



Biblical Life eMag

The Biblical Life Quarterly eMagazine

“ARMING BELIEVERS WITH GOD’S TRUTH”



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Premier Issue | January 2012

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The Bond Servant

by Michael K. Lake, Th.D.

Over the last few years, God has been speaking to me quite a bit about the bond servant. This is not something that we hear a lot about. We have articles and books on “how to become a master preacher,” “how to influence people,” or “how to release the leader that is within you.” Seldom do we hear teachings on becoming a “bond servant” of God. To be truthful, books like that will not sell on the Christian market. Everyone will pay good money to “learn how to be somebody” or to “get everyone to see how gifted you are.” No one will let loose of their hard-earned money to become a “nobody”! Yet, is that not what Jesus taught?

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” Matthew 16:25

It seems that our generation is too worried about our ministry getting the exposure that it needs or people hearing what we have to say. To be honest, most of what “we” have to say has little “Kingdom” content. Spiritually, it is not worth hearing! It is “self” serving and “self” exalting. To become a bond servant is to lose sight of “us” and to see only “Him”! It is not worrying whether or not people hear or notice us, but that people hear, notice and submit to Him.

I have got to realize that I am not going to save the world. My teaching and my preaching (in itself) will do nothing! Jesus has and is saving this world. His teaching and preaching is changing lives and setting the captives free. *The hard part is getting “me” out of the way so that He can teach, preach and lead through me.* (That is a good place for an “amen” for anyone that is being real honest with him or herself!)

In this book, I want to introduce you to some scriptures and concepts that I pray will change your paradigm regarding ministry and leadership. For the true Body of Messiah to rise up and be that “wife” that prepared herself for her husband in the Book of Revelation, we must change . . . and change soon!

The Bond Servant and the Book of Revelation

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified by his angel unto his servant John.” Revelation 1:1

Now let’s look at this verse again in the Amplified Bible:

“[This is] the revelation of Jesus Christ [His unveiling of the divine mysteries]. God gave it to Him to disclose and make known to His bond servants certain things which must shortly and speedily come to pass in their entirety. And He sent and communicated it through His angel (messenger) to His bond servant John.”

I am amazed at how many in the Body of Christ seem to think that the Book of Revelation is irrelevant. I have even had many tell me “But Michael, I am not even going to be here! Why do I need to read and understand it?” First, God in His economy does not write things that do not need to be used. There is not even one redundant word in the entire Bible. Everything has meaning and purpose (whether we understand it or not!) If the book was not so important, why did God promise a blessing simply to those that read it? Maybe it is because as the prophetic fulfillment of the Book of Revelation is “hitting the fan” in events around us, we will be able to contextualize its message and know what to do in that hour. *I would definitely call that a blessing!*

The core issue is this: “We do not believe it was written for us!” It was written for all those that will miss the Rapture and be found in the Tribulation. Right?!?! Well first let me say this without opening a big can of worms. The pretribulation rapture of the Church is the newest end-times teaching in the Church. Prior to the early 1800’s (when it first appeared on the scene) it was never the position of any of the Church Fathers or theologians. All believed that they would live through most or all of the tribulation period. Now, I do not want to waste my time arguing this position. It will not be productive for either one of us. Let me say that it is much better to be prepared for tribulation and surprised by rapture than to be prepared (or counting) on the pretribulation rapture and be surprised by tribulation!

I think that the real problem of why the Book of Revelation does not seem relevant to us is that we are not BOND SERVANTS, and bond servants were the only ones that it was written to! My concern is not whether our eschatological position is correct or not. Believe me, as Almighty God works His plan, our positions will change to what He is really doing (if we are following His Spirit). My greatest concern is that our hearts are not right! We do not have the heart of a bond servant. We want to rule and reign as kings (. . . for Jesus that is) in His Kingdom here and now. We are too “self” aware and not “Him” aware. Jesus told us “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” John 5:30. Jesus was not “self” aware, but rather “Father” aware! If we are truly His followers, are we not required to follow His example?

The History of the Bond Servant

In searching through the many biblical references in my library, finding information on the bond servant was difficult. I was able to find one minor reference that I would like to share:

“(6) Voluntary Surrender: In the case of a slave’s release in the seventh year there was allowed a willing choice of indefinite slavery. The ceremony at such a time is interesting: “Then his master shall bring him unto the judges (margin), and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever” (Exodus 21:6). A pierced ear probably meant obedience to the master’s voice. History, however, does not record a single instance in which such a case occurred.”¹

First of all, I think that the placement of this scripture is important. In Exodus 20, Moses gives the Children of Israel the “Ten Commandments”. We then have their response and a short statement regarding provision for approaching God. Then we jump right into the scriptures dealing with slaves and becoming a bond servant. I do not think that Israel, or the Body of Christ, gets the prophetic picture here. God just delivered them from slavery. He then tells them that if they have a Hebrew servant (for example, someone indebted to them), that servant must be set free after seven (7) years. Seven is a significant number in dealing with God’s plan of salvation. Anytime you see seven in scripture, it should grab your attention! Israel’s response to her new freedom should have been to become bond servants of the Most High God . . . just as the Church should!

A Correction to ISBE

The editors of the ISBE may have been right when they said that not a single instance of the bond servant happened as outlined in Exodus. But the truth of the matter is that its prophetic picture was fulfilled . . . and it was fulfilled in none other than Jesus.

*“5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
Philippians 2:5-11 KJV*

Dr. Wuest in his Word Studies from the Greek New Testament makes this comment about the word “servant” in verse seven: “The word ‘servant’ is the translation of the Greek word which Paul used in 1:1 to describe himself, *a bonds slave*.”²

¹ International Standard Bible Encyclopedia – Volume 8. AGES Software, Albany, OR USA Version 1 © 1996

² Wuest, K.D. (1997, c 1984). Wuest word studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English reader (Php 2:7). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Jesus took upon himself the form of a bond servant (or slave) to His Heavenly Father. His ear was only attentive to the voice and wishes of His Father, not those around Him. His ear was not nailed to the door-post of the Cross, but rather His hands and His feet. Although He is LORD, he came as a servant to do the will of His Heavenly master . . . Father God.

What a different climate the Church would have today if we followed His example. In fact, Paul stressed that this same mind or “mind-set” should be within us. What would happen in the Church if every member, deacon, board member and minister threw out their own agendas and struggles for political power within their Church, denomination, etc., and hit their knees until each fully and completely submitted to the will of God and knew exactly what Jesus wanted in the Church. I can tell you that the structure and plans of most Churches would change dramatically. Everyone would also be saying the same thing and moving in the same direction. The state of the Church today could be considered strong evidence that we have not become “bond servants” to Messiah.

We, Like Israel of Old, are Slaves Set Free

In the New Testament, Paul uses two specific Greek words to describe our redemption in Messiah. They are (1) *agoridzo* and (2) *exagoridzo*. Let’s take a look at these two important words.

- a. *Agoridzo* (a-go-rid-zo): This Greek word described those sold into the SLAVE MARKET. This reminds us that we WERE slaves to sin. We were past from one sinful influence (or demon spirit) to another. We were Satan’s (the real Pharaoh of this world) property, and he was working his evil in us to destroy every fiber of our humanity. We did what Satan wanted like puppets on a string.
- b. *Exagoridzo* (ex-a-go-rid-zo): This Greek word signifies “the purchase of a slave in order to permanently set that slave FREE from that heinous place, never to be put on the trading block of slavery again.” This is the price that Jesus paid, purchasing us from slavery to sin and Satan in order to permanently set us free.

These two words tell the story of redemption. We were born into slavery to sin. The only thing that we had to look forward to was being passed from one “master” of lust, filth and sin to another. When these masters finish with us, death takes hold and we die. The good news is that Jesus paid the price as our Kinsman Redeemer to set us free. He translated us out of that sinful kingdom into His kingdom. We were like the Children of Israel of old. We did not do anything to deserve to be freed from the Pharaoh of this world. Like Israel of old, we were redeemed by the grace of God. We stand before God as a people that have been assembled by His hand, by His grace and for His purposes.

The greatest figure in the Old Testament (besides Almighty God) is Moses. His life so resembled Jesus that Moses told the Children of Israel that there was a prophet coming “just

like me.” We could say that the greatest title for Moses might be “Moses the Law Giver” or “Moses the Deliverer.” But the title that resounds through the Old and New Testaments and from the mouth of God is “Moses, the Servant of God!” Again, he was a type and shadow of Jesus. Jesus came and was found in the form of a bond servant. If we are going to honor the Almighty with our lives upon this earth, we MUST learn to follow the example of Jesus.

Predestined to be Conformed

“For those whom He foreknew [of whom He was aware and loved beforehand], He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness], that He might become the firstborn among many brethren.” Romans 8:29 Amplified Bible³

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” KJV

This verse from the Book of Romans is a very powerful one. There is one major point that I would like to address (without delving into foreknowledge or predestination).

To be conformed (molded) into the image and inward likeness of Jesus

The power of this statement is almost beyond our ken. When we see Jesus in the Gospels, we see how the Father wants us to be or should I say “become.” Let’s look at some areas of Jesus’ life:

1. He Lived the Torah Perfectly

The early Church called Jesus “The Living Torah.” He walked in the ways, commands and statutes of the Torah perfectly during his life and ministry. As New Testament believers we give this truth lip service, but seldom do we contemplate the significance and power of it. Jesus gave the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. What we see in the Torah are the ways, ordinances, commands and principles of Jesus. They are perfect just like He is perfect. No one could live up to His standard except for Him!

It is interesting that when Moses completed the Torah right before he died, he gave the Levites the instruction to read and teach the Torah to the children of Israel. The original cycle of reading the Torah was three and a half years. It would be read at the times of gathering three times a year during the Feasts. Jesus’ ministry was three and a half years in length. Jesus lived the Torah before them perfectly for one entire Torah reading cycle as originally given by Moses.

³ *The amplified Bible, containing the amplified Old Testament and the amplified New Testament.* 1987 (Ro 8:29). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

We need to realize that if we are going to follow Jesus and live as He lived; it will be a Torah-based lifestyle that is empowered by the Holy Spirit!

I realize that some might have a problem with that statement. The problem arises from a misunderstanding of the Law or Torah and almost 1,800 years of anti-Semitism (as well as anti-Torah) ideas that have plagued the Church. Without going into great length on Torah and our misunderstandings of it, I would like to address several things that may be “seeds” of thought for you to ponder and then research for yourself.

