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November-December 2024

RESTORATION TIMES



“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the
Salvation of Yahweh.”

Exodus 14:13

RESTORATION TIMES

VOL. 14 | No. 6 | November-December 2024

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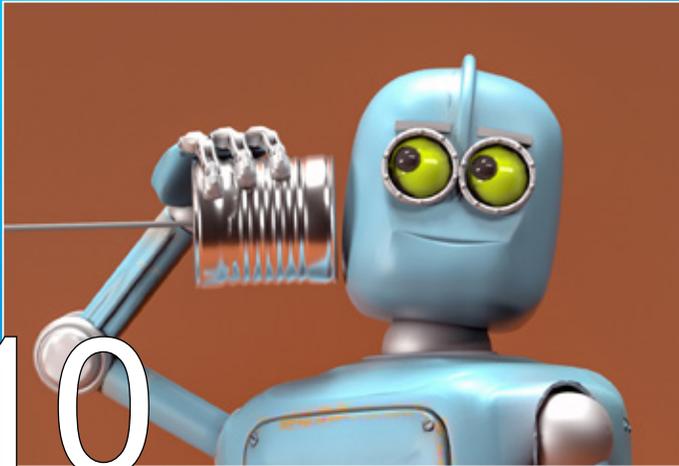


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Restoration Times expounds the close ties between the Old and New Testaments. We teach the continuity and harmony that extend from Yahweh's actions anciently down through His present activity in Yahshua the Messiah. This was also the conviction of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

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

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COVER:
Moses parting the Red Sea. The name Yahshua seems to be alluded to here in Exodus 14:13 in Hebrew. The Israelites were then baptized under Moses, 1 Corinthians 10:2.

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Christmyths

And the Folly of the Holly

by Alan Mansager



Father rises early, puts a large log on the fire, dresses warmly, grabs his axe and heads into the woods. He'll soon return with bundles of greenery to place around the house.

Humming cheerfully, mother prepares a ham, lights red candles for the table centerpiece, and fills wine glasses for the adults who will soon arrive. Everyone eagerly awaits the gift exchange amid mistletoe and figurines.

The living room decorated with mistletoe and holly will soon reverberate with laughter as the children, off from school, join in festival games while eating their fill of fruits and nuts. "Merry Mithras," they call out. "May Mithras bless us, everyone."

Welcome to the Roman Saturnalia and Feast of Mithras. It's December 25th – 50 years before the Messiah is born at Bethlehem. It could just as well be 2,000 years before that, as these ageless Mithraic rites are rooted in the customs of the ancient Babylonians and their worship of the sun deity.

The focus of this holiday is Mithras, a Roman god known as the Sun of Righteousness. This is his birthday celebration during the Saturnalia, a Feast to the Roman god Saturn.

But for the Name, It's Much the Same
If you were to place this celebration up against today's December 25th festivities you would notice few major differences. Except there would be tons more presents to exchange and homes would be more garishly decorated.

Other than that, the masses would be just as comfortable with the rites of Mithras as with St. Nick. Even those who want to "put Chr-st back into Christmas" will sense a commonality with the ancient sun god of the Romans.

Note the stark similarities as Mithraism promised immortality for its faithful. That pagan faith included such rites as fasting at certain times, baptism, marriage, the last rites, and liturgy with candles, incense, and holy water.

More striking than this are the similarities between Mithras and Messiah: Mithras "was the creator and orderer of the universe...he incarnated

on earth...his birth on 25 December was witnessed by shepherds. After many deeds he held a last supper with his disciples and returned to heaven... after the last battle, victorious over evil, he will lead the chosen ones through a river of fire to a blessed immortality" (*Mystery Religions in the Ancient World*, p. 99).

All of this begs the obvious question: who is being honored on December 25th? The Savior, or a heathen sun god?

Don't feel alone if you are mystified by it all. Many ancients were also confused. Pope Leo I (440-461) chastised Christians, who on Christmas celebrated the birth of the sun deity.

A Strange, Puzzling Mixture

From the start, the Christmas observance was mired in a pagan and pseudo-biblical hybrid that still scourges it today.

Why mix evergreen trees, St. Nick, Wassail bowls, wreaths, and mistletoe with the nativity scene and the crooning of Bing Crosby? Is this how Yahshua should be honored?

Search the Scriptures and you will

not find one instance where Yahshua the Savior commanded or even requested such hoopla. For that matter, He never asked for His birthday celebration to begin with.

It is consistent, then, that no birthday observance for the Savior was held until 300 years after His birth. Being that no one knew when He was born, the Christmas observance was timed to coincide with the midwinter pagan festival honoring the imperial gods Mithras and Saturn.

By a process called syncretism, the winter solstice celebration became linked with the birth of the Savior. Here is how one of many references describes it:

“In the 5th century the Western church ordered the feast [of the Savior’s birth] to be celebrated on the day of the Mithraic rites of the birth of the sun and at the close of the Saturnalia, as no certain knowledge of the day of [Messiah’s] birth existed. Among the German and Celtic tribes the winter solstice was considered an important point of the year and to commemorate the return of the sun they held their chief festival of yule, which, like other pagan celebrations, became adapted to Christmas” (*Encyclopedia Americana*, vol. 6, p. 622).

This source candidly admits that Christmas customs have no basis in the Bible. Notice:

“Most of the customs now associated with Christmas were not originally Christmas customs but rather were pre-Christian and non-Christian customs taken up by the Christian church. Saturnalia, a Roman feast celebrated in mid-December, provided the model for many of the merrymaking customs of Christmas. From this celebration, for example, were derived the elaborate feasting, the giving of gifts, and the burning of candles. Lights also played an important part in most winter solstice festivals” (*ibid*).

Another learned source weighs in: “The recognition of Sunday (the day of Phoebus and Mithras as well as the Lord’s Day) by the emperor Constantine as a

legal holiday, along with the influence of Manicheism, which identified the Son of God with the physical sun, may have led Christians of the fourth century to feel the appropriateness of making the birthday of the Son of God coincide with that of the physical sun.

“The pagan festival with its riot and merry-making was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue its celebration with little change in spirit or in manner. Christian preachers of the West and the Nearer East protested against the unseemly frivolity with which Christ’s birthday was celebrated, while Christians of Mesopotamia accused their Western brethren of idolatry and sun-worship for adopting as Christian this pagan festival.

“Yet the festival rapidly gained acceptance and became at last so firmly established that even the Protestant revolution of the sixteenth century was not able to dislodge it and Evangelical Christians even of the more radical types, who reject or ignore nearly all of the ecclesiastical festivals, have never been able wholly to ignore it” (*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, p. 47).

‘But He Understands ...Doesn’t He?’

