



# YAIY BEACON

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**According to Your Faith  
Prideful Census  
The Ten Virgins  
Encouragement in  
the Midst of  
Discouragement**

## 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.

- 2 - Introduction
- 3 - According to Your Faith
- 9 - Prideful Census
- 14 - The Ten Virgins
- 22 - Encouragement in the Midst of Discouragement
- 26 - Questions & Answers

## 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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# According to Your Faith

## The Power of Faith

Few things in this world are more powerful, and few things in this world have so confounded the world as faith. But what is faith? What is its power? What does it mean to have faith, and how does its measure affect our lives? These are the questions we will seek to answer in this treatise.

## Faith is Trust

Faith in its most basic understanding carries the meaning of trusting. Faith takes many different forms. Almost every activity in life requires a level of faith, most of the time without our even thinking about it. For example: Based on past experiences and understanding, when I sit down in a chair, I am trusting that it will hold my weight and not break from beneath me.

But according to Scripture, faith is equivalent to power and can open many doors. It was faith that enabled our Master Yahshua the Messiah to heal – both His faith, and the subjects of His ministry. Faith was crucial to everything Yahshua taught and every miracle He performed. “For he who comes to Elohim must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Heb. 11:6) – faith, without which it is not possible to please Him. (*New American Standard Bible* used throughout, unless otherwise noted.)

*And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven,”* Matthew 18:2-4.

With regard to faith, we need to be as humble, little children ... trusting Yahweh, as a child does his parents. We need to have faith that Yahweh knows best and that He is leading us correctly. And much like a child believes that their mother or father can heal their wounds, so, too, must we believe in Yahweh’s power to heal.

This is the faith we see, every time Yahshua healed someone of their ailments. Let’s look at a few examples:

In Matthew 8:5-13, we read of an example of healing by faith. The centurion’s faith was marked by his trust that Yahshua could heal his servant with but a word, spoken in authority. He knew and understood how authority works, having authority himself.

In Matthew 9:27-29 we read *As Yahshua went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Yahshua said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Master.” Then He touched their eyes, saying, “It shall be done to you according to your faith,* Matthew 9:27-29.

*Yahshua went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and [began] to cry out, saying, “Have mercy on me, Master, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.” But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, “Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.” But He answered and said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and [began] to bow down before Him, saying, “Master, help me!” And He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” But she said, “Yes, Master; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” Then Yahshua said to her, “O woman, **your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.**” And her daughter was healed at once,* Matthew 15:21-28.

Like the centurion of our first example, this woman of Canaan hailed from a pagan culture, yet Yahshua acknowledged her faith. Interestingly, Yahshua perceived a stronger faith come of those to whom He had not been sent (the gentiles) than from His own people, the Jews. What prompted Yahshua to grant this Canaanite woman's petition, was her understanding of a Torah principle: That the promise of blessing was given first to Israel (Rom. 3:1-2), but that Israel was purposed to become a blessing to the nations ... a light drawing in the nations (Gen. 18:18; Deut. 4:5-8; Gal. 3:8). This woman appreciated that by faith, she could receive a blessing.

*When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Yahshua seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but Elohim alone?" Immediately Yahshua, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" – He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying Elohim, saying, "We have never seen anything like this," Mark 2:1-12.*

What sets the centurion, the Canaanite woman, and the four men bearing the paralytic apart from other subjects of Yahshua's ministry, is that they believed Yahshua would honor their entreaties in the behalf of others.

Did you notice, **"Yahshua seeing their faith?"** This is what makes prayer effectual. Because Yahweh can use another's posture of faith through their intercession to accomplish a work according to His will. This is also what happens when we

summon the Elders to be anointed for healing (James 5:14-15). The Elders' prayer is offered in faith. However, one ought not to rely solely upon their faith. He for whom prayer is offered should also believe and have faith that Yahweh will work through the Elders for his healing.

It is the opinion of this writer, that if one comes to the Elders for prayer, but reserves his intention to seek the intervention of a physician, his faith may be questionable. We are informed by the writer James, *But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Master, [being] a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways,* James 1:6-8.

Don't make the mistake of King Asa about whom it is recorded, "became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek Yahweh, but the physicians, so Asa slept with his fathers ..." (2 Chron. 16:12, 13). Indeed,

Thus saith Yahweh, *"Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from Yahweh. For he will be like a bush in the desert and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, and a land of salt without inhabitant. Blessed is the man who trusts in Yahweh and whose trust is Yahweh. For he will be like a tree planted by the water; that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the head comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit,* Jeremiah 17:5-8.

The Evangelist Luke provides us with yet another example:

*And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. And Yahshua said, "Who is the one who touched Me?" And while they were all denying it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You." But Yahshua said, "Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me." When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. And He said to her, "**Daughter, your faith has made you well;** go in peace, Luke 8:43-48.*

## The “ACCORDING TO” of Grace and Faith

Every gift that is received from Above is always according to the Grace that is given, and according to the proportion of our faith (Rom. 12:6). Consider the last thing Yahshua said in these narratives: It was always according to the measure of the recipient’s faith.

As an aside, in the case of the woman suffering from a chronic hemorrhaging, her “**touch[ing] the fringe of His cloak**” is a direct allusion to Malachi 4:2: *But for you who fear My Name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.* “**Wings**” is H.3671, *kanaph* (kaw-naf), **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance**, which means “edge or extremity ... (of a garment or bed-clothing) flap.”

What was it that the woman touched again? The fringes or tassels of His garment which would have been His *kanaph*, “**wings**.”

### Emunah!

The Hebrew word for faith is **Strong’s**, H.530, *Emunah* (em-oo-naw’), which means “*firmness*, (figuratively) *security, faith*, (morally) *fidelity*” and rendered in the text, as faith (-ful, -ly, -ness, [man]), set office, stability, steady, truly, truth. The word *Amein* shares the same primitive root as *emunah*. The Greek equivalent to *emunah* is the word, *pistis*. *Emunah* is a verb ... an action word. Faith then, is action ... expressed very well in Habakkuk 2:4: *Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith.* Faith is **living**. It’s a daily action. Simply believing mentally isn’t enough. Thus, the reason James says, *Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, [being] by itself.* (Read James’ complete discourse on the subject in chapter 2, verses 14-26.)

Now, let us consider some Scriptural examples of *Emunah*, beginning with Abraham. How did Abraham believe Yahweh? Genesis 26:5 tells us the answer, *because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.*

Abraham obeyed Yahweh. Obedience, too, is an action. Abraham trusted Yahweh’s promises and acted upon that trust. He lived according to the faith he held. We see this in the narrative when he moved from Haran to Canaan at Yahweh’s command (Gen. 12:1), and Yahweh rewarded his faith (action) with a promise to give Abraham the land and make his descendants as numerous as the dust on the earth

(Gen.13:16-17). Throughout Abraham’s life, we see his faith. Of him, the Apostles Paul gives witness, that,

*He staggered not at the promise of Elohim through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to Elohim; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform,* Romans 4:20-21, **KJV**.

Another example of *emunah* in action is Noah who, when warned by Yahweh of the coming flood, believed and upon being commanded, built an Ark by which all creatures that had the breath of life would be spared extinction (Gen. 6-8). Had Noah ignored Yahweh’s command to build the ark, he would have shown he did not believe Yahweh’s warning. But because of Noah’s faithful action we are all alive here this day.

Then, we have Joshua and the people who were commanded by Yahweh to march once around the city of Jericho for six days, and seven times on the seventh day, and then upon a great shout and trumpets blasting were promised the walls would come down. He Who had forty years earlier divided the sea, would now through the faith of blowing the shofarot and with a great shout of the people, bring down the walls of Jericho (Josh. 6).

A third example of *emunah* occurred at the River Jordan when the Aramean Naaman who was a leper, obeyed the instruction to dip himself seven times – his washing, symbolizing spiritual perfection – to be cleansed of his affliction (2 Kings 5:1-14).

Naaman believed the Word of Yahweh spoken by Elisha just like all who were healed by Yahshua Messiah believed and acted upon what was commanded for their healing.

In the New Testament, we read of a man born blind.

*As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” Yahshua answered, “[It was] neither [that] this man sinned, nor his parents; but [it was] so that the works of Yahweh might be displayed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.” When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came [back] seeing.*

The blind man, like Naaman, acted upon the command of Yahshua to go and wash. The man's reward for his obedience was sight. What I find interesting about this narrative is that Yahshua used clay. Perhaps it may not seem apparent at first, but considering Yahshua made the world including man, and that man was made from the dust of the ground, is it possible that Yahshua created new eyes for the blind man?