The Real Meaning of Torah:

Here is some insight from the Theological Workbook of the Old Testament:

The word tôrâ means basically “teaching” whether it is the wise man instructing his son or God instructing Israel. The wise give insight into all aspects of life so that the young may know how to conduct themselves and to live a long blessed life (Prov 3:1f). So too God, motivated by love, reveals to man basic insight into how to live with each other and how to approach God. Through the law God shows his interest in all aspects of man’s life which is to be lived under his direction and care. Law of God stands parallel to word of the Lord to signify that law is the revelation of God’s will (e.g. Isa 1:10).⁴

More accurately, we could translate the word “Torah” to mean “teaching or instruction from God” rather than “Law.” God provided this instruction because He loved man and wanted him to know how to live and be blessed. Wouldn’t it sound ridiculous for believers to run around and tell everyone that they are not under the loving instruction of God, but only His grace? In most cases, that is exactly what we have done.

Much of God’s instruction is still applicable for the Believer today. If we are going to live like Jesus lived, we must re-examine the Torah and allow the Holy Spirit to teach us to live according to His divine instruction.

2. Being an Individual of Prayer

“21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.” Luke 3:21-22

“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” Mark 1:35 KJV

⁴ Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999, c1980). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed.) (Page 404). Chicago: Moody Press.

Jesus was an individual of prayer. There are several things that we can expound upon in these verses. In Mark 1:35, we see that Jesus took the “Shema” literally. The Torah said that we should be in prayer upon rising and then again before retiring each day. The demands of ministry and having His disciples living with Him as He traveled required Him to get up before His disciples so that He could pray without interruption. Jesus, as our example, took the time to center His mind and heart upon His Heavenly Father before He started His day. Are we being conformed into this image?

Another important point that we need to see in the scriptures in Luke is: “How do we gain approval of our Heavenly Father?” Every counselor, whether Biblical or professional will tell you that for each of us to mature into a healthy adult, we need to receive approval from our parents. Unfortunately, we find that every family since Adam has been somewhat dysfunctional. Many of us did not receive the affirmation and approval that we needed from our parents. To be honest, we need to realize that you cannot give something you never received. Because they never received approval, it was impossible for them to give approval to us. But, praise be to God, we can receive approval from our Heavenly Father!

You may look at the story in Luke and say “I guess I will have to wait for John the Baptist to baptize me before I can receive approval from God. I sure didn’t receive approval when my Pastor baptized me!” Well, my friend, you are overlooking something. The heavens did not open, the Holy Spirit did not fall on Him nor did the Father speak from Heaven when Jesus was just baptized. AFTER He was baptized, He stood praying! I believe this wonderful response from Heaven was not JUST because He was baptized. I believe it was in response to His prayer life. His prayer life put Him into a special place to receive the approval of His Heavenly Father. He is our example. As we get lost in prayer with God, God’s hand of approval begins to manifest upon us.

This may be why Paul was able to write, “if God be for us, WHO can be against us?” Paul was a man of prayer. He knew the hand of God was upon him. Even in the midst of controversy and tribulation, he could press forward. Why? Because his heart had been strengthened by the approval and affirmation he received from God.

3. A Bond Servant in Ministry

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” John 4:34

“Jesus said to them, My food (nourishment) is to do the will (pleasure) of Him Who sent Me and to accomplish and completely finish His work.” Amplified Bible

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” John 6: 38

How do we do ministry? Over the past two decades, I have noticed a change in how we do (and plan) ministry.

- We are “attendee” oriented. What do they want? What will they come to hear? What will keep them happy?
- We are “publicity” oriented. What will get me and my message noticed? How will I get the peoples’ attention and get “my” foot in the door? How am I going to get my big break in public ministry?
- We are “offering” oriented. What will keep the people giving? What new message can I give that will inspire “them” to be blessed (i.e. motivated to start giving more to my ministry)?

None of these things were even in the mind of Jesus. He was a Bond Servant of Yahweh. His own fame, finances or even desires are not what drove Him. He was all about making the Father known among men, doing the Father’s will and allowing the Father to meet His needs. Why are we so pressured into doing ministry the modern way? (i.e. my previous points) One reason is that we have been taught to do it that way by the past generation and pressured into it by the hard-heartedness and entertainment driven minds of this present generation.

The root cause cannot be attributed to either the past or present generation. The root cause is that we have not taken the time in prayer to receive the Father’s affirmation and approval. *It takes time in prayer to gain it and even more time invested in prayer to maintain it!* When we receive His affirmation and approval, something happens within our hearts and to our faith. We can then step out and do only that which He instructs us to do and our faith soars! Perfect obedience to Him brings perfect provision from His hand.

Without His abiding affirmation and approval, we step out in ministry with these “worldly” feelers out. We need approval and provision. Because we have not been trained on how to receive it from our Heavenly Father before (and while) venturing out into ministry, we are by default forced to receive both from men. The sad part is that if we learn to please people, it can be a road to success . . . at least in the short term. It will also lead to compromise, receiving our rewards from men rather than God and eventually stumbling spiritually. Paul was ever conscious of this. He expressed his desire to void running and ministering in vain (Philippians 2:16)

Summing It Up

Are we being a faith Bond Servant to Messiah? Are we being conformed into His image? We need to ask these questions:

1. How am I doing in following the commandments and ways of God? Do I pick and choose? Do I follow only those that do not require a change (or transformation) in my flesh? Am I allowing the Holy Spirit to bring correction to me and live the Word by His power?
2. Where do I receive my affirmation and approval for life and ministry? Here is an acid test that I use: Do I feel pressured to start immediately in the morning with all the “things” I need to do in ministry? Is that my main focus? If it is, my affirmation and approval are “ministry” and “people” oriented. That will lead to physical and spiritual “burnout”. If I have a myriad of tasks to perform in the morning, but I start the day with a prolonged time in prayer, THEN my priorities are right. My affirmation and approval are coming from God. I trust in HIS ability and leadership in ministry. No longer am I pressured to get everything done within a certain time to keep people happy. Today, everybody may have to wait until tomorrow because God has only ONE thing for me to do . . . or one person to minister to.

Remember this important lesson: If I respond to the many without direction from God, He will allow me to do it . . . in my own strength. If I respond to Him and do only those things He has instructed me to do that day, it is done by His power and anointing. I will not be “burned out” in ministry, but rather empowered by His working through me and enriched by fellowship with Him.

3. What really motivates me in ministry? I am not talking about all the PR we give out and the “ministry” talk that we do. I am talking about the truth that we very rarely even admit to ourselves. Is it His fame and purposes? Or is it my fame while I appear to be accomplishing His purposes?

The times that we are living in demand that we be more “real” with ourselves than ever before. Only HIS BOND SERVANTS will be able to stand and thrive in the days to come. ✞



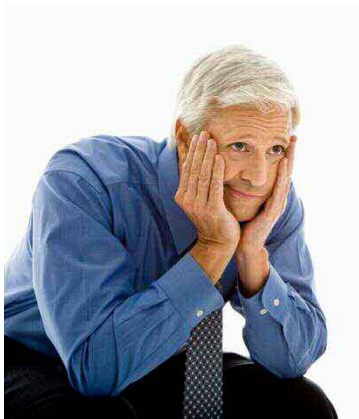
Dr. Michael K. Lake is the founder and chancellor of Biblical Life College and Seminary, the president of Biblical Life Publishing, and the Apostle of Biblical Life Assembly. He has earned doctorates in theology, religious education, and pastoral psychology. Dr. Lake has been teaching and mentoring those called to ministry for nearly 30 years and serves as a consultant on Christian education for many religious organizations. He is known for his “where the rubber meets the road” teaching style that makes complex theological concepts easy for all to understand and live out in their daily lives.



The Bond Servant Video Series

Dr. Lake has just completed a new ten DVD teaching series of the Bond Servant. In this powerful new series, he details the biblical transition from servant to friend to bond servant: a journey every believer must take. Power sessions on emotional healing and understanding the plague of Gnosticism within the Church are included. Learn why becoming a Bond Servant is so important for the days ahead and be ready to walk in God's best!

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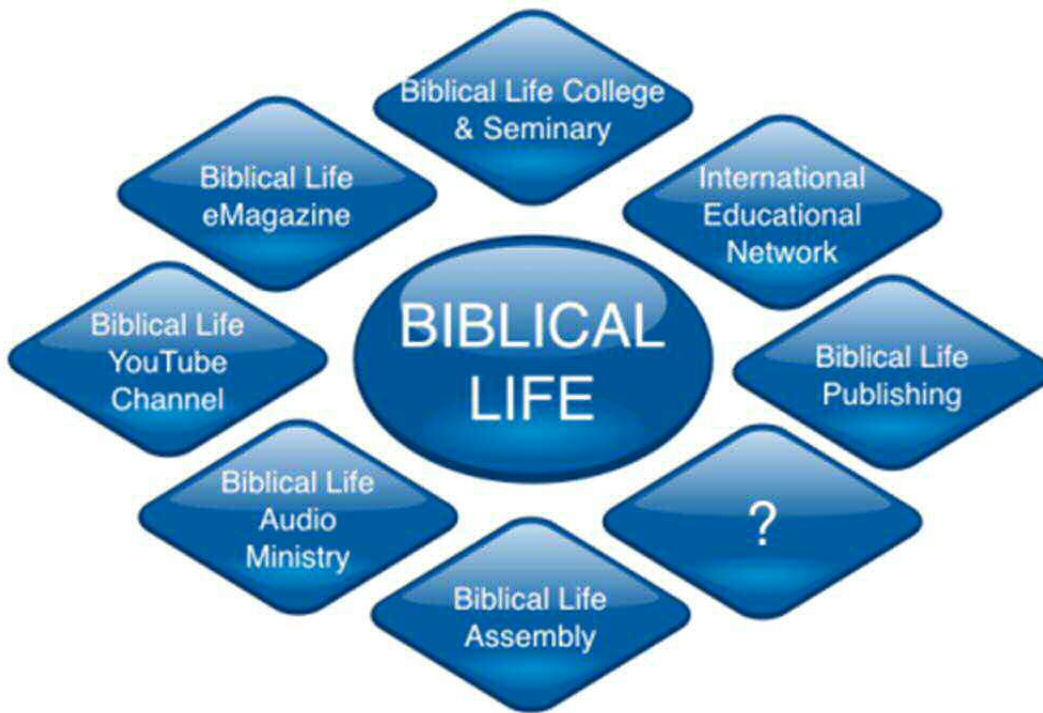
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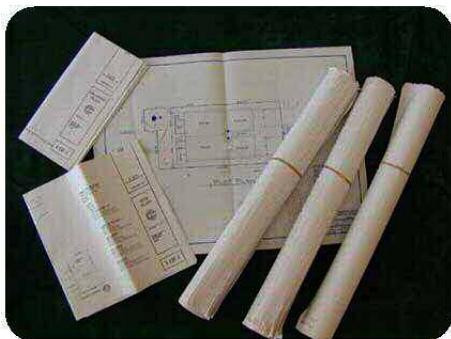
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- Biblical Life eMagazine
- Biblical Life Monthly Internet Radio Program (& podcasting)
- Upgrading Video Production with iMac System
- Biblical Life Commentary on the Book of Acts
- New Master of Ministry Degree Program
- Expanding Books for Biblical Life Publishing
- Annual Biblical Life Conference (hopefully 2012)

And the year is just getting started!