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

Simply put, it absolutely does matter. Mixing in practices of false worship was what got ancient Israel into so much trouble with the Heavenly Father. Yahweh is extremely particular about how we worship and glorify Him. He will accept no other worship than what He prescribes. Anything less, anything added, and anything other than what is commanded in His Word – and we will reap condemnation.

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Yahweh says that worship outside of His teachings is expressly prohibited. He did not authorize any aspect of the Christmas celebration. Further, He repeatedly warned about heathen ways:

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

The Ubiquitous Evergreen

The universal symbol of the Xmas celebration is the decorated Christmas tree. The brightly lit tree is a solar religion survival, and its greenery used to represent life in fertility worship.

Jeremiah 10 condemns tree worship: “Thus saith Yahweh, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good,” vv. 2-5.

Yahweh is not pleased that most have not chosen to separate themselves from the ways and worship of the pagan world. Paul urged the Corinthians, “Wherefore ‘come out from among them and be separate,’ says Yahweh, ‘and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be

My sons and daughters,' says Yahweh Almighty," 2Corinthians 6:17-18.

Let's Be Honest

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

Yahweh says if you do that, it won't be Me but some other that you'll be worshipping. He says I'm different. I demand specific worship from those who are mine. When you include pagan survivals in your worship your worship is vain and even subject to punishment.

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

Be honest with yourself and with Yahweh. Pretending you are keeping the (unauthorized) birthday of the Messiah by gathering around a heathenistic tree, coveting presents, eating (unclean) ham, standing under mistletoe perhaps to steal an immoral kiss, and using Santa Claus as a surrogate savior who keeps track of who's naughty and nice, and rewards accordingly – is all against Scripture. It is an offense to our Heavenly Father and His Son.

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

His laws are not grievous (John 5:3), but reveal His exclusive and saving way of life. Come to know Him. Shun the empty ways and worship of the world that ultimately lead to destruction. Find Him through active and complete obedience to His Word. Nothing more, nothing less. 

When Boston Crossed Off Xmas

In America Christmas is December's trademark. But that wasn't always the case. Christmas was once quite controversial. It was even banned in Boston.

"It wasn't some Scrooge who tried to stamp out the holiday. Two respected intellectual clergymen – Increase Mather, president of Harvard, and his son, Cotton, who enrolled in Harvard at age 12 – preached against observing Christmas.

"Increase thought [Messiah] probably had been born in September, while Cotton said the occasion, in any event, hardly justifies 'mad mirth.'" Thus begins a news item from the *Associated Press*.

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

"The Pilgrims who arrived in New England did not celebrate Christmas. They saw the holiday as a decadent man-made invention. They were not alone. Anabaptists, Quakers and Puritans also believed celebrating Christmas was sinful.

"Stephen Cooper, department chair of religious studies at Franklin and Marshall College, said there was a Puritan dislike of Christmas 'which was grounded in their Calvinist/Reformed tradition's anti-Catholicism and more to the point, their opposition to the Anglican Church, which they felt was "popish" in maintaining Christmas, as (it) was celebrated, as part of the Catholic liturgical year.'" <https://lancasteronline.com/>

In the middle 1600s the General Court of Massachusetts decreed that anyone found feasting on Christmas

"shall pay for every such offense five shillings as a fine to the county."

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

According to *Celebrations—the Complete Book of American Holidays* by Robert Myers, anti-Christmas feeling was also strong in England. The Roundhead Parliament of 1643 outlawed the feasts of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, along with the saints' days. Clergymen were imprisoned for preaching on Christmas day. Myers notes that the Puritans were adamant in their cause. For 12 years the feast day was an ordinary day of business, noted, if at all, with a fast.

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

"On Dec. 25, 1789, the U.S Congress met in session. ...for most Americans it was just a Friday in December." <https://lancasteronline.com/>

After the American revolution, English customs fell out of favor, including Christmas. Christmas wasn't declared a federal holiday until June 26, 1870. history.com/christmas

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

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Rites and Wrongs

With so many proofs against it, the man-made Christmas observance must be honestly confronted.

- December 25 is nowhere mentioned in Scripture as the birthday of the Messiah. “The observance of Christmas is not of divine appointment, nor is it of N.T. origin. The day of [Yahshua’s] birth cannot be ascertained from the New Testament, or, indeed, from any other source. The fathers of the first three centuries do not speak of any special observance of the nativity.

“It was not until the sixth century that the whole Christian world concurred in celebrating the nativity on the same day.” (*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, p. 276).

- Nowhere in the Bible can we find a single command to observe the Savior’s birthday. Rather, the observance of His death, at the Passover, is enjoined on every True Worshiper, 1Corinthians 11:26.

- The number of wise men is never given as three, only that they gave three kinds of gifts. There were at least two, denoted by the plural use of wise “men,” but there could have been a dozen or more.

- The wise men came to a “house,” not a manger, to see the “young child,” not a newborn (see Matt. 2:11). That explains why Herod ordered all children around Bethlehem up to two years of age killed, hoping to catch the young Messiah child in his murderous net, Matthew 2:16.

- The gifts the wise men gave were not birthday presents, but reflected the Eastern practice of approaching a notable person like a king with a gift. Furthermore, they gave these gifts to

Him, not to one another.

- The shepherds and their flocks were still in the fields, which would have been unheard of at the end of December in Judea, when it was cold and wet with winter rains and sometimes snow. The flocks were removed from the fields in early autumn. All evidence points to a fall timing and early autumn birth of the Savior.

- A mass is a Romish observance of the “Holy Communion,” where the supposed body and blood of the Savior are imbibed in a process they call transubstantiation. Why His birthday is called “Christ-mass” is not from anything in Scripture. Usually Christians celebrated the birthday of a saint or martyr through his “heavenly nativity.” Here they honored the Savior’s earthly birth in direct competition with the birth of the pagan Mithras, the Invincible Sun.

Infamous Firsts

The first official record of tree decorating in America was at Harvard College in 1832 by a German professor. The trees were trimmed and lit with candles that typified the waning sun in ancient practice.

Lutheran Pastor Henry J. Schwan is said to be the first to trim a tree in his Cleveland, Ohio, church during the Xmas season in 1851. He was accused of decorating his place of worship with a pagan symbol.

In 1856 President Franklin Pierce was the first to keep Christmas in the White House. His decorated tree has been a custom since.

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

If it’s biblical to observe, why wasn’t His birthday celebrated from the start, right after His birth?

Feasts in a Worldwide Comeback

As society launches into its annual frenzy over what it thinks are acceptable celebrations, the honest Bible student has some serious questions.

What happened to all the commanded observances found in Scripture? he wonders. Why have they been ignored for the past 2,000 years and replaced with unauthorized celebrations rooted in mystery worship? Where did Passover go? What about the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost? And where is the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles?