One of the most powerful and symbolic acts of *emunah* occurs in the matter of the bronze serpent about which we read in Numbers 21:4-9:

*Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. The people spoke against Elohim and Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food. Yahweh sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against Yahweh and you; intercede with Yahweh, that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people. Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Make a fiery [serpent], and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, **when he looks at it, he will live.**" And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that **if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.***

Yahweh told the people in this incident that if they looked upon the bronze serpent they would live, and those that obeyed, lived. This serpent is also symbolic of Yahshua. Yahshua Himself confirms this in John 3:14 saying *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.*

So, too, they who look to Yahshua for salvation, shall be saved.

In Hebrews, chapter 11, we have provided us a digest a record of several heroes of *emunah*, and about whom it is written,

"Who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection ..." (Heb. 11:33-34, 35) and of others, too, who were nonetheless faithful, even

unto death, and "were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35).

### O Ye of Little Faith

All that has been examined so far, are acts of faith and what defines faith. But Scripture allows accomplishments "according to the proportion of faith" (Rom. 12:6, *KJV*). We have examples of small faith in Scripture. As in Matthew 8:23-27,

*When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves; but Yahshua Himself was asleep. And they came to [Him] and woke Him, saying, "Save [us], Master; we are perishing!" He said to them, "Why are you timid, **you men of little faith?**" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"*

The disciples were chided by Yahshua here because of their lack of faith in Yahweh for their safety. We can see the difference in this narrative between small and strong faith by comparing Yahshua to His disciples. While they were panicking Yahshua trusted in Yahweh His Father so much, that He slept without concern for the storm around Him. Fear has torment, and is not of faith (1 John 4:18). Fear comes from a lack of trust in our loving Father in heaven. "But perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). John proceeds to say, that "There is no fear in love ... and the one who fears is not perfected in love."

The disciples had not yet been perfected in love, because they were fearful and did not trust Yahweh for their safety. And that bespeaks us, sometimes. We, too, experience storms in life where it seems like our proverbial boat is about to sink. So often, we, too, act like the Apostle Peter when he attempted to walk on water. We'll say, as he, "Master, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water" (Matt. 14:28). And then, when He says, "Come," we, like Peter, get out of the boat and proceed to walk on the water to the Master. But then we, as he, "**seeing the wind**" become frightened, and beginning to sink, we'll cry out, as he, "Master, save me!" (Matt. 14:30) and receive, as he, His reproof, "**You of little faith, why did you doubt?**" (Matt. 14: 31).

Peter's mistake, and ours, too, is that he took his eyes off the Master. He was distracted by the storm, and his distraction caused him to sink and fall. We,

too, become distracted and take our eyes off the Master, giving more attention to the storm than to the One who protects us through the storm. But just like Peter, when we doubt, if we turn back to Him for help in our turmoil, He will reach out His hand to us and save us. Nevertheless, the fewer times we take our eyes off Him and learn to avoid worldly distractions, the fewer times will we cry out to save us from peril. More noble is he, and more noble is his faith, who can and will, in times of distress, recall the words of Moses' exhortation to the people after they had crossed the Sea and saw the army of Pharaoh pursuing them, Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of Yahweh, which He will perform for you today, Exodus 14:13.

Yahweh will fight for us and deliver us. He is our shelter and strong tower. He will not allow us to be tempted or tried beyond our ability (1 Cor. 10:13). So, we should trust Him even when it's hard.

Having little faith prevents us from being able to exercise the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit. Though the disciples were sent out, with power to exorcise unclean spirits, their want of faith prevented them from casting out a demon from a young boy.

*When they came to the multitude, a man came up to Him (Yahshua), falling on his knees before Him and saying, "Master, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. And I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him." And Yahshua answered and said, "**You unbelieving and perverted generation**, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me." And Yahshua rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. Then the disciples came to Yahshua privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" And He said to them, "**Because of the littleness of your faith**; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there', and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you," Matthew 17:14-20.*

"**Littleness of your faith?**" Yahshua even went so far to emphasize that had they faith but the size of a mustard seed they could remove mountains. A mustard seed is a very tiny seed that's just a bit bigger than the tip of a ballpoint pin. If faith the size of a mustard seed can remove mountains, imagine what could be accomplished if one had faith the size of a mountain!

Another thing little faith can prevent is the

fullness of its potential being achieved. Mark 8:22-26 supplies us with this example:

*And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Yahshua and entreated Him to touch him. Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?" And he looked up and said, "**I see men, for I am seeing [them] like trees, walking about.**" Then again, He laid His hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and [began] to see everything clearly. He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."*

Why did this man need to be touched twice by Yahshua to be healed? Why was his healing only partial after the first time? Perhaps, because his faith was small. A want of faith can affect our prayers from being answered, because we must trust that Yahweh will grant our petition. As we read before in James, a man who doubts must not expect to receive anything from Yahweh (James 1:6).

A want of faith also causes us to be unfruitful in our walk and hinders our spiritual growth. Little faith takes many forms. Small trust in Yahweh's power is just one form. Unbelief in His Commandments and Word is another. The Ancient Israelites did not enter into the promised land because of their unbelief.

*Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living Elohim. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is [still] called "Today," lest any of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Messiah, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, while it is said, "**TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.**" For who provoked [Him] when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt [led] by Moses? And with whom was He angry for forty years? **Was it not with those who sinned**, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? So, we see that **they were not able to enter because of unbelief**, Hebrews 3:12-19.*

The Epistle to the Hebrews makes it plain that disobedience to Yahweh's Law is unbelief. Thus, walking in faith is more than just trusting in Yahweh's power to heal and to save. It is also believing in, and obeying, His Word and His Commandments.

## Conclusion: Great is Thy faith

In contrast to little faith, or even the want of faith, strong faith has the opposite effect. Strong faith gives us power with the Holy Spirit of Yahweh and our fruitfulness will abound day by day and remain, too ... even in the face of great trials. The cares of the world and the affairs of life, and the fear these produce will not weigh us down because we believe and trust Yahweh has something better of enduring substance prepared for us.

We have already examined some great examples of strong faith, but in closing we shall look at a couple more.

From the Book of Daniel, we read an account of king Nebuchadnezzar commanding all his subjects that at whatever time the sound of music should be heard, they should bow down and worship a golden idol he had set up. But the Hebrews, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah defied the king in order to obey Yahweh's commands, replying to the king,

*O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be [so], our Elohim Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But [even] if [He does] not, let it be known to you O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up, Daniel 3:16-17.*

The consequence for defiance was known to the three – death by being cast into a fiery furnace. Yet, we see their resolve and response. They were trusting in Yahweh to deliver them knowing He was able to do so, but content dying, if it must be in order to obey Yahweh. They were faithful to the end. These three are an example of incredible

faith in action, and their faith was duly noted as they emerged from the midst of the fire with not an “hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them” (Dan. 3:26, 27) in addition to, while enclosed within, “four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire ... and the form of the fourth is like the Son of Elohim” (Dan. 3:25). How many of us can say that we would exercise the same resolve, even in the face of death?

Again, from the Book of Daniel, we read that a decree which no man could nullify, had been issued by Darius that no man should pray to any mighty one but to the king only. But Daniel did not fear but continued to pray to Yahweh three times a day with his face set toward Jerusalem. The punishment for violating the king's command was being cast into a den of lions, yet Daniel continued to pray trusting Yahweh to deliver him. (You can read this account in Daniel 6:16-23. Daniel was saved by Yahweh because he trusted in Yahweh.

We should strive to possess such faith like these, our examples, being counted among those of whom this world is not worthy (Heb. 11:38). Faith is an active choice we make, whether that be trusting Yahweh for our healing or for help in times of need, or whether our faith should assume the form of obedience, faithful to the end. The Master said, in Matthew 24:13, **But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.** Let us make sure our faith endures to the end, trusting and obeying Yahweh, and remember that He works with us and rewards us in a measure – “**according to our faith!**”

He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

~ Deacon Lucas Bentley

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# PRIDEFUL CENSUS



There are many parallels one could make between the ancient days and today. Many of the same mistakes and sins of the past are being repeated. After all, even Scripture acknowledges that there is nothing new under the sun (Eccl. 1:1-9). Sadly, these mistakes don't have to be made; neither do the sins once committed, repeated. After all, this is one of the reasons we have the Scriptures, given us for our learning and admonition: *For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope*, Romans 15:4. (*New American Standard Bible* used throughout, unless otherwise noted.)

We should learn from the mistakes of those who came before us, not repeating them. One mistake (sin) committed more than 2500 years ago is constantly repeated today by those who profess to know the Almighty.