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Marcion – the Heretic the Church Follows

by Chad Kottke, M.Div. (BLCS Graduate)

For most of my life, I have been a part of the church. My childhood years were spent in a Baptist church, where the congregation truly loved God and sought after Him, both in their personal lives and within the community. The teaching was Biblically based and by the time I was a young adult I had a solid understanding of Scripture.



After a short period of rebellion in my early adult years, I joined a Brethren church where the teaching had an even greater emphasis on the Bible than the Baptist church of my childhood. During this time I begin to seriously study the Bible myself. My knowledge of the Scriptures increased and people begin to notice; I even had some opportunities to teach.

I was in the military so I moved several times. Over the following years I went to another Baptist church, a Free Methodist church, a Vineyard church, and an independent Charismatic church. I selected each church because of their emphasis on Scriptural teaching and their heart for God and His work.

I explain this not to impress anyone with my credentials, but to show that I had a solid conservative upbringing in the Protestant church, and that in every church I went to Scripture was considered the literal Word of God, the true guidebook for every Christian.

It was during this time that I developed an understanding of how Christianity had come out of Judaism, and that the Old Testament was of equal weight to the New Testament. But when it really came down to it, I knew very little about the Biblical roots of Christianity.

While I knew several of the Old Testament stories and was familiar with the Psalms and Proverbs, the bulk of the doctrine I had been taught and held to came from the New Testament. My understanding of the Prophets was extremely weak; I did not even know the names for all of the Prophetic books. Worse yet, my understanding of the Torah was limited to Sunday School stories from Genesis and Exodus.

Sadly, this weak understanding of the Old Testament is characteristic of much of the church. The emphasis is heavily focused and centered on the New Testament, to the neglect of the Old Testament. Evidence of this can be seen in many committed Christians' Bibles, the last quarter of the pages are well worn and dirty, while the first three-quarters are crisp and clean. But without the Old Testament, Christians have a sword without a hilt. Most, if not all, of the

writers of the New Testament were Jewish and wrote from their Hebraic understanding of the Old Testament. The Apostle Paul, who provided the bulk of New Testament writing, was a highly educated teacher of the Law who extensively referenced the Old Testament. The Old Testament was the only Scriptures that the early church had:

Early Jewish converts relied on that collection for “proof texts,” for evidence that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. Moreover, the Jewish scriptures were evidence to Christians of the Almighty's earlier and continuing concern for humankind and provided a set of moral laws -- from which they could separate the distinctively ritual elements -- that were left incomplete in the teachings of Jesus. The Jewish bible was the only fully-approved Christian scripture until Marcion appeared on the scene.⁵

Once I realized how weak of an understanding the modern church has concerning the Old Testament I began asking myself why this was the case. What I discovered was that although there are several reasons for this, much of the disregard for the Old Testament found in the church today can be traced back to one man – Marcion the Heretic – a very important, though largely unknown, figure in church history.

While Marcion was not the sole source for the church essentially abandoning the Old Testament, he was the man who had the means and the will to create an anti-Old Testament bias within the church. To develop a better understanding of this important heretic in the following pages I will examine who Marcion was, what he taught, and the effect it had on the church.

Marcion – The Man

While much of what is written about Marcion comes from his opponents we can still get a fairly good picture of the man and his teachings. Marcion came from a wealthy and religious family, as documented in the Catholic Encyclopedia:

Marcion was son of the Bishop of Sinope in Pontus, born c. A.D. 110, evidently from wealthy parents. He is described as nautes, nauclerus, a ship owner, by Rhodon and Tertullian, who wrote about a generation after his death.⁶

Note that his father was a bishop, which meant he was a leader of a church. Because of the regular persecution the church experienced during Marcion's time, it is reasonable to assume that his father was a committed Christian, and that Marcion grew up in a dedicated Christian home.

⁵ Herbert Christian Merillat, “The Gnostic Apostle Thomas,” <<http://members.aol.com/didymus5/ch9.html>>, Accessed March 3, 2007.

⁶ J.P. Arendzen. *The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume IX* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910) Available from Internet, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09645c.htm>>, Accessed March 3, 2007

It appears that when Marcion was younger, he was involved in an illicit affair, which caused a split with his father. The Catholic Encyclopedia says this of that event in Marcion's life:

Epiphanius (Haeres., XLII, ii) relates that Marcion in his youth professed to lead a life of chastity and asceticism, but, in spite of his professions, fell into sin with a young maiden. In consequence his father, the bishop, cast him out of the Church. He besought his father for reconciliation, i.e. to be admitted to ecclesiastical penance, but the bishop stood firm in his refusal. Not being able to bear with the laughter and contempt of his fellow townsmen, he secretly left Sinope and traveled to Rome.⁷

If Marcion's father did reject him in this manner, it provides a possible emotional basis for the development of his particular heretical theology, which we will soon see favored a loving Father God over a judgmental God.

Very soon after arriving in Rome in AD 140 Marcion fell in with a Gnostic teacher by the name of Credo who believed that:

The God of the Old Testament was different from the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The God of the Old Testament was unknowable; the latter had been revealed. The former was sheer justice; whereas the God of the New Testament is loving and gracious.⁸

Marcion latched onto Credo's teaching, while at the same time establishing himself within the church, both with his words and his money. Within four years the faith of Marcion's father and the teachings of Credo came to a head publicly:

At the end of July, 144 CE, a hearing took place before the clergy of the Christian congregations in Rome. Marcion ... stood before the presbyters to expound his teachings in order to win others to his point of view. For some years he had been a member of one of the Roman churches, and had proved the sincerity of his faith by making relatively large contributions. No doubt he was a respected member of the Christian community.

But what he now expounded to the presbyters was so monstrous that they were utterly shocked! The hearing ended in a harsh rejection of Marcion's views; he was formally excommunicated and his largesse of money was returned. From this time forward Marcion went his own way, energetically propagating a strange kind of Christianity that quickly took root throughout large sections of the Roman Empire and by the end of the 2nd century had become a serious threat to the mainstream Christian Church. In each city of any importance the Marcionites set up their church to defy the Christian one.⁹

⁷ Arendzen.

⁸ H. Dermot McDonald, "Marcion," in *Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity*, ed. Tim Dowley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 102.

⁹ Glen Davis, "The Development of the Canon of the New Testament Marcion and the Marcionites," <<http://www.ntcanon.org/Marcion.shtml>>, 1997. Accessed March 3, 2007.

Marcion – The Teachings

What was this “strange kind of Christianity” that Marcion espoused? We have already touched on Credo’s teaching which separated the God of the New Testament from the God of the Old. But since Marcion was not a Gnostic like his teacher (though he has been accused of this), and because of the Biblical roots of his childhood, Marcion needed to develop a Biblical theology to support his claims. To accomplish this end, Marcion first attacked the usefulness of the Old Testament for Christians:

The Old and New Testaments, Marcion argued, cannot be reconciled to each other. The code of conduct advocated by Moses was 'an eye for an eye', but Christ set this precept aside. Elisha had had children eaten by bears; Christ said, 'Let the little children come to me'. Joshua had stopped the sun in its path in order to continue the slaughter of his enemies; Paul quoted Christ as commanding, 'Let not the sun go down on your wrath'. In the Old Testament divorce was permitted and so was polygamy; but in the New Testament neither is allowed. Moses enforced the Jewish Sabbath and Law; Christ has freed believers from both.

Even within the Old Testament, Marcion found contradictions. God commanded that no work should be done on the Sabbath, yet he told the Israelites to carry the ark around Jericho 7 times on the Sabbath. No graven image was to be made, yet Moses was directed to fashion a bronze serpent. The deity revealed in the Old Testament could not have been omniscient, otherwise he would not have asked, 'Adam where are you?' (Genesis 3:9). Marcion, therefore, rejected the entire Old Testament.¹⁰

It is important to note that although Marcion believed that the Old Testament was not relevant for Christians and had issues with supposed contradictions, he did not reject it as false. Instead, in Marcion’s world view, “the Old Testament is true enough, Moses and the Prophets are messengers of the Demiurge [World Maker or Old Testament God], the Jewish Messiah (sic) is sure to come and found a millennial kingdom for the Jews on earth, but the Jewish messiah (sic) has nothing whatever to do with the Christ of God.”¹¹

Marcion viewed Christianity as a unique religion, entirely separate from Judaism. To him Judaism was as foreign to Christianity as the polytheism of the Greeks or the animism of the barbarians. In Marcion’s mind, while Judaism was based on truth, it was based on a truth distinct and separate from the truths of Christianity. Marcion believed that Jesus and Paul had taught the pure truths of Christianity, and certain Jews had corrupted Christianity in both its practice and its texts. Because of this conclusion, Marcion felt radical steps needed to be taken:

Marcion wished to purge Christianity of its pervasive Jewish influence and took Paul's somewhat ambivalent rejection of “the law” to a logical conclusion. The Jews' sacred

¹⁰ Davis.