Don’t worry. They are still in force and honored at Yahweh’s Restoration Ministry, just as the Bible expects. Learn about these true holidays, the ones the Word says will be observed by everyone in the coming Kingdom. Request the booklet, ***The Amazing Biblical Feasts***. You can read it online, including the booklet ***December 25th – Birthday of the Sun*** for more startling truths about Christmas.

<https://yrm.org/december-25-birthday-sun/>

What Is Yahweh Like?

Part 2

by Lucas Cecil

Yahweh is faithful. He is infinitely, unchangingly true. “Know therefore that Yahweh your Elohim is Elohim; he is the faithful Elohim, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands,” Deuteronomy 7:9.

I mentioned Yahweh’s unchanging nature before, but I want to touch on an aspect of that changelessness.

All these attributes we have covered so far are not separate things that each of us clings to in our own way. They are all interconnected parts of a perfect whole.

So when we read in 2Timothy 2:13, “If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself,” we see these attributes working together.

His unchanging nature means He can never be unfaithful. The attributes of Yahweh feed into one another. And His faithfulness plays a massive role in OUR lives. It means He never forgets; a promise never slips through the cracks.

He remembers that obscure prophecy He gave to one of the prophets thousands of years ago. He has seen or will see it through. Romans 8:28 declares: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love Elohim, to them who are the called according to

his purpose.”

I emphasize that we do not always understand Yahweh’s plan; we do not always see things so clearly. We doubt and we try to act on our own based on OUR desires and OUR understanding.

Yahweh exists outside of time so His faithfulness might look like abandonment when His next move might not happen in our lifetime. And that DOES happen.

In 1Samuel 3:1 we read that the word of Yahweh was rare and there were not many visions, but as we know, this was the start of incredible things going on in the land and Yahweh has always been faithful.

We must remember, we are dealing with Yahweh here. He is faithful to do what He promised. Without question. The ONLY question is, are we willing to wait? We have great comfort in faithfully trusting in who Yahweh says He is.

“For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known,” 1Corinthians 13:12. Also, in Philippians 1:6 we read, “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the

day of Messiah Yahshua.”

“Taste and see that Yahweh is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him,” Psalm 34:8 reads.

Yahweh’s Constant Goodness

Just like His other attributes, Yahweh’s goodness exists within His immutability and infinite nature so that He is always good and unchanging. His mercy flows from His goodness. Yahweh HAS to be perfectly good because if He were not, even the smallest crack in His perfect nature would spell disaster for you and me.

As with Yahweh’s other perfect attributes, Believers find it easier to affirm the goodness of Yahweh when things are going well. When life takes a nosedive, though, that’s when we begin to question Yahweh’s goodness to and for us. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 34:8, “Taste and see that Yahweh is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.”

He continues to express the importance of not just Yahweh’s goodness, but experiencing that goodness from a place of trouble. Verse 17 states it is the righteous who is heard out of his troubles and Yahweh delivers him out of them all.

He is sovereign over everything and has the power to do whatever He likes, but good people still suffer. The Psalmist wraps it all up in verses 21-22: “Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned. Yahweh will rescue his servants; no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.”

Yahweh Is Just

“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: an El of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he...” (Deut. 32:4)

What does it mean to be “just”? Does it simply mean Yahweh is fair? No, it is more than that. It means His judgment is always right. It means that justice is always served.

In light of some of Yahweh’s other attributes, some have a tendency to erroneously assume Yahweh is simply too kind to punish the wicked. But 2Peter 3:9 tells us, “Yahweh is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

When we make this assumption, we risk dulling the reality of Yahweh’s perfect justice. Yahweh WILL have justice for sin, either from Messiah’s atoning death, or from wrath for those who do not accept it. The righteous get justice in that Messiah provides a path to redemption. The wicked get justice for their sin. Injustice is nowhere to be found with Him.

Yahweh Is Merciful

Romans 9:15 tells us, “For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’”

Again, Yahweh’s attributes are inseparable; His justness is directly tied to His mercy and His mercy to His faithfulness, etc.

Yahweh is exhaustibly, actively compassionate. His mercy is also

undeserved by us.

C. H. Spurgeon wrote in an article, entitled, “*The Mercy of God*,” It is undeserved mercy, as indeed all true mercy must be, for deserved mercy is only a misnomer for justice. There was no right on the sinner’s part, to the saving mercy of the Most High [El].

“Had the rebel been doomed at once to eternal fire – he would have justly merited the doom; and if delivered from wrath, sovereign love alone has found a cause, for there was none in the sinner himself.”



*Nothing we say and
nothing written can
prepare us for His
complete nature when
we see Him face-to-face*

All we are worthy of is condemnation. It is by Yahweh’s mercy that we are afforded anything resembling salvation. The wages of sin is death and we have all fallen short of the glory of Yahweh.

But because of Yahweh’s mercy we have an opportunity to spend eternity with Him through the blood of His Son Yahshua.

Yahweh Is Gracious

“Yahweh is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love” (Ps. 145:8). If mercy means not getting what we deserve (death), then grace is getting what we don’t deserve (eternal life).

Mercy is Yahweh’s goodness, making a case against our guilt and shame; grace is Yahweh’s goodness directed at our debts. It is by Yahweh’s grace that He gives merit where none was before, and declares freedom from

debts that we ourselves racked up and could never pay.

There is both general, provisional grace and saving grace. Matthew 5:45 says, “...He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” Take two farmers, one unrighteous and one righteous, the unrighteous farmer is given the same rain as the righteous one. Both are blessed by Yahweh’s grace in the rain. However, only the righteous farmer benefits from Yahshua’s saving grace.

Yahweh Is Loving

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from Elohim. Everyone who loves has been born of Elohim and knows Elohim. Whoever does not love does not know Elohim, because Elohim is love” (1John 4:7-8).

We as mere humans can only begin to comprehend Yahweh’s love when we look at it through the lens of His other attributes.

A.W. Tozer wrote in his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, “It is a strange and beautiful eccentricity of the free [Elohim], that He has allowed His heart to be emotionally identified with men. Self-sufficient as He is, He wants our love and will not be satisfied until He gets it. Free as He is, He has let His heart be bound to us forever. [Elohim]’s love is active, drawing us to himself.

“His love is personal. He doesn’t love humanity in some vague sense, he loves humans. He loves you and me. And his love for us knows no beginning and no end.” So when we look back on these attributes of Yahweh, His love should be at the sum portion when everything else is added.