## A Sin of Pride

This particular transgression was committed by King David and is recorded in 1 Chronicles 21:1-18:

*Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel. So David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring me word that I may know their number." Joab said, "May Yahweh add to His people a hundred times as many as they are! But, my sovereign the king, are they not all my sovereign's servants? Why does my sovereign seek this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt to Israel?" Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore, Joab departed and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. Joab gave the number of the census of all the people to David. And all Israel were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword; and Judah was 470,000 men who drew the sword. But he did not number Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's command was abhorrent to Joab. Elohim was displeased with this thing, so He struck Israel. David said to Elohim, "I have sinned greatly, in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly." Yahweh spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying, "Go and speak to David, saying, "Thus says Yahweh, 'I offer you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you.' So, Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says Yahweh, 'Take for yourself either three years of famine, or three months to be swept away before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or else three days of the sword of Yahweh, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of Yahweh destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now, therefore, consider what answer I shall return to Him who sent me." David said to Gad, "I am in great distress; please let me fall into the hand of Yahweh, for His mercies are very great. But do not let me fall into the hand of man." So, Yahweh sent a pestilence on Israel; 70,000 men of Israel fell. And Elohim sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; but as he was about to destroy it, Yahweh saw and was sorry over the calamity, and said to the destroying angel, "It is enough; now relax your hand." And the angel of Yahweh was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Then David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of Yahweh standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, covered with sackcloth, fell on their faces. David*

said to Elohim, “Is it not I who commanded to count the people? Indeed, I am the one who has sinned and done very wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done? O Yahweh my Elohim, please let Your hand be against me and my father’s household, but not against Your people that they should be plagued.” Then the angel of Yahweh commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and build an altar to Yahweh on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

*The sin David committed here was pride, trusting in numbers. David trusted more in the power of man and the numbers of strength than in Yahweh who gives strength (Deut. 8:17-18; James 1:17). Scripture repeatedly warns against pride and self-exaltation. Yahweh is the one who deserves the glory and thanksgiving for every accomplishment, because without Him we can do nothing at all. All our own power, gifts, and talents ultimately source from Him. What King David did was no different than what many Christian denominations and pastors do today. They value numbers over morality, and truth. One message at curbside posted by an institution of religion, read, “We Value Disciples More Than Doctrine.”*

### **Boasting is Evil**

I am reminded of a testimony given by an Elder of our Assembly who had once been a pastor of a mainline denomination. He stated that often at minister’s meetings, attendees regarded success on the enrollment in Sunday School and the number of pew warmers every first day. This ought not to be the case. Certainly, while seeing people come to “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3) – we exclude first-day Sunday-keepers – is joyous and uplifting, but the focus should not be upon quotas or numbers.

Rather presbyters should be more concerned with speaking the Truth. Boasting their attendance numbers will be worthless on judgment day, because boasting is discounted. *Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith,* Romans 3:27. In fact, boasting is itself evil. But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil, James 4:16. If there is boasting, it should be in Yahweh, as it is written: “Let him who boasts, boast in Yahweh,” 1 Cor. 1:31) and further confirmed by what’s read in Romans 15:17: *Therefore in Messiah Yahshua I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to Yahweh.*

We need to give Yahweh all glory and not trust in

ourselves or boast in ourselves. We need to avoid King Nebuchadnezzar’s mistake. A read of Daniel, chapter 4, excites the imagination, as we can see the king strutting about the palace at Shushan, chest puffed out, looking from horizon to horizon, and musing to himself, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, ‘O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee’ ” (Dan. 4:30, 31, **KJV**). For seven years Nebuchadnezzar was mooing like a cow, having his living among the beasts of the field. At the end of that time, his understanding returned to him, he lifted his eyes toward heaven, and praised and honored and extolled Yahweh, the King of heaven Whose works are Truth and His ways, judgment ... acknowledging Him Who lives forever; Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion (Dan. 4:34, 37).

So many first-day church leaders today, act like Nebuchadnezzar – flouting attendance numbers and conversions. This regard for numbers, while keeping the benches warm and occupied, has compromised the preaching of Truth.

### **Wrongful Majority**

Here is a quick question! Is the majority ever wrong? Contemporary Christianity would answer, “No,” because people are inclined to think, “might makes right.” Thus, they think that a large following means you must be right. Oh, they will say if you speak the truth people will come. Perhaps, but nowhere does it say in Scripture that many will come to **the** Truth. In fact, Yahweh’s Word says the opposite. Matthew 7:13-14 (**KJV**) says,

*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* Here, Yahshua told us that many go the way of death and destruction and few find the path to Truth. All throughout Scripture, we read of the many going the way of death.

In the days of EliYah, out of what may be supposed of the millions in the ten northern tribes of Israel, only 7000 remained faithful to Yahweh. *Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him,* 1 Kings 19:18. Think about how small the number of people choose right over wrong. Again,

this is common in Scripture.

We need only to look at the account of Noah. Yahweh destroyed the ancient world with a flood because the wickedness of man was great in the earth, his every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil, continually (Gen. 6:5). Only Noah and his family were spared, because Noah found grace in the eyes of Yahweh (Gen. 6:8; 1 Pet. 2:5).

Conservative estimates put the pre-flood population in the 1-2 billion range. Only eight people were preserved from the flood. We can see, the majority of people tend to be in the wrong. More Scriptural evidence of this can be seen in the account of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham pleads with Yahweh on behalf of the righteous before Yahweh destroyed Sodom.

*And Yahweh said, "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know." Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before Yahweh. Abraham came near and said, "Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" So, Yahweh said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account." And Abraham replied, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to Yahweh, although I am but dust and ashes. Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five?" And He said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." He spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose forty are found there?" And He said, "I will not do it on account of the forty." Then he said, "Oh may Yahweh not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?" And He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." And he said, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to Yahweh; suppose twenty are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it on account of the twenty." Then he said, "Oh may Yahweh not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it on account of the ten." As soon*

*as He had finished speaking to Abraham Yahweh departed, and Abraham returned to his place, Genesis 18:20-35. Abraham pleaded with Yahweh and Yahweh agreed not to destroy the city if even ten righteous were found within. But apparently, He apparently did not find even ten, because only Lot and his two daughters were spared (Gen. 19:16, 26).*

Yahshua Himself says that few will be saved. *And someone said to Him, "Master, are there just a few who are being saved?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able, Luke 23:23-24. This echoes His words about judgment day! In Matthew 7:21-23, He is recorded having said,*

*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Master, Master,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Master, Master, did we not prophesy in Your Name, and in Your Name cast out demons, and in Your Name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*

Yahshua is going to tell many who thought they were serving Him genuinely on that day to depart from Him. Why? because of their lawlessness.

### **People Pleasers**

Most of Christianity teaches the abolition of Yahweh's Law (the Law of Moses). This is a compromise of Scriptural truth. In Matthew 5:17-18, Yahshua says,

*"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*

Yet, the very thing He said not to think, is what people in Christianity are taught to believe. Why? Is it merely a misunderstanding of Scripture by Christian pastors? No, it isn't. There are many pastors in Christianity who know they should teach their charges to obey the commandments. But, they don't, and won't, because they fear the loss of their members. Moreover, some know they'll be reprimanded or dismissed from their pulpits for teaching sound doctrine that is at variance with their denominational beliefs.

Thus, "wanting to have their ears tickled, **they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn**

away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths,” (2 Tim. 4:3). This gives place to the myriads of denominational and nondenominational churches today – (How many did Messiah die for, anyway?). As one institution of religion posted at curbside, “Church Shopping? We Might Be The Right One For You!”

That’s the mindset today, and sadly, few want to be corrected, or told they have to change their lifestyles. They would rather seek out teachers who twist the Scriptures – making private interpretations of the unadulterated Word – to justify their misdeeds (2 Peter 3:16).

This is not a new phenomenon as it’s the same mindset ancient Israel had.

*For this is a rebellious people, false sons, Sons who refuse to listen to the instruction of Yahweh; Who say to the seers, “You must not see visions;” And to the prophets, “You must not prophesy to us what is right, speak to us pleasant words, Prophecy illusions. “Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.” Thus says the Holy One of Israel, “Since you have rejected this Word and have put your trust in oppression and guile, and have relied on them, therefore this iniquity will be to you like a breach about to fall, a bulge in a high wall, whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant, Isaiah 30:9-13.*

### **Stiff-Necked; Carnally-Minded; Uncircumcised Heart**

Nevertheless, some will seek salvation but desire not the way of righteousness which is life (Prov. 12:28). They desire salvation, but not the requirement to maintain their relationship with Yahweh through obedience to His commandments which are at enmity against their carnal natures. These are the same who in the company of others, will say, “we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways” (Job 21:14, **KJV**). In Romans 8:5-7 we read,

*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,***

Scripture concludes them to be “stiff-necked” (Deut. 10:16, **KJV**); “carnally-minded” (Rom. 8:6, **KJV**); uncircumcised of heart (Deut. 10:16, 30:6; Jer. 4:4). Despite their claims, they are not partakers of the New Covenant, because all who partake of

the New Covenant in Yahshua will desire to keep Yahweh’s law.