¹¹ Arendzen.

books, he taught, were of no concern to Christians. If the Jews wished to worship their ancient tribal god, that was their affair. But the God who smote and slaughtered Israel's enemies, threatened his own worshipers with dire punishment if they were disobedient, prescribed circumcision for males and odd laws for the governance of daily life, and described himself as jealous, could not be the God of Christians.¹²

Besides completely rejecting the Jewish roots of Christianity, Marcion felt it necessary to purge the New Testament, or Christian Scriptures, of their Jewish pollution (This bears great similarity to the modern Jesus Seminar). In the process of doing this, he became the first person to develop a clear New Testament canon, though greatly truncated from the one we are familiar with:

He accepted the following Christian writings in this order: Gospel according to Luke, Galatians, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Romans, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, Ephesians (which Marcion called Laodiceans), Colossians, Philemon, Philippians; but only after pruning and editorial adjustment. In his opinion the 12 apostles misunderstood the teaching of Christ, and, holding him to be the Messiah of the Jewish God, falsified his words from that standpoint. Passages that Marcion could regard only as Judaizing interpolations, that had been smuggled into the text by biased editors, had to be removed so the authentic text of Gospel and Apostle could once again be available. After these changes, the Gospel according to Luke became the Evangelicon, and the 10 Pauline letters, the Apostolikon.¹³

Additionally, Marcion believed that Jesus was not the real incarnation of Christ, but only a manifestation of the loving Father God. Because of his errant view of Jesus, his dualist belief in Old Testament and New Testament Gods, and his rejection of much of Scripture, he was often accused of being a Gnostic, even by his contemporaries. But this is incorrect:

Though generally seen as one of the most important leaders of the somewhat loosely defined movement known as Gnosticism, he did not share some of the main premises of other Gnostic sects. He believed in salvation by faith rather than by gnosis; he rejected the Gnostic emanation theory; and he sought truth in his own truncated version of the New Testament.¹⁴

By dismissing him as a Gnostic the early church unwittingly let the wolf remain outside the door. Though the church excommunicated him, Marcion went on to become the bishop of a parallel church that rivaled and in some cases overshadowed the true church. His heretical teachings took root within Christian communities, in part because of their similarity to

¹² Merillat.

¹³ Davis.

¹⁴ *Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed.*, s.v. "Marcion." Available from Internet, <<http://www.bartleby.com/65/ma/Marcion.html>>, Accessed March 3, 2007.

Christianity, and in part because some of the early church fathers had dismissed Marcion as an irrelevant Gnostic; both of which caused the saints to drop their guards.

The result was that Marcion's heresies were not purged from the church but were further developed and refined by later heretics and even well-meaning Christians, with some long lasting consequences, which we will look at now.

Marcion – The Consequences

Marcion's teachings on the Law opposed to grace, and the separation of the New Testament from Old Testament, have been detriments to the church over the centuries. The Apostle Paul and the early church fathers viewed the Law, or the Torah, and the rest of the Old Testament as vital for Christian doctrine and life. But Marcion's erroneous teachings gained a strong foothold within Christian belief and have confused Christians throughout the ages up to this present day. In fact, some of the major figures who shaped much of Christian theology were influenced by Marcion:

The Roman Catholic monk Augustine championed Marcion's idea about grace, opposing God's Law and made them a significant part of his theology. At the time of the Reformation, men such as John Wycliffe, first to translate the Bible into English, and Miles Coverdale, the translator of the first printed English Bible, were heavily influenced by Augustine... The notion that grace was in opposition to Law was strengthened when the French Reformer John Calvin endorsed this position in his Institutes of Christian Religion, which became the guide for the reformed churches of Protestantism. Although these reformers did a great work in the area of faith, their mistaken ideas concerning the replacing of Law with grace has been a source of much confusion, even to the present.¹⁵

While it would not be fair to say that Marcion was the sole source for this error found in the teachings of Augustine and Calvin, he certainly was a significant cause for them developing the error. Marcion planted the seed that Augustine and Calvin watered.

Marcion's harmful teachings did indirectly have one positive effect on the Church. When he developed the first Biblical canon of the *Evangelikon* (truncated Gospel of Luke) and the *Apostolikon* (ten Pauline letters), there was a reaction within the church:

Marcion was very influential in the formation of the New Testament Canon even though his influence was a negative one. His most important contribution may have been to virtually guarantee that the Pauline Epistles would eventually enjoy the same status as

¹⁵ Ronald W. Mosely, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church* (Baltimore: Lederer Books, 1996), 40-41.

*the Gospels. Marcion's critics were forced to decide about the Pauline works and their relationship to the Gospels, which were already held in high esteem.*¹⁶

To counter the spread of Marcion's canon, the church felt an urgent need to develop an accurate canon of Scripture. Their reaction to Marcion was the first real, concerted effort by the true church to do this. While the Gospels had been largely accepted as Scripture early on, Marcion's actions forced the church to look carefully at the remainder of the apostolic writings and prayerfully consider what could be Scripture.

Conclusion

Marcion was a heretic who had a profound and lasting impact on the church. He came from a strong Christian background, but because he was influenced by the Gnostics, his Christianity was corrupted. His teaching on the Law in opposition to grace and the New Testament being entirely separate from the Old Testament had a profound and lasting effect on the church, which influenced significant church leaders in the past and misleads many Christians even today. One positive effect that Marcion did have on the church was that his actions forced the church to develop a canon of apostolic writings, which we have come to know as the New Testament.

Because Marcion's heresy was not eradicated from the church, we must still react to it today. The best reaction that we can have is to humbly seek God in the fullness of His Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments. Those who teach need to begin to make a true effort to preach the whole Word of God. There needs to be a realization within the church that "the Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." (Ps 19:7a)

A church that does not understand the Law is like a doctor that does not have a foundational understanding of medicine and anatomy. Anyone who tries to interpret the New Testament without the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings of Old Testament is bound to teach error. An ignorant doctor will eventually make a mistake and get sued for malpractice, but we will stand before the eternal God to answer for what we taught. Thank God that we have mercy and grace because of Jesus Christ. ✎

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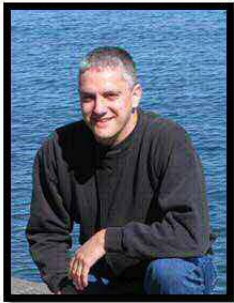
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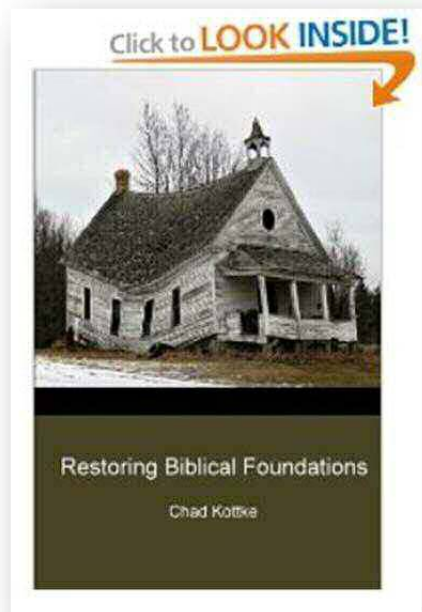
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Chad Kottke served in the U.S. Air Force for ten years, and worked in construction management for eight years after leaving the military. He has earned a Masters of Divinity in Hebraic Heritage and is currently enrolled in the Doctor of Theology Program at Biblical Life College & Seminary. Chad is the author of the book "*Restoring Biblical Foundations*" which reflects his desire to see the church return to her Biblical roots.



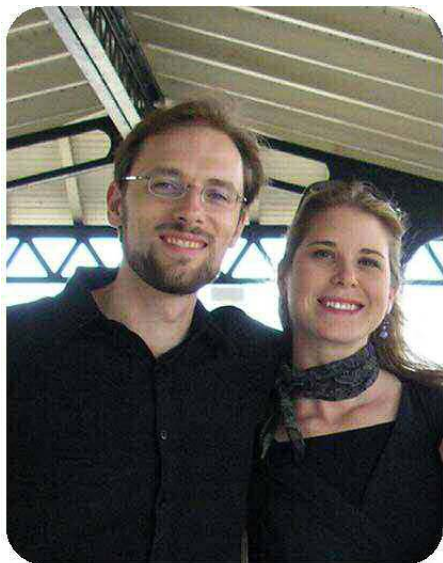
Restoring Biblical Foundations

by Chad Kottke, M.Div.

God gave the church a sure foundation in the Scriptures, but various doctrines throughout the centuries have taken away from or added to the truths of Scripture. *Restoring Biblical Foundations* returns to two foundational aspects of Scripture – covenant and Torah – to examine what God says about each one. The covenant section is a review of seven covenants that God has made with man. These covenants are shown to complement one other as they come together to form the covenant that Jesus the Messiah has made with His body. The Torah section develops principles about the Torah from nearly two hundred passages of Scripture.

These Biblical principles are then used to build an extensive definition of Torah, and to show that the Torah is a necessary part of a believer's walk.

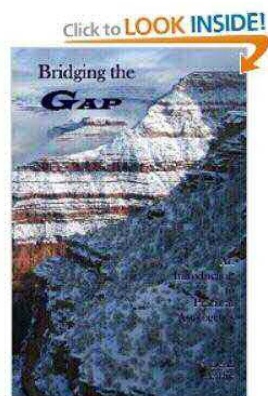
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The first thing that everyone always asks when we tell them that we are going to seminary is, "Which one are you going to?" After explaining that BLCS is a small seminary based out of Marshfield, MO, most people haven't the slightest clue of where or what. However, after three years of studying for our Masters of Divinity we have discovered that it is not the name, size, or fame of an institution, but the fruit that it produces in its students. As for us, we can testify of our incredible growth as we partake in a program that is on the cutting edge of what God is doing today. The combination of Hebraic studies with the guidance and coursework about the Holy Spirit releases the same anointing and power that the first century church had. Biblical Life is not just a degree program for higher education; **it is a well-developed journey that pushes you forward with God.** The excellence of leadership does not compromise the design of the individual degree programs, and the one-on-one attention is unlike any other institute with distance learning as its primary function. Each course

we have taken has always had an immediate application to our spiritual lives and growth. As far as we know and from what we have heard from others, BLCS is very unique. It is for the serious Christian. We highly recommend (and have already many times) this school to anyone who is looking for more than just the traditional seminary education. Be prepared to be challenged on multiple levels and put your seatbelt on as you experience the front lines of God's work in the world today!

Dejan and Michelle Azdajic



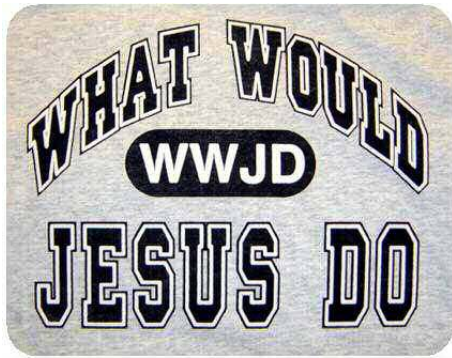
Bridging The Gap: An Introduction To Practical Apologetics

By Dejan Azdajic (His Master's Thesis @ BLCS)

Apologetics constitutes an incredibly vital tool in today's ministry. Although it is necessary to study apologetics for all aspects of ministry, it is particularly important within the missionary endeavor of the Church in evangelizing the nations. By definition, a cross cultural minister will encounter an incredible amount of opposition from a predominantly non-Christian people group, with arguments ranging from pure prejudice against Christianity to deep and well thought through intellectual dilemmas. Apologetics defines and describes how to respond to these objections while uncovering what man's major struggles are in the hope that all men can get an unobstructed view of "the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of this world." This book intends to introduce the

various approaches to apologetics, provide a historical timeline of western man's worldview progression and try to offer up some answers to the main questions that Christians will most frequently encounter.