Yahweh Is Holy

Yahweh is infinitely, unchangingly perfect. “Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh Almighty.” (Rev. 4:8) The word holy is likely the word most associated with Yahweh. He is holy beyond anything else. He is perfect in that holiness. It

is holy, holy, holy, that is being sung endlessly in Revelation 4:8.

Minister John MacArthur wrote: “Of all the attributes of [Elohim], holiness is the one that most uniquely describes Him and in reality is a summation of all His other attributes. The word holiness refers to His separateness, His otherness, the fact that He is unlike any

Whatever is contrary to Yahweh’s holiness is necessarily placed under Yahweh’s displeasure. Think about it. Look at what Yahweh has had to do just to preserve the holiness of His creation. When the scales tip from holy to unholy, Yahweh’s anger tends to flare up and His wrath goes forth to preserve holiness.

Thankfully, we have the blood of

I have always said Messiah did not come to lower Yahweh to our standards, but to bring us up to His perfect, holy standards.

Yahweh Is Glorious

“His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand, where his power was hidden, Habakkuk 3:4. We cannot comprehend Yahweh’s beauty. Even when someone was exposed to even a fraction of it, it was immediately evident.

Exodus 34:33-35 relates, “When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered Yahweh’s presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with Yahweh.”

We tend to believe that what Moses saw was the pre-existent Messiah. As Scripture states in John 6:46, “No one has seen the Father except the one who is from Elohim; only he has seen the Father.” So even when Moses took on the glory that he did, it was not the full amount. It was only a fraction of Yahweh’s beauty and to be able to behold that will be something we simply cannot put into words.

We have now addressed all these attributes of Yahweh, and there are obviously more we could speak of; we could speak of our Creator endlessly. In fact, everything we do is an attempt to spend more time with Him.

This look at Yahweh’s attributes is just a feeble attempt to fathom Yahweh for who He is. Ultimately, nothing we say and nothing written can prepare us for His complete nature when we see Him face-to-face. We have only glimpses and anecdotes about His glory. I pray Yahweh reveals Himself to more truth seekers as the time of Yahshua’s return gets closer, to help prepare His people to see Him face-to-face in His kingdom. 



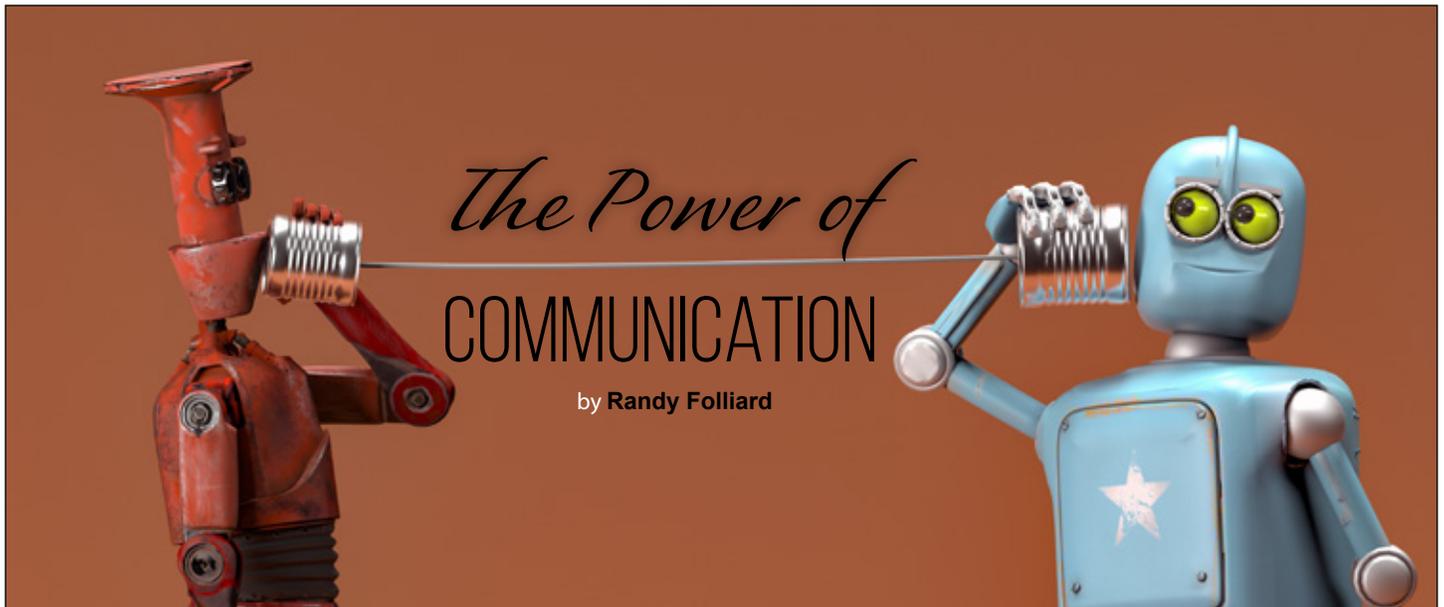
other being. It indicates His complete and infinite perfection. Holiness is the attribute of [Elohim] that binds all the others together.” To be truly holy is to be perfect. Messiah said as much in Matthew 5:48: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” This is why we are in such desperate need of the Messiah. That simple command would be the end of the road if it were not for His atoning sacrifice.

Without Yahshua, all of us would fall miserably short of Yahweh’s holy standard. You can look at holiness as an indicator of the universe’s moral health.

Yahshua to forgive our sins if we repent of them. Now, when our wickedness, which is deserving of damnation, is looked upon by Yahweh, He sees the perfect blood of Messiah having washed it away and we stand clean before Him.

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The Power of COMMUNICATION

by Randy Folliard

Whether we realize it or not, there is power in how we communicate. In fact, nothing is more life-altering than our communication. More often than not, how we communicate is the reason for our successes or failures. This is true for nearly every aspect of our lives, including our careers and relationships.

Employees who can effectively communicate are normally more successful than those who can't. The same is also true in our relationships – whether that be a friend or a spouse. Communication in a marital relationship can make the difference between a bad marriage and a great marriage.

Forms of Communication

Most understand communication as the words we speak. And while this certainly qualifies, it's not the only form of communication. Those who study this subject will often distinguish it between verbal and non-verbal.

Those who study interactions say verbal is only a very small portion of communication. This is shown by Dr. Albert Mehrabian, professor of psychology at the University of California. According to Professor Mehrabian, only 7% of what we communicate is through spoken words,

38% is through voice and tone, and 55% is through body language.

How we communicate impacts everything around us, including our relationships. How many times have we been offended by a discussion not because of what was said, but how it was said? You can hear that something's wrong in the tone of the voice. When we communicate, whether within or outside the assembly, we should be aware of how we are communicating, including our voice, tone, and body language.