“Behold, days are coming,” declares Yahweh, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares Yahweh. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares Yahweh, **“I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it;** and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know Yahweh,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares Yahweh, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more,” Jeremiah 31:31-34.

This parallels what Yahweh says in Ezekiel 36:25-28:

*Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you **and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.** You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your Elohim.*

Again, Yahweh clarifies that He will put His Law in those who will enter into, and abide in His Covenant Promise. But someone who tries to justify and excuse his lawless behavior, will not become a partaker in the Commonwealth Yahweh has reserved for them who obey Him.

This anti law teaching (anti-nominalism) amongst Christianity – they say, “the law’s been done away with ... blotted out, taken out of the way, and nailed to the cross” – is nothing more than men’s traditions being exalted above Yahweh’s law and makes those who teach traditions (lawlessness) no different from the Pharisees whom Yahshua rebuked.

*And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. ‘But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’ Neglecting the commandment of Yahweh, you hold to the tradition of men,” Mark 7:6-8.*

## The Little Flock

From all that Scripture has said about this subject, we can understand boasting in numbers does not determine Truth. Yahshua never said many would follow Him. In fact, He often talks about the few that would. In Luke 12:32 (**KJV**), He tells us, *Fear not, **little flock**; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* Yahshua calls His disciples, a **little flock**. Not a large one, a little one. Few will desire Truth and even fewer will continue steadfastly in Truth, till the end. *For many are called, but few [are] chosen*, Matthew 22:14, **KJV**. Many doesn't necessarily mean a lot. One hundred can be many but in that many, a few could be ten. Many may be called, but did they answer the call? Or did they hang up on Yahweh immediately? And out of those who did answer, how many remained long? Consider Yahshua's parable in Luke 8:5-8, **KJV**:

*A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when He had said these things, He cried, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear;"* And the interpretation, in Luke 8:11-15, **KJV**:

*Now the parable is this: "The seed is the Word of Yahweh. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."*

Only one fourth remained fruitful, and even among these, some produced thirtyfold, sixty, or some, a hundred (Mark 4:20). You can see how it is indeed a **little flock**.

## Conclusion

No one wants to be disparaged, but that's what we, the few, who follow Yahshua will be. Yahshua declared in Matthew 10:22, *You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has*

*endured to the end who will be saved.* Not only will we be hated by those in the world (John 15:19), but we shall also be disesteemed by churchianity which tout themselves, to be right ... though majority does not equate to Truth.

The fact that Yahshua affirmed that though many are called, but few are chosen and to be among the few chosen should confirm that they are right. Preachers, therefore, should not be afraid to speak the Truth, even if it negatively impacts their numbers. Even Yahshua weeded out His disciples with hard statements (John 6:47-70).

Teachers and preachers of Scripture must be willing to sacrifice numbers for Truth. Teachers and preachers of Scripture need to be willing to sacrifice position for Truth and have the mindset of King David who repented of his **prideful census**.

*Then the angel of Yahweh commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and build an altar to Yahweh on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. So David went up at the word of Gad, which he spoke in the Name of Yahweh. Now Ornan turned back and saw the angel, and his four sons who were with him hid themselves. And Ornan was threshing wheat. As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out from the threshing floor and prostrated himself before David with his face to the ground. Then David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of this threshing floor, that I may build on it an altar to Yahweh; for the full price you shall give it to me, that the plague may be restrained from the people." Ornan said to David, "Take it for yourself; and let my lord the king do what is good in his sight. See, I will give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for wood and the wheat for the grain offering; I will give it all." But King David said to Ornan, "**No, but I will surely buy it for the full price; for I will not take what is yours for Yahweh, or offer a burnt offering which costs me nothing.**" So David gave Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site. Then David built an altar to Yahweh there and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And he called to Yahweh and He answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. Yahweh commanded the angel, and he put his sword back in its sheath, 1 Chronicles 21:18-27.*

The lesson here? Whoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he who humbles himself, shall be exalted (Matt. 23:12). He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

~ Deacon Lucas Bentley

# The Ten Virgins



In looking at the **Song of Solomon (Song of Songs)**, when one reads chapter 1, verse three, the latter part says “your name is like purified oil; therefore the maidens love you.” (*NASB* used throughout, unless otherwise noted.)

One is immediately drawn to the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew, chapter 25, verses 1-13, which when understood correctly, is speaking of maidens. Obviously these ten virgins are bridesmaids, as the bridegroom isn’t going to be marrying ten women at the same time. Let’s look at the account:

*Then **the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins**, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when **the foolish took their lamps**, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for **our lamps are going out**.’ But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; **go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves**.’ And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. **Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Master, Master, open up for us.**’ But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour, Matthew 25:1-13.*

The moral of the story, is that we should make the most of the time and opportunities we have now. We are not going to slide into the Kingdom with the bare minimum.

Now is the acceptable time for those called to the wedding. Yahweh, through the prophet Isaiah, is quoted by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:2: “... AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.” Behold, now is “THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,” behold, now is “THE DAY OF SALVATION.” (See also, Isaiah 55:6, and Hebrews 4:7)

Another area of Scripture that points to bridesmaids, specifically alluding to coming into the wedding feast of the Kingdom, with Yahshua being the King, is Psalm 45:10-15:

*Listen, O daughter (Bride), give attention and incline your ear (for those who have ears to hear): Forget your people and your father’s house (love Yahshua more than father or mother, Luke 14:26); then the King (Yahshua) will desire your beauty. Because He is your Master, **bow down to Him** (all will kneel before Yahshua). The daughter of Tyre will come with a gift; the rich among the people will seek your favor. The King’s daughter (Bride) is **all glorious within**; her clothing is interwoven with gold. She will be led to the King in embroidered work; **the virgins, her companions** who follow her (Bride), will be brought to You (King Yahshua). **They will be led forth** with gladness and rejoicing; they will enter into the King’s palace. (Revelation 7:9-17, especially the verse 17, is applicable for the wise virgins).*

It is amazing to see the imagery pointing to both the bridesmaids and the Bride. We find this in Song of Solomon 6:8-10, *There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and **maidens without number*** (Rev 7:9);

*but my dove, my perfect one, is unique: she is her mother's only daughter (Gal. 4:26); she is the pure child of the one who bore her. The maidens saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines also, and they praised her, saying, "Who is this that grows **like the dawn**, as **beautiful as the full moon**, as **pure as the sun**, as awesome as an army (Rev. 7:4) with banners?"*

Think of the bridesmaids seeing the glorified Bride! Imagine what they will see, as Yahshua is they will be like Him. Yahweh will be magnified through the glorification of His people, changed in the twinkling of an eye.

The bridesmaids follow the Bride into the Kingdom, and the ones who are ready are provided for. The others, like goats, are removed. We will look more closely Revelation chapter seven, verses 9-17 ... especially, verse 17 as it relates to the wise virgins. But first, let's consider the five foolish virgins and five wise virgins with another parable taken from Matthew, chapter 25.

### **Goats And Sheep Separated**

*But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put **the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left**. Then the King will say to **those on His right**, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." Then **the righteous will answer Him**, "Master, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and*

*come to You?" The King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." Then He will also say **to those on His left**, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me." Then **they themselves also will answer**, "Master, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?" Then He will answer them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me." **These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life**, Matthew 25:31-46.*

Note well: This discourse follows immediately after the parable of the ten bridesmaids, and illustrates a connection Yahshua is drawing to them. They (the five wise virgins) which are ready to meet the bridegroom are not only vigilant, but diligent in doing such of those things which will have pleased Him upon His return ... like, showing compassion to the least and to the last, including such traits that are mentioned in Luke 6:27-36.

### **Oil Is Important**

In the first 13 verses of Mathew chapter 25, we had read that "the foolish took their lamps but took no oil with them, while the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps." We also read, "*The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came.*"

For these latter, it was too little, too late. And that is the moral of the story, but what is the oil? This returns us to the **Song of Solomon 1:3**, which says,



*Your oils have a pleasing fragrance, **Your Name is like purified oil**; therefore **the maidens love you**.* (See also, John 17:26).

This is a direct reference to the oil and the maidens of Matthew 25:1-13. Note the emphasis on the Name of Yahweh, expressed as, “purified oil.”

It is also noteworthy, in other areas of Scripture, that the Spirit of Yahweh is poured out like oil. Romans 5:5 says, *And hope does not disappoint, because **the love of Elohim has been poured out within our hearts** through **the Holy Spirit** who was given to us.*

The oil is related to Yahweh’s love. However, though the virtuous virgins remarked that the oil could be bought, we can’t buy the Spirit, as Simon Magus found out (Acts 8:18-20). But, what about the pearl of great value?