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WWJD? What Would Jesus Do?

by Rabbi Bruce Booker, Ph.D., Th.D.
(BLCS Associate Professor of Hebraic Heritage Studies)

Over the last several years, a popular item among Christian children (and some adults, I might add) has been a wristband with the initials "WWJD?" This acronym stands for the words, "What Would Jesus Do?"

While I am not being critical of the practice of wearing things like these to remind us to live holy lives (in fact, I wear one myself), I think that people who promote the wearing of these items sometimes often fail to realize the scope of what they are saying.

It must be remembered that Jesus was *totally* obedient to the commandments as pertained to an Israelite (a citizen of Israel). As believers in him, we are all made part of that same commonwealth (Ephesians 2:11-22) whether we are Jew or non-Jew. Because of this, all the laws of this community apply to all within the community. The sojourner follows the same laws as the native. There are no separate laws for Jews and another set of laws for non-Jews; we are all one.

Since Jesus showed us by his life how an Israelite is to live, the acronym "WWJD" is quite appropriate. When confronted by various situations in life, we *should* ask "WWJD?" What Would Jesus Do? When examining the Scripture, what day would the Lord rest on? WWJD? Where would He be on the Sabbath day? WWJD? What kind of things would He eat? WWJD? Would Jesus celebrate the pagan practices of the Caananites or other peoples surrounding Israel? "WWJD?"

If we didn't know the answer, where can we turn to find it? Of course, we would go to the "Old Testament," since that was all He had.

Having now found the answer in Scripture, the person wearing the "WWJD" band implies that they will follow what He would have done in the *same* situation.

Now, I realize that we will *all* fall short of what Jesus would have done (that is what sin is) and won't always do what He did. Yet, having said that, we often excuse ourselves in our sin by saying, "I'm just human..." or, as the saying that was popularized by Flip Wilson goes, "The Devil made me do it..." and we go on sinning anyway as if we have no choice.

Well, Scripture says we *have* a choice: the choice to do good; the choice to do what He did. This choice is the choice to be free from the bondage of sin. There was a time in our lives before we

became believers in Him that we had no choice. We were in bondage to sin (Romans 6) and sin reigned over us, but now we are freed from sin (verse 18). We have a choice to do as Jesus did!

When we ask the question “WWJD?” we are saying that our choice is to do what He would have done in the same situation. What we need to do is to broaden the question to see if there are areas in our lives that do not live up to “WWJD?”

When we consider the implications of the question “WWJD?” we find that it is greater and deeper than we first realized. The question goes to the essence of what He was and what we should be: holy. The answer to the question speaks to us and says:

The one who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same manner as he walked (1 John 2:6)

We need to realize that as believers in Him, we are to walk as He walked. Not only must we walk His walk in the more obvious ways, but we must learn to walk His walk in those less obvious ways which are just as important to holy living. If we don't, we are making the Messiah a partaker in our sin.

When we became believers in the Lord, we became one spirit with Him. Our body members became members of the Messiah and His Holy Spirit dwells in us.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Messiah? Shall I then take away the members of Messiah and make them members of a harlot? May it never be!

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:15, 19)

When we sin, He is in us; He is partaking with us: we are defiling His temple. I am sure He doesn't like that, though He realizes as believers we will sin. We often ignorantly sin because we don't know the Scriptures as we ought or were mis-told.

Sometimes, we do it deliberately; even though we know what the Scripture says. But when we truly repent of our sin (turnaround from our sin), ask forgiveness for our sin and choose to do what is right, God will forgive us and heal us.

Since He dwells in us, the Lord expects us to live holy lives. We should *care* what we do with Him living inside of us. We should ask the question “WWJD?” and search the Scriptures diligently to find the answer. To do that, we must put human tradition and doctrine aside in favor of the Scripture's position and seek to walk as He walked.

That is true discipleship. ☞



Dr. Bruce Booker received s'micha (ordination) as a Messianic Rabbi through United Messianic Jewish Alliance. He currently serves as the Messianic Rabbi of [Beth Yeshua Messianic Fellowship](#), Priest River, Idaho. Bruce has led several Messianic fellowships and congregations since 1989, including Beth Shalom Messianic Congregation, Sandpoint, Idaho, and Beth Shalom Messianic Congregation, formerly of Colton, CA - currently in Rancho Cucamonga, CA.

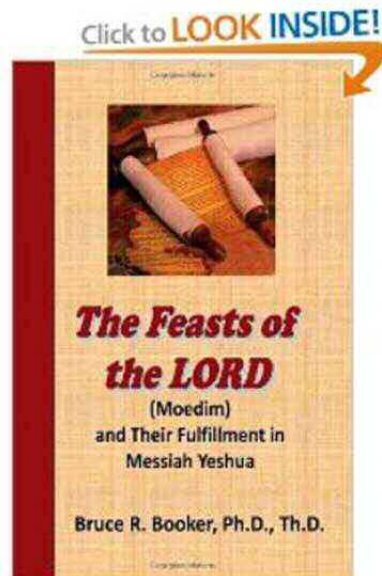
He is the author of several books including: THE LIE Exposing the Satanic Plot Behind Anti-Semitism, A Merciful Severity - A Study of Christian Anti-Semitism through the Centuries, God, Give me Patience NOW!, A Call to Holiness, and What If?

The Feasts of The Lord (Moedim) And Their Fulfillment In Messiah Yeshua

By Rabbi Bruce Booker, Ph.D., Th.D.

Yeshua said, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-47)." As proof of His credentials as Messiah, He fulfilled the TANAKH (Older Testament). He is the One of Whom the prophets spoke. He came to fulfill ALL the Feasts of the Lord (Moedim) found in Leviticus 23.

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Why Christians Should Learn Their Biblical Hebraic Roots?

by Richard Booker, Ph.D.
(BLCs Associate Professor of Hebraic Heritage Studies)



Why should Christians learn their biblical Hebraic roots? The answers to this question cannot only be informative and enlightening, they can also be somewhat challenging because they force us to rethink centuries of tradition and stereotyping regarding Christianity and Jews.

Most do not realize there was a vital connection between Christianity and Judaism that was severed by the Christian church centuries ago. Once that severing took place, biblical Judaism and biblical Christianity, which God intended to be one, went their separate ways with tragic consequences for both.

Returning to Our Roots

We are living at a time when the Lord is calling both Jews and Christians back to their biblical roots. The biblical root of Christianity grew from an everlasting covenant God made with Abraham. Christians become part of that covenant through faith in Jesus.

There were 2,000 years of Hebrew history, culture, language, traditions and customs that formed the root of Christianity. We may not like it or want to acknowledge it, but Christianity is nourished from that Hebraic/Jewish root.

A Jewish rabbi from Tarsus, known as the apostle Paul, wrote these words to the Christians in Rome, *“Do not boast against the branches (Jews). But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root (the Hebraic origins of our faith), but the root supports you (Christianity) (Romans 11:18).”*

The root is the origin, the cause, the source that establishes and gives life to that which is attached to the root. The more we can learn about our Hebraic/Jewish roots, the more blessed we will be in our Christian lives.

A Fuller and Clearer Understanding of the Bible

While Christians in America view life with a Western mind and worldview, the Bible was written by Abraham’s descendants who had an Hebraic culture, language, and worldview. This presents

a real problem and challenge. We have a Middle-Eastern book that we seek to understand from our Western culture.

Our Western perspective can easily cause us to misunderstand the Bible. Furthermore, our mind has been more influenced by Greek philosophy than biblical, Hebrew thought. This is why we must study the Hebraic/Jewish roots of Christianity.

The Bible is a Hebrew book, telling the story of the Hebrew people. Jesus was a Hebrew Lord. We, on the other hand, are Western people sharing a very diverse and sometimes controversial heritage that comes from many sources. If the Bible is going to be understood in our day, we must develop 'Hebrew eyes' and 'Hebrew attitudes' toward life.

When we read the Bible through Hebrew eyes, our understanding becomes much richer, deeper, and clearer with more detail than we could ever imagine. We gain new and powerful insights and clarity of vision because we are perceiving the Bible through the eyes of the writers. We see truths that we just cannot see with our Western eyes no matter how honorable our motives and intense our desires.

Exciting New Insights About the Teachings of Jesus

While Christians have a good understanding of the divinity of Jesus, few know Jesus the man. Every culture makes Jesus over into its own image.

Westerners get upset when they discover that Jesus was not a European. Religious groups get upset when they discover that Jesus was not a member of their denomination. The PLO is trying to make Jesus into a Palestinian.

Jesus was a Jew born into a Jewish family in the Jewish village of Bethlehem in the land of Israel. His heritage was Hebraic and He kept all the laws of God.

JESUS

- Read the Jewish Scriptures
- Spoke Hebrew
- Wore Jewish clothes
- Ate only biblically kosher food
- Kept the Jewish Sabbath
- Celebrated the Jewish feasts
- Followed Jewish customs
- Lived His entire life as an observant Jew

Jesus' followers were Jewish. The New Testament tells us that they worshipped on Saturday (the biblically appointed day), attended the Synagogue and kept the feasts. They acknowledged

Jesus as the Jewish King and Messiah, wrote the “Jewish” New Testament, and lived *Torah*-observant lifestyles (Acts 21:20).

Jesus and His early followers were deeply rooted in the rich Hebraic soil of their ancestors. They thought, taught, and lived out of this soil. God planted Christianity in this soil and we must return to it in order to be biblically nourished.

Clarification of Paul’s Writings

Paul is one of the most misunderstood persons in history. Both Christians and Jews believe Paul was an anti-“Law” Jew who established a Gentile brand of Christianity that was different from his ancient faith. We learn otherwise when we study Paul’s writings from his Hebraic-Jewish roots.

The greatest misunderstanding of Paul’s writing relates to his views on Law and Grace. For centuries, the church has taught that, in the First Testament, the Hebrews were saved by Law, but in the New Testament we are saved by grace and faith.

From a Western view, the Law was understood as a legalistic system of rules which the Hebrews had to keep in order to be saved. Grace was understood as freedom from the Law. Judaism with its Law, and Christianity with its grace, was placed in opposition to one another.