The Power of the Tongue

It's shocking how much the Bible says about this topic, which shows that Yahweh cares about how we are communicating.

James 3:2-10 offers this warning: "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a

little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of Gehenna. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we Elohim, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of Elohim. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

James begins by talking about the power of the tongue and that if any man doesn't offend in words, the same is a perfect man. Consider the significance of this statement. If we were able to tame our tongue by always saying the right thing, the Bible says that we would be a perfect person. This reinforces why it's important that we are cognizant of the words we use.

He then compares the tongue to the helm of a great ship. The word "helm" here is from the Greek *pedalion* and refers to the blade of an oar or to a rudder. The concept is that even though the rudder is very small compared to a ship, it can move the ship in any

direction, even against strong wind.

Likewise, even though our tongue is very small compared to our body, our words have the power to speak blessings or curses. That's why James says that the tongue can defile the whole body. For this reason, it's crucial that we understand the power of words.

Honest Communication

One of the attributes of good communication is honesty. We find an example of this in Ephesians 4:25. "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."

In this passage, Paul declares that we should not lie, but always speak the truth. Honesty is sorely lacking in our culture today. It seems most people are okay with small lies, but as believers, we should not succumb to this way of thinking.

Honesty is an attribute that Yahweh values greatly. We also know that He condemns liars. In Revelation 21:8 we read, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

This passage says our communication is the difference between everlasting life and Gehenna fire. Enough cannot be said about how crucial it is that we're honest and truthful in our communication, in every

facet of our lives.

Corrupt Communication

Ephesians 4:29 speaks about avoiding corrupt communication. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

What does Paul mean when he says, "corrupt"? This word is from the Greek *sapros* and means, "worthless." As believers we should always avoid inappropriate language, including that which may cause strife or contention.

How many times have we been guilty of *sapros* in our relationships? How many times have we said something to simply tear down or make someone feel inferior? It's sad, but over the years I've seen many examples of this within relationships, including in the Faith.

Instead of speaking *sapros*, Paul says to speak that which is edifying. This word comes from the Greek *oikodome* and refers to a building. Our words can build something positive or they can tear down and make the situation worse. As believers, we're to focus on words that are positive and optimistic.

Be Truthful, Even When It Hurts

From Proverbs 27:5, we must always speak the truth, even when it may hurt. "Open rebuke is better than secret love."

Here Solomon is saying that it's

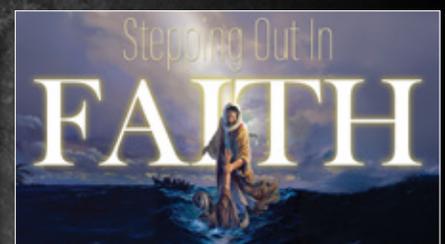
better to be open and honest and to face conflict rather than to hide it through words of love. The *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* explains it this way, It "is better than the love which is hidden in the heart, and does not perform the outward offices of love, in aiding, amending, 'rebuking' a friend in error, through fear of offending him."

Sometimes the worst thing we can do within our relationships is to ignore the truth. If we see someone we care about committing a serious sin, we have a moral obligation to show that person their sin.

Ignoring the problem is often not the best solution. There are some who refuse to confront others simply because they're afraid of conflict. In fact, some people fear conflict more than death. Is it better for us to allow someone we care about to continue in a serious sin, or risk offending them if it means restoring their relationship with Yahweh? The answer is, take the risk of offending them if it stops them from offending Yahweh.

There's always more than one way to share your concern. When approaching a situation like this, I try to do so in love, concern, and diplomacy. I've found that even with most bad situations, you can find a positive outcome if approached in the right way.

Over the years I've learned that addressing issues in love and concern is more effective than dealing harshly. As believers we should not be afraid of



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offending if we can help someone overcome an issue, especially if it's done in love and compassion.

Communication Through Listening

Listening is key to communication. Solomon in Proverbs 18:13 says: "He who answers a matter before he hears it – this is folly and disgrace to him." (*Berean Standard Bible*)

Here Solomon says it's foolish to answer before hearing someone out. Understand that this lesson applies to all relationships, but especially in marriage.

When it comes to listening, there are two types. One is passive, which means that we hear what the person is saying, but our mind is not engaged. The other is active, meaning that we hear and focus on what is being said. Some attributes of active listening are:

- Being present in the discussion
- Looking at the person who is speaking
- Remaining silent
- Visualizing what is being said

We've all heard friends or spouses ask, "Are you listening to me...?" When counseling someone I can usually tell whether the person is really listening.

I hope that we all strive to be active or good listeners. As we see in the Word, this is an important concept and, in many ways, can change our lives for

the better.

James 1:19 says, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

As we saw in Proverbs, James speaks about the need to listen. This is contrary to what we see most often. Most individuals talk more than they listen, but believers should be listening more than speaking. At minimum, we should be careful not to be the one



always dominating a discussion. We should give others the opportunity to speak and share their thoughts. This is difficult for some. Some are simply wired to talk excessively, and as believers need to overcome that impulse.

Another reason it's important that we listen to others is that we learn through others. If we're always the one talking, we're not learning. From

listening comes learning, a great benefit.

As a side note, James also says that we're to be slow to wrath. While this is not an article on anger management, it's important to manage our emotions. Proverbs drives this point home:

- Proverbs 14:29: "Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly."
- Proverbs 29:11: "Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end."
- Proverbs 15:18: "A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel."

Avoiding Gossip

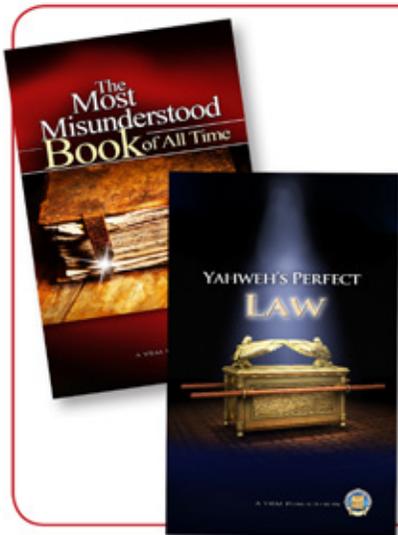
A specific communication sin that we're to avoid is gossip. Proverbs 16:28 warns us: "A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends." (*NIV*)

Gossip is wrong on multiple levels. First, it is sharing information that is not ours to share. Second, we are betraying trust. Third, the consequence often leads to the ruin of that relationship. And fourth, and most important, Yahweh disdains gossip.

It's for these reasons we must never gossip. The sad reality is that gossip occurs wherever there are people, including a congregation. But this admission is not to excuse or diminish the consequence of gossiping. The Bible considers this a serious sin and if we're guilty of it, we need to stop and repent.