*Again, **the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding **one pearl of great value**, he went and sold all that he had and bought it**, Matthew 13:45-46.*

The Kingdom of Heaven is the exchange one might receive for relinquishing the Self to Yahshua through contrite repentance, confession, and immersion in the Name of Yahshua the Messiah. And the Holy Spirit is not a commodity one can purchase. For it is the Gift of Yahweh to those who obey Him.

Love also cannot be bought, but is freely given just as the Spirit is. The Spirit is noted as a seal, as we are sealed by It, just as we are the Name.

*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**. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to Elohim and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless, Revelation 14:1-5.*

(Incidentally, the Name also cannot be purchased, but is more of an inheritance freely given. Just as Yahshua inherited a better Name than the angels

themselves (Heb. 1:3-5).

We read in Isaiah 43:4-7,

*Since you (Israel) are precious in My sight, since you are honored and I love you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, “Give them up!” And to the south, “Do not hold them back. Bring **My sons** from afar and **My daughters** from the ends of the earth, **everyone who is called by My Name**, and whom I have created for My Glory, Whom I have formed, even Whom I have made.”*

We see that while His Name cannot be purchased, it is by His Name we are called. But being called is not enough. As Yahshua points out to the Laodicean Assembly, in Revelation 3:14-19, saying,

*To the angel (messenger) of the Assembly in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of Elohim, says this: “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, **I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich**, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.”*

What makes us rich? Is it physical gold? What is more precious than gold refined by fire? Symbolically, what would that be? We find actions are important, like those attributes aforementioned in Matthew 25:35-36.

### **What Can Be Purchased?**

*The law of Yahweh is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple. 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 19:7-11.*

While the Name, the Holy Spirit, and Love cannot be physically purchased, Bibles, Biblical study guides, and online resources can all be purchased to obtain understanding of His instructions. Merchants sell these tools which can help us better understand how to draw close to Yahweh.

*Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding, Proverbs 23:23.*

So, buying Truth comes at a cost! When we come to Yahweh and strive to learn and do His will, He doesn't put a price tag on it, other than His will shall cost us time, and can cost us family and friends and at times, even our own will.

However, monetarily, there may be no cost. We can obtain some resources at the local library and check out for free. Or, we might go online and download study resources, oftentimes with no charge.

And in living by the Word of Yahweh, one can't count tithing a cost, as it is a commandment. (Read our free booklet on, *The Temple Tenth.*)

### **Walking on Higher Ground**

We find the free gift of grace given by the Father through our faith and His Son's Sacrifice.

Yahshua taught deep truths that focused on the spiritual economies rather than the physical. He taught tithing; he gave commandments concerning murder and adultery, as a few examples of walking on higher ground. He still came to do Yahweh's will, which was His Father's Way of Life, exhorting us to repent, that we might become heirs to Kingdom Life, both now in the life that is, and that which is to come.

Yahweh is the fountain of Living Waters (Psa. 36:9; Jer. 2:13), and Yahshua is the Dispenser or Distributor of Living Waters (John 4:10, 7:38), as it is written:

*Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Yahshua stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this **He spoke of the Spirit**, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Yahshua was not yet glorified, John 7:37-39.*

*Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. Incline your ear and come*

*to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David, Isaiah 55:1-3.*

Is the Word contradictory? We can't buy the Spirit, but we can buy the Spirit? Meanings can be figurative at times, rather than literal. While there is a physical promise of life, even eternal life accomplished through the Spirit of Yahweh and the Sacrifice of Yahshua the Messiah, there is also the figurative purchase of the Spirit.

Besides the Spirit there is Truth. We are, in fact, in need of both! This may help clarify what the oil consists of: oil may be a combination of both the Spirit and Truth in abundance.

Yahshua Himself said, *But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and Truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. Elohim is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and Truth, John 4:23-24.*

So, what two things can be within True Worshipers of Yahweh? Yahweh's Spirit and Yahweh's Truth, but it is the Former that is listed as a figurative type of (anointing) oil.

### **Figurative Anointing by the Spirit of Yahweh**

Oil is usually thought of in anointing, but we find that the anointing we receive is by the Spirit of Yahweh. This was also true for the Messiah Who came in the flesh.

The Spirit of Yahweh Elohim is upon Me, because Yahweh has anointed Me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners, Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18.

We also receive confirmation through the Apostle Peter:

*You know of Yahshua of Nazareth, how Elohim anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power; and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for Elohim was with Him, Acts 10:38.*

Those in the Messiah, though a portion is given in measure, it is not a different anointing, according to the Apostle Paul.

*Now He who establishes us with you in Messiah and anointed us is Elohim, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. The Apostle John also testifies, "you have **an anointing from the Holy One,**" 1 John 2:20. He says further, in verse 27, *As for you, the **anointing** which you received from Him **abides in you**, and you have no need for anyone to**

to teach you; but as **His anointing teaches you about all things**, and is true and is not a lie, and just as **it** has taught you, you abide in Him.

Psalms 45 is a song of love, verses 10-15 particularly, alluding to Yahshua and the Bride, and mention is figuratively made to oil in verse 7: *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore Elohim, Your Elohim, has **anointed** You with the **oil of joy** above Your fellows*, Psalm 45:7; Heb. 1:9.

### **The Bridesmaids Follow the Anointed Bride into the Kingdom**

*After these things* (referring to the 144,000 first-fruits Saints in Messiah), *I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our Elohim who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb"* (They know Whom they serve, not the beast nor its image). *And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped Elohim, saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our Elohim forever and ever. Amen."* Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "My master, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of Elohim; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will (now, from this time forward) be their shepherd, and will (then) guide them to springs of the water of life; and Elohim will wipe every tear from their eyes," Revelation 7:9-17.

Prior to this, the 144,000 are said to have the seal of Yahweh (verse 4), which is both the Spirit being granted within them, and His Name inscribed on their foreheads and who have been, no doubt, obedient to the Truth.

*After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of*

*the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living Elohim; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our Elohim on their foreheads,"* Revelation 7:1-3.

It is after the sealing of the Saints, called bond-servants here, is accomplished that the four angels who are holding back the winds of wrath will then release the three-and-a-half-year tribulation period to begin. After the tribulation, Yahshua returns to the earth and, specifically, to Jerusalem.

*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**. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and **no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth**. These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. (symbolically meaning, no false worship) These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to Elohim and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless,* Revelation 14:1-5.

Those who come into the Kingdom having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14), did so, after the Saints were already sealed prior to the winds of wrath being released. This means that those following the Bride into the Kingdom learned during the tribulation, most likely by the testimony of the two witnesses and the angel in the midst of Heaven (Rev. 14:6) declaring the Truth to everyone still alive. Knowing that they had before been lied to (Jer. 16:19), they probably immersed themselves into the True Name of the Messiah, calling out to Him (Acts 22:16), due to the chaos and utter destruction all around them (called the Great Tribulation, the Day of Yahweh, Joel 2:1-10). Imagine the utter destruction occurring on the earth, and you found out that things you believed were salvational were actually not true at all. What

would you do? (See our Mini-Study, ***Why Be Baptized into the Name of Yahshua?***).

Revisiting the idea that the five good bridesmaids told the five foolish bridesmaids to go to the merchants and buy some oil, it may they just needed to study more to fully get an understanding of what Yahweh teaches in His Word about salvation; about the Law; and about the Messiah Who walked perfectly, and didn't sin at all.

People, today, hear the Word preached, but cannot really understand what they hear, because they are not willing to surrender their lives that they might understand. They may be superficially involved with their local church and community, but they really lack an understanding of what they should be doing according to Yahweh's Word.

Others, on the other hand, are very dedicated toward doing what they have learned and not wanting in diligence putting forth effort, but still lacking a true knowledge of the Truth, not understanding the True Names, and obligations of eating clean food, and keeping His weekly 7th Day Sabbath and the Feasts of Yahweh. Yet, to their credit, some of these same people express compassionate love toward their fellow man and hence, to Yahweh better than we who have this knowledge, do at times.

Remember, the Saints are said to be blameless, with no lies and no false worship of any kind. Saints also to strive to love and be compassionate toward all people, especially to the household of faith.

Given the gravity of what we've already gleaned from Scripture, maybe we all should reexamine what we believe, and how we believe!

### **The Word Provides Light, Like Oil Can Supply**

In recalling to mind Matthew 25:1-13, we notice that the wise bridesmaids had an extra flask or container of oil for their lamps which suggests they had an abundance, of both the Spirit and the Word.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path ... The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.* Psalm 119:105, 130. The way the Word is unfolded is by reading the pages of Scripture and giving attendance to Its preaching.