This is a Western view, but it is not Paul’s view, nor is it what he intended us to understand from his writings.

TORAH

- The Hebrew word for law is *Torah*.
- It means to teach, instruct, guide, and direct.
- *Torah* is teaching people the way to walk with God.
- It does not mean a legalistic set of rules one must follow in order to be saved.

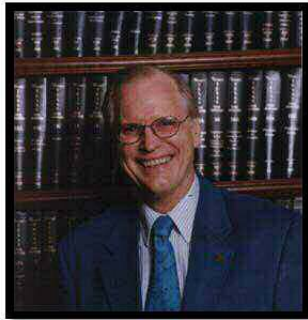
The consequence of this unfortunate misunderstanding has been a disaster for the church. Christianity became a “lawless” religion in which people believed they could simply confess a creed and live as they pleased. *The entire New Testament is Torah teaching us how to walk with God in order to live an abundant Christian life.*

A Better Follower of Jesus

Another exciting benefit of studying our Hebraic/Jewish roots is that we will be a better follower of Jesus. Jesus said to two of His followers, “... ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ (Messiah) to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:25-26).

Luke recorded this story and went on to say. *“Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him. ... And they said to one another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?’ ” (Luke 24:31-32).*

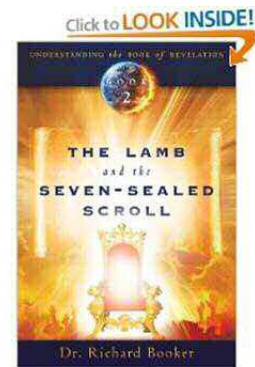
When we learn our Hebraic/Jewish roots, the Spirit of the Living God will open our spiritual eyes to know Jesus more clearly and more intimately. God’s words will burn within our hearts with a fresh fire that cannot be quenched. ✞



Dr. Richard Booker is the President of [Sounds of the Trumpet Ministries](#) and the Founder of the Institute for Hebraic-Christian Studies. He is the author of the bestselling book “The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread” and has authored over twenty books dealing with the Hebraic heritage of Christianity and the victorious Christian life. Dr. Booker is in great demand to teach on these subjects around the world.

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This verse-by-verse study teaches:

- How to read Revelation within the context of its biblical, Hebraic roots.
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- How to read the literary style of the apocalyptic writings of John’s time.
- The influence of Greek mythology and Roman imperial cult worship are a background to understanding the Book of Revelation.
- The connection between the context of the Book of Revelation and our world today.
- There is hope for believers facing the challenging days ahead.

God will authorize who can loose the seals, open the scroll, and read His final prophetic word for humankind. Open this book for an inside look at the end times!

[Order Book at Amazon.com](#)



The Foundation of Wisdom

By Pastor Michael Rodhouse, B.A. (Associate Pastor, Biblical Life Assembly)

“And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship;” Exodus 35:30-31 [emphasis mine]

Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge: These three words stuck out to me while reading a recent Torah portion. As I meditated on these words and read a teaching on this portion, I could not get away from the first word, *wisdom*. While there are great and in-depth teachings on all three of these words, in this article I will deal primarily with *wisdom*. In doing so, I want to discuss its definition, its use in the Scriptures and its application to us today.

Wisdom Defined

Webster defines *wisdom* as "the quality or state of being wise; knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action; sagacity, discernment, or insight." Strongs (#2451) defines the first appearance of *wisdom* or *hok-mah* in Hebrew as "wisdom (in a good sense): skillful, wisdom, wisely, wit."

With a basic knowledge of Hebrew letters, the definition of *wisdom* can be even better defined as follows:

Hok-mah in Hebrew is spelled חכמה. When applying the common representations of these Hebrew letters, a greater understanding of *hok-mah* surfaces (Remember that Hebrew reads right to left):

פ = "separate"

כ = "open hand; cover"

מ = "water/chaos"

ה = "behold; reveal"

Putting these together, one could easily conclude that in Hebrew, wisdom is something received by "separating ourselves to God, opening our hands to Him and allowing Him to reveal to us the way out of the chaos in our lives." While this may be stretching it to some, when compared to the Scriptures it lines up.

We can conclude then that wisdom involves discerning right and wrong and revelation or insight for dealing with life's situations.

God's View of Wisdom

Before we can rightly apply wisdom in our own lives, we'll need to see how it was used in the Scriptures. God apparently has a high esteem for wisdom, as he used it to found the planet we live on. **Proverbs 3:19** says,

"The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens."

And then again in **Proverbs 4:7**:

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."

Apparently God has no problem with us storing up wisdom. See also how He praised Solomon in 1 Kings 3:11-13 when Solomon chose wisdom over riches and a long life. God wants us to have it so much He literally gives it away, too! Check out **Proverbs 2:6**:

"For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."
[emphasis mine]

and **James 1:5**:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." [emphasis mine]

Wisdom from God is apparently so easy to attain that James says we need only ask. Proverbs 9 describes wisdom as practically standing on the roof of her house shouting "Hey everybody, if you want me, come on up! I'm right here! See?"

If wisdom is so easily defined and so easily accessible, then why do we not have more of it these days? Why does it seem so difficult to get? If God is shouting from the rooftops to give it away, then why does it seem so lofty? How do we get wisdom? The answer is found in one simple word: *obedience*.

Wisdom Today

So how do we get wisdom today? The same way they got it in the Bible: *by obeying His Commandments*.

The reason why wisdom is so absent in the lives of people today is because they don't require themselves to obey all of God's commandments. Many keep a modified version of the Ten Commandments, but very few seek out all of God's Commandments and strive to obey them. This is unfortunate. The Commandments forsaken in our theologies, churches and lifestyles hold the key to the pure wisdom that comes from above (see James 3:17).

In **Deuteronomy 4:6**, God said to His children before they were to take the Promised Land:

"Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

Biblical Definition of Wisdom: The Wisdom that is from above



Now let's think about this for a second. Would God in His wisdom put bondage on His people after taking them on a 40-year journey away from it? Of course not! The commandments were

never intended to put people in bondage! God's Law (the Torah) was a loving teaching and instruction (like a father to a son) to show His children how to live and "hit the mark" in life. If they obeyed God's commandments, it would be their wisdom! Obedience, then, equaled wisdom. Disobedience equals no wisdom.

Does our God change? How are we different than the children of Israel? Why do we assume that since we have the Messiah and His atoning blood that we are exempt from obedience in order to receive wisdom? This is not negating the free gift of salvation; that has always come by grace through faith (**Ephesians 2:8**). Salvation is-and has always been- by grace, but blessings of wisdom come by obedience.

You'll notice when God uses *wisdom* in the Scriptures He uses it first, follows it with *understanding* and then *knowledge*. We showed in **Proverbs 3:19** that the foundation of the earth was with *wisdom*; then came understanding and knowledge. Let's look at another example in **Proverbs 24:3-4**:

“Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.”
[emphasis mine]

Again, the same pattern: *wisdom, understanding, knowledge*.

Let's go back to our original meaning of the word *wisdom* from the Hebrew letters: *separating ourselves to God, opening our hands to Him and allowing Him to reveal to us the way out of the chaos in our lives*. Knowing this, Satan has done a number throughout the years by getting believers to stop their obedience to the Torah (separating themselves *from* God) and opening their hands instead to the vain philosophies of the Greco-Roman mindset. This, of course, has resulted in *chaos*.

Since then, the Greco-Roman mindset has become so familiar to many of us that we've started to think it's Biblical! It's the farthest thing from it. Many have opened their hands to false wisdom, and Satan has had plenty of it to dish out. He's done it by simply reversing God's order of attaining wisdom. When the Church forsook obeying God's Commandments, Satan's pattern of *knowledge, understanding, and wisdom* was embraced: the exact opposite of God's pattern.

Greco-Roman Mindset: Decendedth not from above



We can conclude that if God is going to build anything- the earth, the Tabernacle or a house- that He is going to use *His* pattern of *wisdom*, *understanding*, and *knowledge*. It will start with wisdom as He defines it in His Torah: obedience to His commandments. Only after obedience to His commandments can genuine understanding and knowledge come. Wisdom is the foundation, understanding is the establishment and knowledge is the decor! Knowledge is the "icing on the cake" or the "finishing touch" to what is built - not the foundation!

If we get our wisdom by obeying God's commandments and receive His genuine wisdom *first* before seeking understanding and knowledge, we will get the wisdom that James 3:17 describes as "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

If we're really honest with ourselves, we'll have to confess that the bulk of our church lives have not been like this. The reason is twofold: 1) We have stopped obeying the very commandments needed to get genuine wisdom and 2) We have inverted God's pattern of wisdom and embraced the Greco-Roman mindset of knowledge first, then understanding and wisdom.

If we go back to our house example in Proverbs 24 and compare our Greco-Roman mindset with it, we see why it hasn't worked. In God's Kingdom, knowledge is what fills the rooms. But our Greco-Roman mindset makes knowledge the foundation! Nobody in their right mind would put an antique vase or a piece of furniture in the foundation! Yet, that is exactly what we have done in the theologies, churches, families and lives we've attempted to build with the Greco-Roman mindset.

Whether the emphasis has been on storing up knowledge of the Bible to impress their peers, or staying up to speed with the latest marketing techniques to bring in new "tithing prospects," many have sought knowledge first before wisdom (or obedience)! The emphasis on acquiring

and storing knowledge may have built some big buildings in the past, but it has not gotten us very far spiritually.

Because of this, wisdom has not become the "principle thing," but instead has become the "mysterious" thing that only those with "exalted knowledge" and "understanding" attain. Wisdom from God is not like this. It comes when we simply obey His commandments. Anyone can do it. No "enlightened level of knowledge and understanding" is required! Check out **Isaiah 35:8**:

“And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”

and **Psalm 19:7**:

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”

By embracing the Greco-Roman mindset of "knowledge is the principal thing" we have the other kind of wisdom that James describes as not from God, but "earthly, sensual, devilish."