Here's a common example of how gossip often begins in an Assembly. Normally, it starts with someone who becomes disgruntled with a member or even the administration and instead of going to the person to express their concern, they gossip with other members of the congregation, which creates even more discord and conflict. I believe this is why Yahweh loathes gossip as He does.

From Proverbs 6:16-19 we find



Lawkeeping in the New Testament

For many in churchianity, advocating obedience to the Word today is bondage to a bygone era and an attempt to earn salvation. Nothing could be further from the truth. The law represents the character and values of Yahweh and Yahshua, which believers are to reflect in their lives. Forget misguided church teachings. Get the facts. Request or go online to read the dynamic duo of booklets, **Yahweh's Perfect Law** and **The Most Misunderstood Book of All Time**.

Yahweh views this as an abomination. “These six things doth Yahweh hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaks lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”



When it comes to conflict, do not involve others, unless you must, but only after you've tried to resolve the conflict between you and the person alone.

The final abomination listed is the individual who sows discord among brethren. This is another way of saying he or she is a gossip.

In Hebrew, an abomination refers to something that is morally disgusting or abhorrent. So as believers, before we engage in gossip, we must remember how Yahweh views it. Remember, He sees gossip as something morally disgusting or repulsive.

So, what are some of the best ways to avoid this sin? The easiest way is simply choosing not to talk negatively about someone behind their back or to share information that is not yours to share.

If you're the recipient of gossip, I encourage you to stop the person and simply say that it's none of their business or does not pertain to them.

Resolving Conflict

Let's now take some time to delve into resolving conflict. Yahshua provides a

three-part process for this in Matthew 18:15-17. “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the assembly: but if he neglect to hear the assembly, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

This process can be used in every aspect of our lives, whether it's between friends, a spouse, or even at work.

First, if someone has wronged us we're to go to them and them alone to resolve the conflict. If the person responds in a positive way and makes the situation right, then there's no reason to escalate the conflict further. However, if the person does not listen, Yahshua says to bring one or two persons with you to serve as witness between the two parties. If the offender still does not listen, Yahshua says to bring him to the Assembly, i.e., the governing ministers of the assembly.

I want to step back and stress three points here. Number one, when it comes to conflict, do not involve others, unless you must, but only do so after you've tried to resolve the conflict between you and the person alone. Number two, do not skip steps one and two and go directly to the ministry. Over the years, I've found that normally steps one and two will resolve the issue – the problem is that most simply don't do it. And number three, at no point is gossip okay or permissible.

For a moment, let's talk about different communication outlets for resolving conflict. Possibly, the worst communication tools for which to resolve conflict are text and social media. Now why is this?

First, they are generally short messages without much context; and second, the receiver only sees words

and not the emotion or tone of the message. Half of communication is in the tone of voice, facial expression, and body language. For this reason it's common to misinterpret or to read into a message through text or social media. We should avoid these when trying to resolve conflict.

Another outlet for communication is email, which is still a poor way to resolve conflict. You can provide more context with this method than you can with text or social media, but there's no direct feeling or tone behind it.

A better way would be to use video conferencing, but only if you were unable to meet in person. As a project management oversight director with the state of Missouri, a big part of my job is engaging in meetings through both video conferencing and in person. While both can be effective, you generally lose part of the message and engagement through video conferencing versus in person.

It's for this reason that I believe in-person is always the best method to resolve conflict. In many ways, it seems we've lost the ability to effectively communicate face-to-face, a problem promulgated by technology and social media.

Be Positive and Encouraging

Communication is power and it's important we use that power in the right way. We can use our tongues to speak words of blessings and optimism or curses and negativity. As we read in Ephesians, Paul encourages us to avoid words that are offensive and speak words that are edifying or that build up.

I absolutely believe that much of our lives are determined by the words we use and how we communicate. This includes personally and professionally.

Therefore, let us set an example that Yahshua the Messiah, our Savior, would be proud of by being careful with our communication. Let us speak words that bring life and not death and that honor Yahweh, our Father in heaven!

QYou teach that the Holy Spirit is Yahweh's power and not a person. If so, how can you grieve, vex, and provoke a force? Read Ephesians 4:30; Isaiah 63:10; Psalm 106:33.

AHow can you pour out a person? How can a person be flames like fire that stand on the heads of Apostles? How can a person come out of someone's breath? How can you make a down payment of a person, or give a person by measure? How do you impart a person by laying on hands? Clearly these are examples of the true nature of the Holy Spirit, which is revealed by the term *Ruach haKodesh* in the Hebrew and *Pneuma Hagion* in the Greek. Both terms mean hallowed wind or breath.

The Holy Spirit is the active force by which Yahweh and Yahshua accomplish work. Hebrew is a flowery language filled with metaphors, symbols, and colorful, poetic imagery. These were Hebrews writing their native Hebrew language in the New Testament, which was later translated into Greek. Most translations say "Holy Spirit of [Elohim]," a merging of the power of Yahweh and the Holy Spirit as one. Yahweh's spirit can be grieved because it is Yahweh Himself who is grieved, vexed, and provoked in His spirit and is not a separate third "person" as the Hebrew and Greek reveal.

QIf human beings lack an immortal soul, please explain the following scriptures that talk about being absent from the body is to be present with the Master: Philippians 1:23-24; 2Corinthians 5:6-8.

APaul in Philippians 1:23-24 says, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Messiah; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Note that Paul states that he had a "desire" to depart, not that he COULD depart and be with the Messiah. All believers in the Messiah share a desire to be with Yahweh, but it doesn't mean we are immortal.

Also 2Corinthians 5:6-8 states, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from Yahweh (for we walk by faith, not by sight). We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with Yahweh." He doesn't say that being absent in the body IS to be present with Yahweh. Again he is simply stating his preference for being with Messiah. This does not imply, however, that he would automatically be with Messiah after his death. The same phrase is used in 1Corinthians 5:3, where Paul says he was "absent in body" but he is yet there in spirit with the Corinthians. In other words, he is not bodily present, but he still has made a judgment. Yahshua said no one has ascended to heaven but only Yahshua, John 3:13. The Bible teaches that upon death a person's spirit or breath of life

returns to Yahweh (Ecclesiastes. 12:7) and the person in an unconscious state (Ps. 146:4; Ecc. 9:10) sleeps in the grave waiting for the resurrection (Dan. 12:2, Matt. 27:52).



QIf 'Jesus' is not the acceptable name for our Savior, then why when I've prayed in that name have I had my prayers answered?