Let's read these verses from Psalm 119, again ... but now, in light of Proverbs 6:23:

*The commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life.*

The commandments and laws of Yahweh are true altogether, and in obeying them, we get understanding and wisdom which, incidentally, follow from nurturing the fear of Yahweh (Psa.

111:10; Prov. 9:10).

*For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Master Yahshua Messiah, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from Elohim the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with Whom I am well-pleased" – and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your heart, 2 Peter 1:16-19.*

The testimony and word of the letters written in the first century as eye witness accounts of Messiah Yahshua and inspired to be written as a record for us, is as sure to provide us light as well as the Torah, Prophets, and previous Writings to the first century believers of the Common Era. It is a lamp shining in a dark place, the dark place being this world.

Oil is necessary for the light to shine forth.

### **Yahshua Is Light, as a Perfect Example of How to Live by The Word**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with [the] Elohim, and the Word was [an] Elohim. He was in the beginning with [the] Elohim. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it,* John 1:1-5. We've added the articles, "the" and "an" to differentiate Yahweh from Yahshua, Who is subject to His Father. (Read our In-Depth study on, ***Did the Savior Pre-exist?***).

Then Yahshua again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life," John 8:12.

Yahshua the Messiah, meeting Paul on the road to Damascus, told him He was going to use him as an instrument to reveal Himself to both Jew and Gentile:

We read in Acts 26:18, that He sent the Apostle to the Gentiles, *to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to Elohim, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.*

Today, we have this light within as we walk in the Word of Yahweh and Messiah, in the Holy Spirit.



The Apostle Paul warned his contemporaries then, and warns us today, in Ephesians 5:6-8,

*Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of [the] Elohim comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Master; walk as children of Light.*

### **Yahweh's Spirit Provides Light, Just Like Oil Can Supply**

*But when He, ("It," as there is no neuter gender in the Hebrew) the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come, John 16:13. The language in which the disciples and Yahshua spoke, was eloquent and to the point. (See our Mini-Study entitled, **Hebrew, The Original Language**).*

*For Elohim, Who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of Elohim in the face of Messiah, 2 Corinthians 4:6. It is through the True Name of Yahshua Messiah, in Him, and through His shed blood, that we are granted access to the Spirit which comes and emanates from the Father above.*

We must repent, and be obedient to the truth of Yahweh's Word.

*As Peter said in Acts 5:32, And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom Elohim has given to those who obey Him. (Read our Mini-Study on, **Why Biblical Law?**).*

In all of this, we can conclude that while the Word of Yahweh, the Spirit of Yahweh, and Yahweh's Son provide us with light, it is only the Word of Yahweh which can be purchased with physical money through merchants who supply materials which can be studied.

### **Revisiting the Parable, Again**

*Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the*

*prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.*

*Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Master, Master, open up for us.' But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour, Matthew 25:1-13.*

The emphasis, once again, is to be ready; be alert; and study to show yourself approved. And, if you won't consider what's written in the Old Testament, what good will the New Testament do you?



Are You Ready?

On the other hand, eating clean foods, keeping the Sabbaths and the Feasts, and obeying the Ten Commandments are not the only requirements, as we must obey from the heart whatsoever has been commanded us.

### **Living According to the Word of Yahweh, Helping the Poor**

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus speaks of those who end up in the lake of fire. Abraham is pleaded with to warn others of the death that awaits those who reject the Truth. Here is the conclusion of the parable:

*“I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house – for I have five brothers – in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.” But Abraham said, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.” But he said, “No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!” But he said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead,”* Luke 16:27-31.

Earlier in this parable, mention is made how well-dressed and how well off the rich man was. He didn’t care about the poor. Otherwise, he would have helped Lazarus who was at his gate wanting to be fed. If he paid attention to the Word of Yahweh, he would have known that he should have helped the poor. But he only evidently cared for himself ... which is contrary to what Scripture teaches, as it is written in the Torah:

*If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which Yahweh your Elohim is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks. Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, ‘The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,’ and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to Yahweh against you, and it will be a sin in you. You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing Yahweh your Elohim will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings. For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land,’”* Deuteronomy 15:7-11.

Scripture, by way of a warning, goes even further than this: *He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him,* Proverbs 14:31.

*He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses,* Proverbs 28:27. Could one of these curses be, that the offender is deprived admittance into the coming Kingdom?

This might have been troublesome to the foolish bridesmaids, but it may also be part of the problem they have.

While we may not fully appreciate what having extra oil means – per the parable of the ten virgins – we should consider what’s been presented in this discourse.

### **Take Away Points**

- The ten virgins are not the Bride, but are bridesmaids to the Bride.
- There is an emphasis on making use of the time given.
- Half didn’t have enough oil. The other half had an extra supply.
- Oil can be representative of the Word of Yahweh and of the Spirit of Yahweh, but love and Yahweh’s Name can also be related.
- For the Bride, the Messiah provides anointing by the Spirit, leading them as they follow.
- The great multitude, not associated with the Bride, coming into the Kingdom, will then be led to living waters, and Shepherded by Yahshua the King.
- Just like the sheep and goats are separated, the ten bridesmaids are separated into two groups.
- Only one is allowed to enter and stay.
- We also learned, those who don’t fully believe (i.e., live accordingly) to the Torah and the Prophets, might not be persuaded otherwise. Not now, neither in the future.

~ Elder David Brett

# Encouragement in the Midst of Discouragement

In the text of the New Testament, the Apostle Paul severally tells us, that

- “All Scripture is given of Eloha, and is profitable ...” (2 Tim. 3:16);
- “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning ... and they are written for our admonition... that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11, the King James Version, used throughout).

And we are further informed by the Holy Texts,

- “There hath no temptation (trial) taken you but such as is common to man ...” (1 Cor. 10:13).
- “Beloved, think it not strange, concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you ... knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pet. 4:12, 5:9), and that

Yahshua, among His farewell remarks to His disciples and before His Gethsemane passion, declared, “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33) and then told them to “be of good cheer,” that He had overcome the world. In His Revelation to the Apostle John, Yahshua severally concluded His address to each of the seven Assemblies of Asia Minor, promising them, and by extension, to us as well, that “He that overcometh ... to him that overcometh ...”

- He would give him to eat of the tree of life...” (Rev. 2:7);
- that he should not be hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:11);
- that He would give to eat of the hidden manna, and be given a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving him who receives it (Rev. 2:17);
- that he who keeps His works unto the end, to him would be given power over the nations to rule over them with a rod of iron, and that he would be given the morning star (Rev. 2:26-28);
- that he would be clothed in white raiment, and his name would not be blotted out of the Book of Life, but confessed before His Father, and before His angels (Rev. 3:5);

- that he would be made a pillar in the temple of Yahweh, and no more go out, and upon him the Name of Yahweh and the name of the city of new Jerusalem (Rev. 3:12);
- be granted to sit with Yahshua in His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne” (Rev. 3:21);

– all this briefly comprehended, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his Eloha, and he shall be My son” (Rev. 21:7).

## Of Commandments, Trials, and Promises

These are exceedingly great, and precious promises ... promises among many that are given us in the Volume of the Book; promises that ordinarily and immediately follow the giving of a commandment, as in: Trust in Yahweh with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths, Proverbs 3:5-6.

When Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch – where they had before preached the Evangel – they exhorted the disciples in these places to continue in the faith, telling them (and us, too) “that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of Eloha” (Acts 14:22) which is but a corroboration of what Master Yahshua had told His disciples before His Gethsemane passion.

And so, now let’s talk about tribulation ... because, for sure, it is appointed each one of us. But before proceeding further, let’s acknowledge that,

- life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you respond or react to the 10% of what happens to you and that,
- Yahweh never promised you or me smooth sailing, a calm passage, or an easy flight, but that He did promise us a safe landing IF, we endured all things to the end and so,
- what doesn’t kill you is supposed to make you stronger.

In the Book of Hebrews, chapter 11, we read of some who were tortured, not accepting deliverance; others, experienced trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, were bound and imprisoned; still, others were stoned, sawn asunder, and having no certain dwelling place, wandered about destitute, afflicted, tormented, attired only in sheepskins and goatskins as they traversed deserts, mountains and

took refuge in dens and caves of the earth.

Some even, experienced sundry perils at the hands of men but nevertheless continued, though weary and in pain, yet continuing steadfastly in, and earnestly contending for the faith, remaining ever vigilant, whether hungry or thirsty, whether naked or cold, enduring the contradiction of sinners against themselves ... some even, resisting unto blood.

Think Abraham, whom the Apostle Paul declared, “against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations ... And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body ... neither the deadness of Sarah’s womb: he staggered not at the promise of Eloha through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to Eloha; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it (faith and hope) was imputed to him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:18-22).