Wisdom In the NT

By now one might be saying "Alright, I'm OK with what you're saying, but what does the *New Testament* say about all of this. Surely Jesus has a 'new and better' way to get wisdom, doesn't He?" I'll let Messiah's words in **Matthew 7:24-26** explain it:

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:”[emphasis mine]

"These sayings" that Jesus spoke of included his admonition to obey the Torah down to the very least of the Commandments! (**Matthew 5:19**) *Again, obedience equals wisdom.*

Another New Testament example of this concept is found in Luke Chapter 1. An angel of the Lord appeared to Zacharias while he was ministering in the Holy Place by the altar of incense. After totally freaking Zacharias out, the angel proceeds to tell him about the son he and Elisabeth will soon bring forth. After saying the prophecy from Malachi 4:5-6 about the hearts of the fathers being turned to the children, the angel goes on to say,

"and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." **Luke 1:17** [emphasis mine]

The angel used an interesting contrast by saying John the Baptist would change the "disobedient" to the "wisdom of the just." Why did he not say that John would "change the disobedient to the obedience of the just"? It is obvious, even here in our New Testament; *obedience equals wisdom!*

Jesus said that He is going to build His church. My guess is the foundation of the church He builds will be just like the earth, the tabernacle and a good house. It will not be built on a Greco-Roman "wisdom" gained by knowledge acquisition. It will be built on wisdom- as His Word defines it- that precedes understanding and knowledge. It will be founded on a wisdom that only comes from obeying His commandments.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom [obedience to Torah]. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." **James 3:13-18** [emphasis mine] ✎



Pastor Michael Rodhouse, B.A. has been associated with Biblical Life for over 15 years. He served as the Registrar of Biblical Life College and Seminary for nearly a decade before starting his own personal business – Rodhouse Field Services. Michael also serves as an associate pastor at Biblical Life Assembly and is the congregation’s praise and worship leader.



The Power of Core Values

Biblical Life Mentor's Tips 2012

by Michael K. Lake, Th.D.

It has been said:

"The man, who will not stand for something, will fall for anything."

Although the origin of this axiom is unknown, its truth is manifest in the lives of men throughout history. In fact, I am seeing its truths being manifested today throughout the Body of Christ in the Western world. You see, there is an epidemic of biblical illiteracy in the Church in our Western culture. Somehow in the Protestant movement, we have transitioned from being a people that would give up their lives for the right to read the Word of God to a people that are dying spiritually because we refuse to read it! What a spiritual paradox this places us in.

What the aforementioned axiom tries to express is the truth that if a man has not developed a code to live by with real dedication and conviction, he will run after every new thing filled with folly that the world will throw at him. This explains one of the reasons that the Church today is consumed with being a part of every new fad, gimmick, or philosophical idea that is embraced by the world. This is a sign of the immature believers that Paul warns us about in the Book of Ephesians:

Ephesians 4:14 (KJV)

¹⁴ That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

In the times in which Paul lived, the word "doctrine" had a different meaning than the one we attribute it to today. Hebraically speaking, "doctrine" is what you live. It is your manner of life. The world's way of living is like a storm whose waves will eventually carry your ship to the deadly rocks of a shipwrecked life. God has a better plan for you than this! He has a destiny for you, but that destiny can only be reached when you live by the core values He expresses in His Word.

Psalms 1:1-3 (KJV)

¹ Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. ³ And he shall be like a tree

planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

We have been trained by the Greco-Roman influence in the Church to despise the “Law” of God. Yet the Word, in countless verses, promises blessings and prosperity to those that meditate in the “Law.” Are we missing something here? Let’s look at the Hebrew word translated “Law” in verse 2:

Law: Strongs #08451 towrah {to-raw'} or torah {to-raw'}¹⁷

Meaning: 1) law, direction, instruction 1a) instruction, direction (human or divine) 1a1) body of prophetic teaching 1a2) instruction in Messianic age 1a3) body of priestly direction or instruction 1a4) body of legal directives 1b) law 1b1) law of the burnt offering 1b2) of special law, codes of law 1c) custom, manner 1d) the Deuteronomic or Mosaic Law.

First with the Torah, and then throughout the entire Old and New Testaments, is the instruction of God. Within this instruction are divine core values that are essential to walking in the Kingdom of God and staying free of the siren’s song of this world. When we read and meditate on the Word of God (Genesis – Revelation), we begin to see, understand, and implement God’s core values in our lives with devotion that serves as part of our worship to Him.

It is God who defines what is right or wrong, clean or unclean, holy or unholy. It is His instruction, when consistently applied in our lives, that places us in strategic positions for advancement, prosperity, and blessings. His principles are also safeguards to keep us on course and from the rocky shores of ungodliness.

Yet the world has done several things to throw the Church off course:

- Biblical Illiteracy
- Progressive Philosophies

The first takes us away from the only source of true core values to live by. The second teaches us concepts like:

- Situational Ethics (i.e., do wrong, if you think you can get away with it.)
- Relativism (i.e., there are no absolutes.)
- The End Justifies the Means (i.e., lie, cheat, steal, and kill for the greater good.)

The list goes on of these philosophies birthed in the darkest corners of hell itself. The world is being positioned strategically to welcome the anti-Christ with open arms. The only antidote is a return to a life of devotion to Christ that includes a passion of His Word and living by His principles as an expression of our worship of our Creator.

¹⁷ Strong's Enhanced Lexicon. BibleWorks for Windows 7.0. BibleWorks, LLC, Norfolk, VA. Copyright © 2006.

We need to realize that when we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, God's Law was written on our hearts. The prophets of the Old Testament looked to our day with wonder:

Jeremiah 31:30-33 (KJV)

³⁰ But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. ³¹ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: ³² Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: ³³ But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

How much is Jeremiah 31:30-33 connected to New Testament believers? Verse 31 is where we get the concept of the New Covenant or New Testament. These verses are the prophetic foretelling of the New Birth that Messiah would one day come to give. Part of that New Covenant was that God's Law (Torah or instruction) would be written on our hearts - in other words, encoded into our spiritual DNA are God's core values expressed in the Torah.

This is why the Apostle Paul instructs us to walk in what the Holy Spirit encoded into our spirits at the New Birth:

Galatians 5:16-17 (KJV)

¹⁶ *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

When we live by the flesh (i.e. ways of this world), we are living in violation of what the Holy Spirit has encoded into our spirits (or hearts). When our actions are not in line with what God has written on our hearts, it produces frustration, inaction, and ill-effects. Let's look at these verses again in the Complete Jewish Bible:

Galatians 5:16-18 (CJB)

¹⁶ What I am saying is this: run your lives by the Spirit. Then you will not do what your old nature wants. ¹⁷ For the old nature wants what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is contrary to the old nature. These oppose each other, so that you find yourselves unable to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, then you are not in subjection to the system that results from perverting the *Torah* into legalism.

Can you see now why it is so important for a believer to meditate on the Word of God to learn God's core values and to begin living by them? It is the only way to live "by the Spirit" and to

gain victory in our lives. No wonder the Word continually promises blessings and prosperity to those that meditate in the instructions of God!

The year 2012 needs to be a year in which you return to the full counsel of God's Word, spending time meditating on the principles you learn and then beginning to make them a part of who you are and how you live. As you do, you will discover:

- **Greater faith:** your spirit and soul will be in agreement.
- **Greater results in prayer:** powerful prayer is a product of a right relationship with God and a system of living that is in agreement with His Word. (Your heart can believe what you are asking for.)
- **Strategic Positioning:** your biblical core values will place you at the right place and at the right time for miracles.
- **More open doors** for Heaven to move in your life.
- **Fewer open doors** for Hell to invade your life.

A better life and a brighter tomorrow await you when God is the One who provides your core values to live by!

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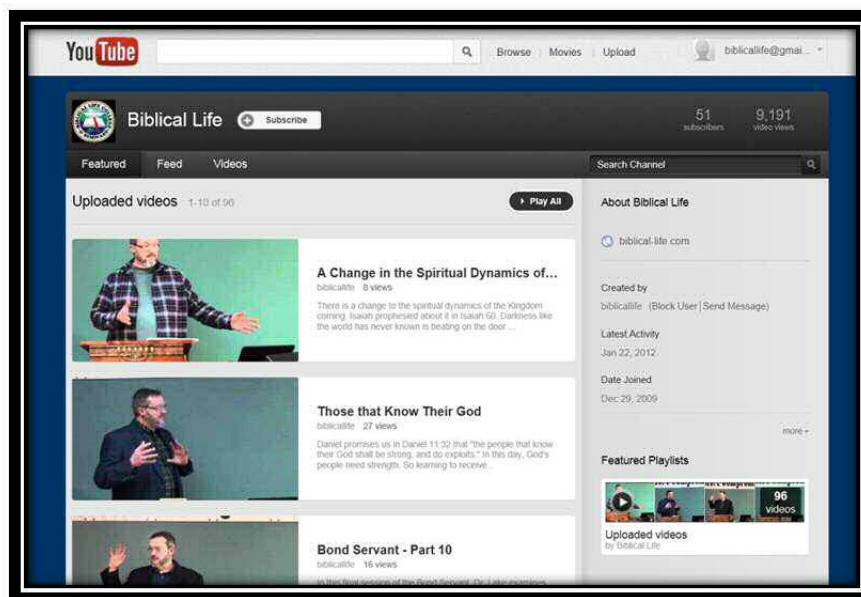
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A Jewish Perspective: For the Generations to Come – the Feasts of the Torah

by Jennifer Willford, M.S.W. (BLCS Graduate Student)

I am Jewish as are my past generations. My maternal grandmother traveled by boat with her family from Russia when she was seven. My maternal grandfather came from a long line of rabbis. My paternal great-grandfather immigrated to the United States. The pain of being persecuted for being Jewish was evident in both sides of my family, so we rarely spoke of being Jewish to outsiders. While earlier generations had a strong belief in the G-d of the Torah, later generations turned away.

My immediate family settled into a peaceful blend of keeping the occasional Jewish traditions while allowing in a bit of the world's festivities – like a white “Hanukkah bush” with blue ornaments – that was really a Christmas tree. There was enough generational *tradition* to remain set apart as a Jew and to feel somehow left out of the holidays and church activities that my friends enjoyed. My parents were quite firm in teaching us that we did not celebrate Easter because “we did not believe in Jesus”; they never were firm about what we did believe. We did not regularly attend synagogue and mostly spoke of G-d when there was a crisis. I did attend Hebrew School in third and fourth grade, so I had some foundation in the teachings of the Torah...just enough for my later journey.

When my mom passed away in 1997, I earnestly began to seek G-d. During the journey, as I learned about Jesus, G-d brought many people across my path who taught me about Jesus while gently helping me clear up my misconceptions and who guided me in the reconciliation of being Jewish and believing in Jesus as Messiah. A little more than six months later, I finally *knew in Whom* I believed - Jesus! I was greeted with “welcome to the family” at my church was quite surprised by the acceptance I received when people found out I was Jewish just like Jesus. There was little teaching of anything Jewish after that as I readily replaced the Jewish Feasts with the Christian holidays, including Christmas and Easter.