AWe use the true Name of the Messiah as revealed in the biblical manuscripts. He was never called "Jesus" in His lifetime because he was a Hebrew, not a Roman or a Greek. "Jesus" is Latinized Greek. The letter "J" did not exist before the time of Christopher Columbus (consult any unabridged dictionary to see that "J" is the newest letter in our alphabet and did not exist in Hebrew or Greek).

Most all Hebrew names have inherent meaning. "Yahshua" means "Yah[weh] is salvation." He said He came in His Father's Name, John 5:43 (i.e. Yah-weh/Yah-shua). It makes perfect sense! So why was your prayer answered? Yahshua said that even an evil person won't give his son a stone when he cries out for bread (Matt. 7:9). Each one who initially seeks the Truth of Yahweh does so with a certain lack of understanding. If Yahweh let our ignorance get in the way of our heart's desire to seek Him, then we would soon become discouraged and give up our quest.

When we first learned the truth, we didn't do everything right, and even kept worshiping on Sunday until the error of it was revealed. Even though we were worshiping in error, He never gave up on us and kept answering our prayers for more knowledge. When more truth was revealed to us, however, then we became accountable to make the proper changes in our lives and move toward True Worship. "And the times of this ignorance Yahweh winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent," Acts 17:30.

Our walk in Truth must start somewhere, and if calling on Him through common titles is all we know at the time, then Yahweh will show leniency and toleration. But as He gives us more knowledge and Truth of His true Name, He expects us to walk in all the light we are given. Paul wrote, "For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Master: walk as children of light," Ephesians 5:8. Yahshua said, "Not every one that says unto me, 'Rabbi, Rabbi' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven," Matthew 7:21.

QDid Eve and Satan produce the offspring of Cain or was Adam his actual father? I am thinking Satan could have been Cain's father.

AThe Word reveals that Cain was the offspring of Adam and Eve. At the birth of Cain, Eve said, "I have gotten a man from Yahweh," Genesis 4:1. She felt blessed by

Yahweh to bear this firstborn son. She would not have said he was from Yahweh (meaning a blessing) if Satan were the father. We caution against Jewish mysticism or symbolism. Many such beliefs were influenced by mystic sources like the Kabbalah. The best approach to the Bible is to always consider the literal meaning and only then the symbolic and dual interpretation.

The other problem regarding Satan's fathering Cain is that the Bible nowhere shows that Satan can procreate. Yahshua verified that angels, spirit beings, are not given in marriage (Matt. 22:30), indicating that they lack the ability to procreate, Genesis 1:22 (for additional information, see our online article, "Sons of Elohim," http://yrm.org/sonsof_elohe.htm). Imagine the consequences if Satan could procreate. There would be no need for him to deceive mankind into following him as he could engender his own massive civilization of rebellious ones!

Q Did not Yahshua declare that it was not what goes into a man that defiles him, like unclean meat, but what comes out of his mouth? When the disciples asked about what He meant, He explained that what a man eats goes into the mouth, through the digestive tract, and then out of the body.

A Your question is about Yahshua's statement in Mark 7:18-23, "And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

This passage is not referring to unclean food, but to rabbinical, ritual washings. Mark 7:2 states, "And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault." Matthew offers a parallel account, which provides a summation that's not found in Mark: "Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man," Matthew 15:17-20.

Nothing is stated here about unclean meats. Neither is there any passage setting aside the clean food laws commanded in the Old Testament. We find in the New Testament lessons about rabbinical distinctions between Jew and gentile (Acts 10:9-17, 28, 34-35), and foods sacrificed to idols (1Corinthians 10:23-28). Yahweh's laws in the Old Testament were supported by Yahshua. See next question.

Q Hasn't the Old Covenant been completed and put away (Heb 8)? We have a New Covenant based upon better promises as [Yahshua] fulfilled all the demands of the Old and gave us a New, which is of faith in Him, not law.

A That is not what Paul said: "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not: yea, we establish the law," Romans 3:31. What does faith in Him mean, exactly? If I have faith in you it means I trust that you will deliver and do what you say. Our faith in Yahshua means that when He said He did not come to destroy the commands of the law, we trust Him in what He said.

Yahweh specifically defined the transition from the Old to the New Covenant: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith Yahweh, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Yahweh: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," Jeremiah 31:33-34. See also Hebrews 8:10-11.

Although the Old Covenant is old, it's not dead. Hebrews 8:13 states, "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." If something is only ready to vanish, it has not yet vanished. This is clear in many New Testament passages.

Lawkeeping is found in both the Old and New Covenants (Testaments). Here are some New Testament verses that testify to this fact:

- Yahshua said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matthew 5:17-19.
- "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?..Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," Romans 7:1, 12.
- "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of Elohim perfected: hereby know we that we are in him," 1John 2:3-5.
- "By this we know that we love the children of Elohim, when we love Elohim, and keep his commandments," 1John 5:2-3.

Meeting Hall Expansion

Construction update... We have made some exciting progress. The exterior metal is now completed and we have contracted a glass company to finish the glass on the lower level. We have also given the go ahead to a local company to install the HVAC on both levels, as well as the closed-cell spray foam insulation. Ryan, Lucas, and Aden have been working on framing the stage and we are happy with the results. We plan to start on the electrical very soon. The project is moving along well and we are excited. We appreciate the donations and your ongoing help to continue into the drywall and finishing stages. When completed, this meeting hall extension will be a great improvement in facilities. www.yrm.org/buildingfund or mail a tax deductible gift to **YRM, PO Box 463, Holts Summit, MO 65043**



BIBLICAL HEBREW WORD LESSON

אֱמוּןָ

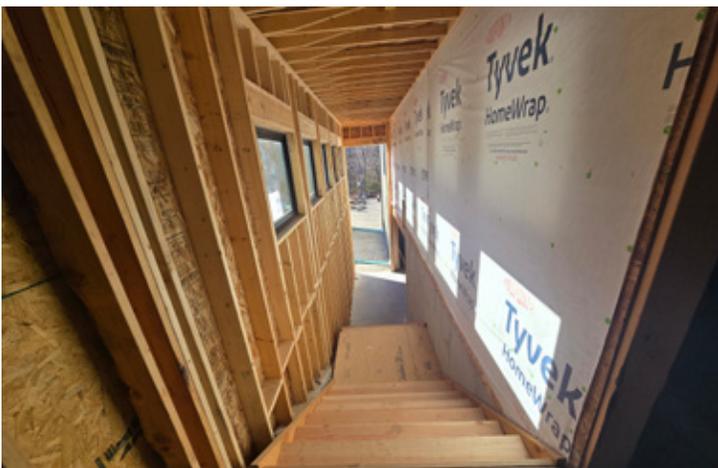
Emun Ay-MOON

Composition: Aleph, Tsere,
Mem, Sureq, Final Nun.