Like us, oftentimes, having received a promise, he leaned to his own understanding of how it should be accomplished... in his case, yielding to the voice of his wife, much like Adam did to Eve who was also the first in transgression, by taking to himself Hagar when she was offered to him by Sarah.

Five years spent he in Haran, and twenty-five more in Canaan before the nativity of the promised seed, Isaac. And then, when Isaac was a young man, as it is supposed, 25-30 years of age, Abraham is directed by Yahweh to take his son, his only son Isaac whom he loved into the mountains of Moriah, and there, offer him as a burnt offering (Gen. 22:2).

But notice such a remarkable confidence this aged man had in the Promise ... staggering not at the promise of Eloha through unbelief; strong in faith, being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform – so that he could say to his two servants who had accompanied him and his son Isaac, “Abide ye here with the donkey; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, AND COME AGAIN TO YOU” (Gen. 22:5).

And so, “with the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together” (Gen. 22:6). And then, we read of yet another marvelous thing: When asked of Isaac, “Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” (Gen. 22:7), Abraham replies, “My son, Eloha will provide Himself a Lamb for a burnt offering ...” (Gen. 22:8) which connotes for us, a Messianic prophecy, that Yahweh will provide THE Lamb, an offering for sin. The author of the Book of Hebrews says of Abraham, “Accounting

that Eloha was able to raise him (Isaac) up, even from the dead; from when he (Abraham) received him (Isaac) in a figure (Yahshua)” (Heb. 11:19).

You see here, an example ... again written for our learning, how that confidence in the promises of Yahweh Who cannot lie can become the source of our encouragement in the midst of discouragement.

Thus, we are charged, “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which had great recompence of reward” (Heb. 10:35).

Like Abraham, we “have need of patience, that after [we] have done the will of Eloha, [we] might receive the promise” (Heb. 10:36).

Think, Moses who with Yahweh ten times (and probably more than what’s recorded in the Sacred Record) endured the murmurings and transgressions of the wilderness congregation of Israel ... even to the point where he’d lost it, speaking unadvisedly with his lips and incurring for himself, the penalty of being refused admittance into the Promised Land, and with his importunity in soliciting a reprieve, the rebuke of the Holy One: “Speak no more unto Me of this matter” (Deut. 3:26).

The Psalmists, too, in their distresses, often punctuate their praises to Yahweh with queries,

- *How long wilt Thou forget me, O Yahweh? for ever? how long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me,* Psalm 13:1;
- *Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand, even Thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom,* Psalm 74:11;
- *How long, Yahweh? wilt Thou be angry for ever?* Psalm 79:5;
- *O Yahweh Eloha tsavaot, how long wilt Thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?* Psalm 80:4.

Again, from the Tanach, we read of another who could have, but didn’t, yield himself to one or several of the Five D’s – Disappointment, Discouragement, Depression, Despair, Despondency – and who very nearly experienced the 6th D at the hand of his companions.

David had served Achish, king of Gath, with the Philistines as a mercenary for a year and four months, until he lost favor with the princes of the Philistines at a time when they were prepared to wage a battle with Israel under the hand of Saul. So, he and his band of 600 men were compelled to return to Ziklag which had been awarded him by Achish ... there, to find that the Amalekites had come in the warriors’ absence and burned the city, and taken captive all the women with the children.

David is greatly distressed, “for the people spake of stoning him, the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: BUT DAVID ENCOURAGED HIMSELF IN YAHWEH HIS ELOHA” (1 Samuel 30:6).

David had recourse to the ephod vestment worn by Abiathar, *the kohen ha gadol*, with its faculties of Urim and Thummim by Which he inquired, “Shall I pursue ...? Shall I overtake ...?” (1 Sam. 30:8). And the answer? “Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all” (1 Sam. 30:8).

Then there is Master Yahshua ... 3 ½ years, laboring among them to whom He’d been sent, and is characterized by Isaiah as a Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, despised and rejected. 3 ½ years, apostles whom He’d sent out with power against unclean spirits, to cast them out; to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease; and more also, witnessing His works in demonstration of the Spirit and power; speaking such Words that none other had spoken – Words That were spirit and that were life, and that more abundantly, and doing such deeds that none other had done: imparting sight to the blind; cleansing lepers; exorcising unclean spirits; conferring hearing to the deaf and speech to the mute; making paralytics whole, and the lame to walk; and raising up the dead to life again.

And yet, during His time, among them were the contentious-of-spirit, the envious, the betrayer, the denier, the doubter and all, who forsook Him and fled in His moment of passion and at such a time, when He could have used a friend. And He tells them, and us, too, that neither they, nor we, as His disciples are above Him, but that it is enough we should be as He (Matt. 10:24-25)– learning obedience as He, by such of those things we suffer (Heb. 5:8).

### **Introducing the 6 D’s**

And we think we have it rough, when we are permitted to taste but a little of infirmity, necessity, distress, reproach and even a little persecution for having but rendered whole duty and reasonable service in this vocation to which we’ve been called and chosen ... not appreciating that the sufferings of this present time are a light affliction and but for a moment in the expanse of eternity and not worthy to be compared with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which shall be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17).

Yes, life – the 10% of what happens to you and the 90% how you respond or react to the 10% of

what happens to you – often fails to provide us with joyous experiences but instead, grief of mind and sorrow of heart and often, too, producing what may be thought as the 5 D’s, each becoming progressively (or regressively) worse in experience: Disappointment; Discouragement; Depression; Despair; Despondency ... and the which, if not redressed, may end with the 6th D, Death.

Oh, yes, suicide ... often at the end of this D-path which is not uncommonly, marked beforehand with observable behaviors like alcohol and unLAWful substance abuse (anything that defiles the House of Yahweh, Whose House we are); promiscuous and/or aberrant sexual activity; vagrancy; domestic abuse of family members; acts of public trespass and criminal conduct.

### **Who, or What, is at the End of Your Rope?**

I remember reading a message at curbside belonging to a first day church: “When you reach the end of your rope, you’ll find G-d there.”

Today, we have neither a Levitical priesthood, nor linen ephod with its faculties of Urim and Thummim. But what we do have, is an important faculty of Yahweh’s continuing workmanship in each one of us – a progressive work, transforming each one of us from being a member-in-particular to becoming a member, every-one-of-another, with none saying,

“I have no need of thee” but “much more those members of the Body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the Body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour” so that “the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it ... that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of Eloha ... Who comforteth us in all our tribulation ... the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working of every part, mak[ing] increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love” (1 Cor. 12:21, 22, 23, 26; 2 Cor. 1:4; Eph. 4:16).

We’re talking here about “belonging” ... oh, and so much more, like covenant-relationship, and spiritual commonwealth fulfilling the Law of love – none working ill to his neighbor (Rom. 13:10); and every other bearing one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2); and, moreover, you bearing your own burden

(Gal. 6:5), too, which is as much as fulfilling the Law. We're talking here about not becoming weary in well doing, neither griping, murmuring, complaining about what you go through but instead, counting it all joy when trouble befalls you (James 1:2); looking beyond your trouble toward That Blessed Hope that is set before you (Heb. 12:2), anticipating and expecting Him to make that way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13).

What do the Scriptures say?

- "Fear not: for I have redeemed *thee*, I have called thee by thy name; thou *art* mine ... Fear not: I *am* with thee" (Isa. 43:1, 5);
- "Thus saith Yahweh ... 'be not dismayed' ... (Jer. 10:2); and numerous,
- "Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid ..." (Deut. 31:6, 7, 23; Josh. 1:6, 9, 18, 10:25; 1 Chron. 28:20).

For He that cannot lie, has said in Deuteronomy 31:6, "For Yahweh thy Eloha, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee ..."

Note well: The Scriptures have not said,

- "If anything can go wrong, it will;" neither,
- "If it wasn't for bad luck, I'd have none at all."

So, rather than becoming weary in doing well – you know, Griping, Murmuring, and Complaining (GMC) about what you go through, why not instead count it all joy when trouble befalls you (James 1:2)? Why not look beyond your trouble toward That Blessed Hope, anticipating His deliverance that is set before you? In fact, why not respond to the Master's invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ... and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28, 29)?

After all, Yahweh has called you to peace, and His thoughts toward you are of peace to bring you to an expected end in glory.

### **First, be INSTRUCTED; Then LEARN**

A lot of pulpit rhetoric has been given to "for I have LEARNED, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11). But you don't LEARN anything apart from first being INSTRUCTED.

Let's look at the full context of Philippians 4:12-11- and in that order, too – and properly place the cart before the horse: *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where and in all things I am INSTRUCTED both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need ... for I have LEARNED, in whatsoever state I am [therewith] to be content.*

LEARNING is the product of having become INSTRUCTED – experience is the best teacher, notwithstanding. INSTRUCTION is by far, the better teacher because instruction produces far less consequences of trouble than experience. In fact, it could be affirmed that the one thing we LEARN from experience is that we haven't LEARNED.