I loved reading the Word! Then came the questions – Why did the church believe some things in the Old Testament (what I called the Torah) but not others? It was then I ran into the phrase “for the generations to come”.

In Genesis 9:12, G-d confirms his covenant to not destroy the earth by floods “for all generations to come”. In Genesis 17:7 G-d covenants with Abraham to be his G-d and the G-d of all Abraham's descendants “for all generations to come”. So far, so good, we (Christians) believe this. Then I read Exodus 12:14 “This day (*the Passover*) you are to commemorate; *for the generations to come* you shall celebrated it as a festival to the LORD – a lasting ordinance”. So why do we (as Christians) not celebrate the Passover?

Around that time, friend invited me to my first messianic Passover Seder with Jews for Jesus. The Seder was the same as when I was a child (except for the explanation regarding Jesus, of course). I was astounded at the prophetic symbolism celebrated annually by the Jewish people who did not have eyes to see the Messiah in the celebration with the pierced matzo, the three matzos in the white linen bag, the hiding of the Afikomen (the middle piece of Matzo representing Jesus in the tomb), the lamb bone, the drops of wine...who could miss it? It was then that I truly understood that G-d had removed the scales from my eyes.

So, why doesn't the church celebrate the Passover? Besides celebrating Israel's deliverance from the bondage from Egypt, the Passover prophesied the coming of the Messiah! While I received a myriad of explanations, the bottom line was that my fellow followers of Jesus said that we do not celebrate Jewish holidays anymore even though the Bible says...*it is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come!*

I kept reading. As I finished Leviticus, the phrase "to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come" was repeated seven more times:

Leviticus 3:17 – "This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, that wherever you live: you must not eat any fat or any blood." *(Okay, that is a dietary reference and I knew to keep this.)*

Leviticus 10:9 – "You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come." *(What does this mean when there is no Tent of Meeting?)*

Leviticus 23:14 – "You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your G-d. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live." *(This is in reference to the First Fruits.)*

Leviticus 23:21 – "On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live." *(This is in reference to Shavuot.)*

Leviticus 23:31 – "You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live". *(This is in reference to the Day of Atonement.)*

Leviticus 23:41 – "Celebrate this as a festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month." *(This is in reference to the Feast of Tabernacles.)*

Leviticus 24:3 – "Outside the curtain of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, Aaron is to tend the lamps before the LORD from evening till morning, continually. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come." *(What does this mean when there is no Tent of Meeting?)*

On a side note, as I write this I am aware that Leviticus 10:9 and Leviticus 24:3 are not clear to me since there is no Tent of Meeting, but that will be a subject for another day and for prayer. Just because I do not understand these two does not nullify the other five references. I have much to learn.

While I had no answers to my questions at that time, I knew enough to understand that G-d would not say something as distinctly permanent as “a lasting ordinance for the generations to come” and then change His mind when Jesus came along (since the Father knows all things in advance). In retrospect, I did not *really* want to know the answers. I cared more about being like other Christians than I cared about what G-d was trying to teach me. I was finally a part of the “Christian” celebrations that I had coveted as a child, so I did not pursue the matter. I did not even notice that Christmas and Easter were not mentioned in the Scriptures. I did not bother to research the origins of these man-made traditions. I did notice, however, that I did not experience shalom in my spirit during these Christian festivities. I wanted to please my husband and his family. I knew of the Feasts, learned a little bit about their prophetic significance, and occasionally celebrated Passover. And yet...I knew that in my heart of hearts that my Savior was not pleased with my choices.

Last fall, my husband (who is not Jewish) and I watched Biblical Life’s **“The Feasts of the Lord and their Spiritual Significance in the Life of the Believer.”** Afterwards, it was actually my husband’s suggestion that we come in line with the teachings of the Torah and do what Jesus did – celebrate the Feasts. We also learned in that series that G-d was not pleased when we let go of the commands of G-d and instead hold on to the traditions of men (Mark 7:8); nor is He pleased with us using pagan celebrations to honor Him (Deuteronomy 12:4-8 and 30-31). Consequently, fourteen years after I became a follower of Jesus, we did not celebrate Christmas this past December. Instead, we used the eight days of Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, to re-dedicate our lives to living the Torah and to study about being bond servants, and we found shalom.

Now, the journey has come full circle and I feel as though I have come home. I am back where I started being set apart, now as a Jewish follower of Jesus. Holy means being set apart; to be set apart is an honor and privilege. I am learning more about my Hebraic roots as I study the Word and as a student of Biblical Life. While my choice to not pursue understanding “a lasting ordinance for the generations to come” had negative consequences, I am still in awe of how G-d patiently waited for me to understand what He had been trying to teach me. He waited for me to love Him enough to choose to obey Him.

As I write this I now realize that the Lord was trying to teach me the truth about my heritage and about my future through the Scripture: “this is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.” The Spring feasts have been fulfilled; the fulfillment of the Fall feasts are yet to come. When Jesus said “If you love Me, you will obey my commands” (John 14:21), I now believe He also meant those lasting ordinances found in the Torah. Jesus did not come to abolish the Torah, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17) “For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not

the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.” (Matthew 5:18) Through Jesus, the Torah is G-d’s loving instruction to His children – to me and to you...for today and *as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.* ✎

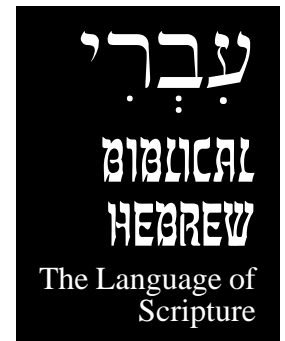


Jennifer Willford is currently pursuing her Masters of Divinity in Hebraic Heritage Studies at Biblical Life College & Seminary and has a Master’s degree in Social Work from San Diego State University. Her passion is helping others understand and apply G-d’s Word to their lives. She has 11 years of experience working with couples and individuals who have had loss or trauma in their lives. Jennifer and her husband Doug have been married for 20 years.

מלך המלכים

King of kings

BY KARL D. COKE, PH. D.



The most common phrase heard in Jewish prayers is *ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם* (*Baruch atta Adonai Elohainu melech ha'olam*) which is "Blessed art Thou, O LORD our God, King of the universe" in English. It prefaces all of their *B'Rachot* (Blessings)—*Birchot nehenin*; *Birchot he'mitzvot*; and, *Birchot hoda'ah* (joyful experiences; performing a mitzvah; and, petition, praise or thanksgiving).

According to Blu Greenberg in her book, *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household*, page 143, "These particular blessings are among the most beautiful features of Judaism. What they imply is that we take absolutely nothing for granted."

Lisa Aiken said in her book, *To Be a Jewish Woman*, page 83, "*Lehitpallel* means "to pray" in Hebrew, but it also means "to judge oneself." This suggests that prayer should not be our way of trying to convince God to change how He runs the world. Rather, it should be a process by which we introspect and then change who we are, thereby allowing God to respond to us differently than he otherwise would."

Following in the Jewish woman's traditional dedication and respect for prayer, Ruth Specter Lascelle in her book, *Jewish Faith and the New Covenant*, spoke of the *Talliith*, the Jewish prayer shawl. On pages 49 and 50, she wrote of God's request in Deuteronomy 22:11-12 not to use wool and linen together. Her comment about prayer was, "How the LORD desires an undivided heart in our worship, an unwavering faith, not tossed about by every wind of doctrine, not mixed with the religion of the world, but PURE and single to his honor and glory!"

Prayer is a pure way for man to establish the kingdom of God in his life. Prayer sets God upon His throne. Therefore, God allows each man to place a single, royal blue, woolen thread in the *tzitzit* attached in the four corners of his prayer shawl. This encourages each man, as the head of his family, to pray as a "king-priest." The mix of linen and wool was allowed for priests only and the dye used to make the royal blue thread was so costly that only kings could afford it.

Numbers 15:37-41 declares twice that each man should "look upon" the *tzitzit* and be reminded that he should do all of God's commands. Man's authority in God's kingdom comes from God's Word at work in each "king-priest's" life, not each man demanding that God perform on his behalf as described in Scripture. God is sovereign and requires His will be done—and so, it shall be done!

Exodus 19:6 reveals what God looks for from His people. It says, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." The Hebrew text says, "ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש." God wants "king-priests" that is, a "nation set apart." According to verse 5, this makes this people God's "treasured possession." Since מלך in Hebrew means "to reign, to be king," according to Gesenius' *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament*, page 477, it is clear that God intends His people to rule and reign with Him! כהן (priest) in Hebrew means, "a prophet, ... one who undertakes anyone's cause, ... he who stands up in anyone's matter, ..." according to Gesenius' (*ibid.*, p. 385).

Those who are "born of His Spirit" and have taken up His cause are His kingdom of priests. John said in Revelation 17:14 (NIV) of those kingdoms who will attempt to war unsuccessfully against Jesus, "They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers." His followers are those "king-priests" over whom He is "King of kings and Lord of lords (Priest of priests).

John says of Jesus (Rev. 19:16, NIV), "On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. This passage indicates that Jesus Christ will return to rule and reign with His followers, and, perhaps, will be wearing His *Talliith*. Some scholars suggest that His *tzitzit* will be laying upon His thigh indicating His priest-king status. Written upon his shawl will be "ואדני האדנים ומלך המלכים." The angel Gabriel said, "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:32-33 NIV)

Written upon his shawl will be "ואדנים האדנים ומלך המלכים ואדני (KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS)."

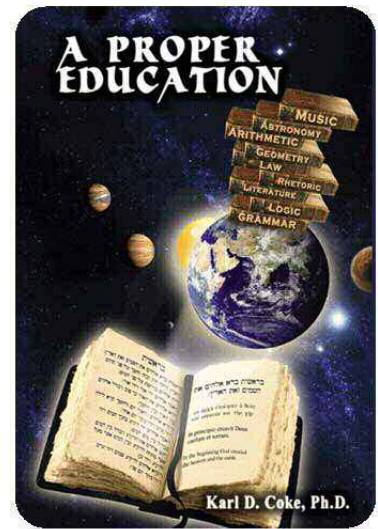


Dr. Karl Coke is the founder and president of [Karl Coke Evangelistic Association](#) and "Re-Direction" Media Ministries. He is the Professor of Greek and Hebrew at BLCS. He is also a guest speaker at many Bible Colleges and Seminaries around the world teaching on Hebrew, Christian/Judaic Heritage and related subjects. He has been serving as a tour host and teacher for 15-day bible study tours of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Greece since 1972. He serves on the Advisory Board of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America and is a member of the Evangelical Theological Society.

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