The Hebrew word **Emun** (H529)
is a masculine noun and has
the meanings: Faithfulness,
trustworthiness, fidelity

"I will hide My face from them, I will
see what their end will be, For they
are a perverse generation, Children in
whom is no **faith**."

Deuteronomy 32:20



Outreach Program's Current Partners

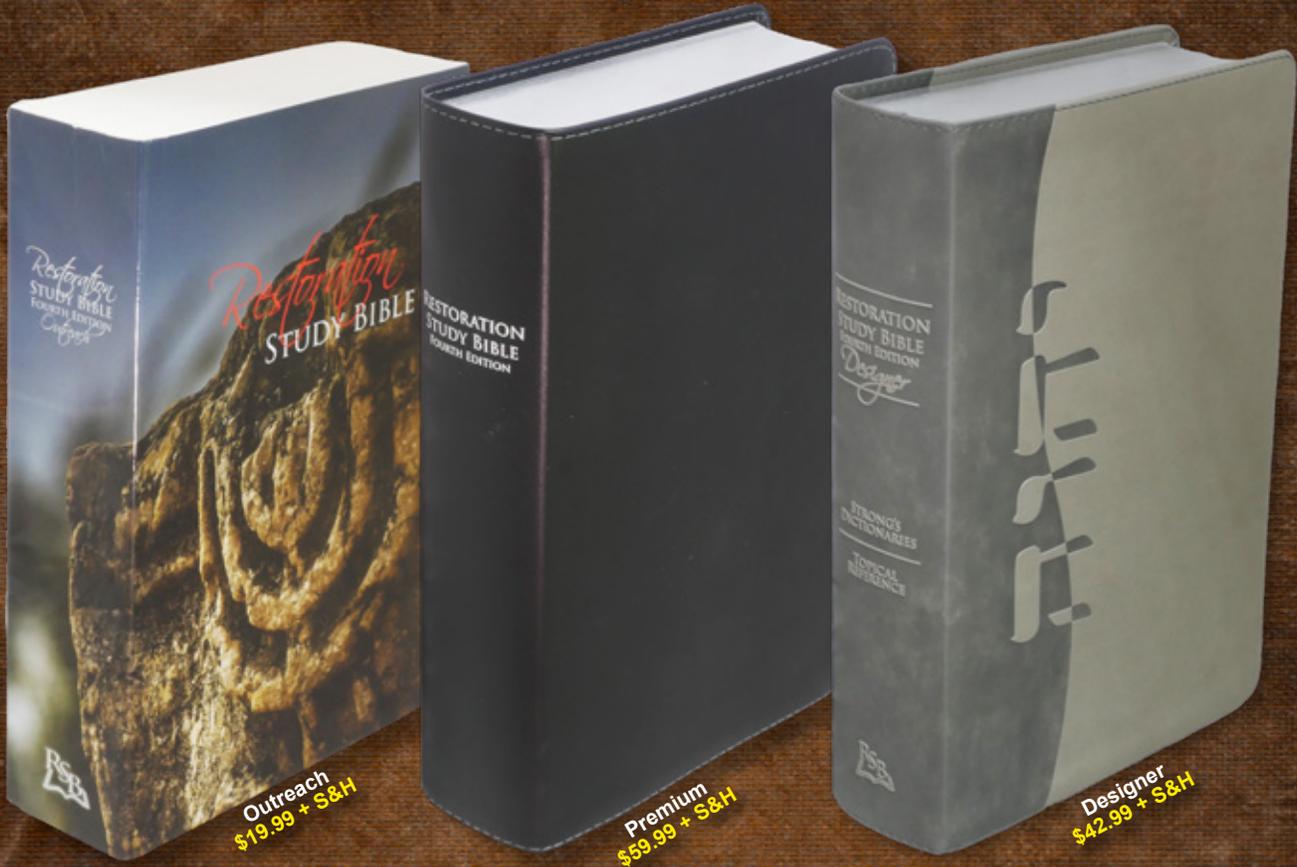
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Eldertorial

Called to Be Special

This world is increasingly becoming the domain of specialists.

Rather than attempting to treat a heart patient, the family physician will refer him to a cardiology specialist. A couple forever mired in the throes of debt will consult a financial advisor.

When it comes to the Bible there is no shortage of self-styled specialists.

Many boast expertise on prophecy. They claim to have a fix on what the mark of the Beast is, who the Antimesiah and two witnesses are, and the exact day the Savior Yahshua will return. Others are well-practiced in how to live outside "the system" by avoiding taxes and other obligations from which they personally benefit.

In spite of those with such special interests, few are expert in what counts the most, which is successfully following Yahshua through all the complexities and trials of life.

Rare is the person who is eager to share insights on living a life of genuine love for, and obedience to, the precepts taught in Yahweh's Word. We eagerly await the day when someone knocks on our door saying something like, "I have done extensive study on the fruits of righteousness that Paul talked about in Philippians. I would like to share how to overcome some of the most challenging, personal trials and dilemmas we face today."

Part of the problem is that many are too busy listening to others rather than studying their own Bibles and learning more of what Yahweh expects of them. Instead, they get so wrapped up in superficialities that they fail to learn the truths critical even to their own salvation. They lack the motivation for personal change when all they hear is that Yahweh loves them, without understanding that they need to love Him back by keeping His commandments, 1John 5:3.

The real business of following Yahweh is the critical issue of how we conduct our lives. The Scriptures are full of lessons on repentance of sin followed by obedience.

The message of the first chapter of Haggai is that we need to put ourselves second when it comes to building Yahweh's house. But instead, at the core of so many obsessions is a personal motive, to elevate self or to put personal advantage above everything else.

Yahshua said in Matthew 23:12, "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Don't be led astray by teachings that have little to do with the weightier matters of committing to Yahweh's way that leads to salvation. That is where we should all specialize.

"Shalom and greetings from Cape Town South Africa. I will always promote YRM because this is where I started in 2017 with research on the truth. I sometimes tune in to your Sabbath services. I give a great HalleluYah in His qodesh Name for bringing across your website." – IG

"Thank you for sharing. I've heard different explanations about what is the new moon and this article confirms my discernment." – YB. (yrm.org/biblical-new-moon/)

"Are funerals acceptable? In my research, I have come to the conclusion that funerals should be avoided. Mourning the absence of a loved one is natural, but funerals seem to mask the promise of the resurrection of the faithful and promote a false heavenly reward, as well as other non-scriptural beliefs that only mislead those in attendance. – SN

Funerals have a very long history. Yahshua mentioned them in Matthew 8:22. When YRM officiates a funeral, it is an opportunity to teach the truth about death and what comes next. It may be the only time family and friends will have to hear the truth of the resurrection, what happens after that, and how to attain it. – ED

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