Want proof? What's the definition of insanity? Doing the same thing in the same way with perhaps, only slight modification and experiencing the same outcome with, perhaps, only slight modification ... and usually worse! But doing Life Yahweh's way, yields Yahweh's results. And when we allow Yahweh to guide us, He will provide for us.

Nevertheless, we suffer, and we will suffer ... but let your suffering be for a good cause and a better effect. In Colossian 1:24, Paul says of himself, he "rejoice[d] in his sufferings in [his] sufferings ... and fill[ed] up that which is behind of the afflictions of Messiah in [his] flesh ..."

Sometimes, our suffering is of our own making ... usually, attributable to disobedience, thus the reason for the Apostle's observation, "he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Pet. 4:1). And so, we suffer, and we will suffer. Only let your suffering be for a good cause, to produce a better outcome.

### **Conclusion**

And so, when you are in any trouble, pray Psalm 91, saying,

"I will say of Yahweh, 'Thou art my refuge and my fortress: Thy truth, my shield and buckler; my Eloha, in You will I trust. Surely, Thou shalt deliver me from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. Under Thy wings shall I trust'.

"I shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasted at noonday, because I have made Yahweh my refuge, even El Yon, my habitation.

"For Thou shalt give Thy angels charge over me, to keep me in all my ways. They shall bear me up in their hands, lest I dash my foot against a stone.

"Because thou hast set thy love upon me, therefore wilt Thou deliver me and set me on high, because Thou hast known my name. I shall call upon Thee, and Thou shalt answer me. Thou wilt be with me and deliver me in trouble and shew me Thy salvation. Amen."

~ Elder John W. Reece



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q** In the Torah, it is written, *One Law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you*, Exodus 12:49. My question is, how applicable is this Law today in a multi-cultural society in which freedom, respect, diversity, tolerance, and equity have displaced TRUTH as the foundation of law and justice, and, yes, even family relationships?

**A** Without question, there is certain tension in multi-cultural societies in which, as you have correctly observed, “freedom, respect, diversity, tolerance, and equity have displaced TRUTH as the foundation of law and justice, and, yes, family relationships.”

In some communities in the United States, for example, predominantly Muslim communities have placed members of their “cultural demographic” into positions of government - even into the United States House of Representatives - and insisted, moreover, upon the imposition, enforcement, and judgment of *sharia law from which there is no appellate remedy*, incidentally, upon all citizens of their communities, whether all citizens of their communities are Mohammedan or not.

### **Yahweh Approves of Multi-cultural Societies**

Of course, this flies in the face of the contemporary ethos of freedom, respect, diversity, tolerance, and equity, but an argument could certainly be made that the imposition, enforcement, and judgment of *sharia law from which there is no appellate remedy, satisfies One Law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you*, Exodus 12:49. Moreover, we might add that Yahweh is not opposed to multi-cultural societies. After all, in Nimrod’s time, at a tower whose top might reach to heaven (Gen. 11:4), He frustrated men’s purpose in countermanding the Very First Commandment He gave to Adam in Genesis 1:28:

*Be fruitful, and multiply, and REPLENISH THE EARTH and subdue it ...* by confounding their language so that they could not understand one



another’s speech and scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth (Gen. 11:7-8).

Before Covenant TORAH was ever engraved in a stone tablet, Yahweh spoke to Abraham, saying,

*This [is] My Covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the Covenant betwixt Me and you.* Genesis 17:10-11.

### **Variance between the Homeborn & the Stranger**

Early on, we discover Yahweh is all about Law and Order – His Law and Order! But in an age and at a time, when a believer - as *he that is homeborn* - dwells with, and is ‘unequally yoked’ (2 Cor. 6:14) with ‘the mixt multitude’ (Num. 11:4) - *the stranger that sojourneth among him* - it is become much more challenging for the believer to separate himself both socially and economically, from the other whose works are ‘abominable and disobedient’ (Tit. 1:16).

Nevertheless, freedom, respect, diversity, tolerance, and equity have little place in the Spiritual economies, because this ethos bespeaks the kingdoms of this world which will have neither Yahweh nor His Dear Son Yahshua as its Sovereigns (1 Sam. 8:7; Luke 19:14).

And so, we should not be so much concerned about foundations of freedom, respect, diversity, tolerance, and equity that have spun multi-cultural societies out of course (Psa. 82:5) and relegated TRUTH to the streets and made it so, that EQUITY cannot find admittance anywhere (Isa. 59:14). Rather, we should be content studying to be quiet, doing our own business, and providing things honest in the sight of Yahweh and men (1 Thess. 4:11, 12; 2 Cor. 8:21) and find our place in the Kingdom of Yahweh Who has committed all rule and all authority and all power to Yahshua, and Whose Kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).

**Q** I have a question about a statement in Ephesians 2:15, “Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances ...” Doesn’t this support the Christian persuasion that the law has been done away with?

**A** Let’s begin with an exegetical inquiry from *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, into some key words:

G. 2673: **abolished**, *kat-arg-eh’-o*, to be (render) entirely idle (useless), literally or figuratively: abolish, cease, cumber, destroy, do away, become (make) of njo (none, without) effect, loose, bring (come) to nought, put away, make void

G. 2189: **enmity**, *ekh’tthrah*, *hostility*; by implication, a reason for opposition: enmity, hatred

G. 3551: **law**, *nomos*, *law* (through the idea of prescriptive usage) generally (regulation), specifically (of Moses [including the volume]: also of the Gospel), or figuratively (a principle): law

G. 1785: *en-tol’-ay*, *injunction*, that is, an authoritative prescription: commandment, precept

G. 1378: *dog’-mah*, *a law* (civil, ceremonially, ecclesiastical): decree, ordinance

A favorite “go-to” Scripture those of the Christian persuasion defer to, in supporting their contention that the law has been done away with is Colossians 2:14: *Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His stake. (KJV, used throughout unless otherwise noted.)* However, we would retort, “Which, or what, law has been done away with?

But the Savior’s own word, **He had not come to destroy** [G.2647, *kat-al-oo’-o*, loosen down, disintegrate, by implication, demolish: dissolve] **the law** [G.3551, *nomos*, *law* (through the idea of prescriptive usage) generally (regulation), specifically (of Moses, including the volume: also of the Gospel), or figuratively (a principle): law], **but to fulfill** [G. 4137, *play-ro’-o*, satisfy, execute (an office), finish (a period or task), verify (or coincide with a prediction: accomplish, complete, end, fulfil, perfect, supply)] **it**, is further confirmed by the Apostle Paul’s rhetorical question in Romans 3:31, *Do we then make void the law through faith? and which he then answers, Yahweh forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

Properly understood, there are actually two “enmities” spoken of here. We properly define “enmity” severally, as “hostility,” “hatred,” “antagonism,” “animosity,” “rancor” and should

appreciate that this first “enmity” has to do with Messiah Yahshua, “to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:23, *NASB*).

The second “enmity” concerns sin, as that which separates man from Yahweh (Isa. 59:2) and particularly, the means by which sin was remitted: under the first covenant, “divers washings, and carnal ordinances ... the blood of goats and calves ... imposed on them (Jewry) until the time of reformation” (Heb. 9:10, 12, 10) – “the time of reformation,” a reference to Yahshua Who by His own blood, “once offered to bear the sins of many” (Heb. 9:28) abolished in His flesh the oft ritual of the Levitical order for propitiating sin.

On this subject of “enmity,” John Gill, in his commentary on Ephesians 2:15, writes, “the law of commandments contained in ordinances consisted of many precepts, and carnal ordinances; and is so called because it was an indication of Yahweh’s hatred of sin, by requiring sacrifice for it. And because it was an occasion of stirring up the enmity of the natural man, it being a burden and a weariness to the flesh – by reason of its many and troublesome rites – it was the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile. Now this, Messiah abolished, ‘in His flesh’, or by the sacrifice of His flesh ... which was one end of his coming into the world ... that there might be a reconciliation and a coalition between Jew and Gentile, as follows: ‘for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto Yahweh in one body by the stake, having slain the enmity thereby’ (Eph. 2:15b-16) which expresses the union between Jew and Gentile and points at the manner in which they became so strictly united; and that is by being made new men, or new creatures, by having a work of grace upon their souls, and so baptized into one body, and made to drink of one and the same Spirit; the foundation of which union is in Himself; for Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free, are all one in Messiah Yahshua (Gal. 3:28). He is the cornerstone in which they all meet, and the Head to which the whole body is joined.”

Yahweh declares of Himself, that He changes not (Mal. 3:6) and James declares that with Him, there is neither variableness, nor shadow of turning (James 1:17) ... “an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast” (Heb. 6:19).

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