

MESSIAH THEOLOGY

VOLUME I:

THE FUNDAMENTALS



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OF:



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Preface



All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17



What would Christian theology look like if it was carefully based on everything the Bible records about JESUS (and His Apostles and Disciples who recorded the Final 27 Books of the Bible)? If we look carefully at how JESUS (and His chosen Apostles) handled, quoted, interpreted, labeled, respected, and relied on the First 39 Books of GOD’S Word, would it radically change the way we handle, quote, interpret, label, respect, and rely on those same books?

These questions and many more just like them have compelled us to carefully examine every category of Biblical study with JESUS and the Apostles as our only fixed, timeless, and infallible standard of how the 66 books of the Holy Bible should be approached. Yet the ultimate goal of the various volumes of the MESSIAH Theology series can be summed up by the words of our Brother Paul.

The volumes are meant to be: **“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of**

deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”^a

However, each person who reads our fallible words must test these volumes as the Bereans tested the words of Paul. Therefore, dear reader, we entreat you: please “**receive these words with all readiness**” and “**search the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so**”.^b Test our suppositions and conclusions, share your constructive thoughts, and together we can discover the various ways that we might return to the MESSIAH’s Theology; a theology that can *harmoniously* embrace the entire Bible from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis the very last Greek word of Revelation!

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the glorious name of our LORD, JESUS CHRIST!



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^a Ephesians 4:12-15

^b Acts 17:11

Chapter One: An Introduction to MESSIAH Theology

For two thousand years, many deeply devoted followers of JESUS CHRIST have sought to forge a conceptual key to unlock all of the amazing treasures found in the Holy Word of GOD. History reveals that they each believed “the key” would be a simple *interpretational framework* that allowed them to correctly understand the Word of GOD from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation.

Dedicated men with towering intellects searched the Scriptures like the noble-minded Bereans^a, and their earnest and sincere labors have led to several different interpretational frameworks that we simply call: “theologies” (1). Consequently today, these theologies serve as foundations for how every other aspect of the Word of GOD is interpreted!^b

Some Christians decided that the covenants GOD made with people were the key to properly understanding the Bible, and they formulated an interpretational system called “Covenant Theology” (2). Others decided that certain dispensations marked changes in the way GOD was dealing with mankind, and they developed an interpretational framework known as “Dispensationalism” (3). Still others decided that a Hebraic perspective was the key to properly understanding the Holy Scriptures, and they created a movement that they labeled “Hebrew Roots” (4).

Meanwhile, as those logical systems of interpretation (and a few more) sprung up, other, much older systems that further relied on things like *time* and *tradition*, matured. For example, Roman Catholic theology, with its three-legged stool of Scripture, tradition, and magisterium (5), developed alongside several other slightly-less- ancient, “Orthodox” sister theologies (6). And all of these Christian theologies sprang out like branches from the most ancient root of Judaism.^c

While there is most definitely truth to be found within all of these

^a Acts 17:10-11

^b 1 Corinthians 3:11

^c Acts 24:5, 24:14, 26:4-5, 28:22

various theologies (or “keys to understanding GOD and His Word”) the LORD has patiently and graciously led us to a different interpretational Key that we would like to label: “MESSIAH Theology”!^a

We invite you to join us as we attempt to share with you some of the things we have learned in our journey with our amazing GOD about how we should approach His Word, and what we believe our Creator would say the real “Key” of interpretation is: to unlock every Biblical treasure from the first Hebrew word of Genesis to the last Greek word of Revelation!

However, to begin to attempt this fairly complicated task, we would like to first invoke a few very telling verses of Scripture, that will light our way forward on our Biblical expedition.

In Colossians, the Apostle Paul wrote: “**In Christ, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.**”^b (*Emphasis Added*) That is quite a statement when you consider it! Paul is not saying that *some* of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in the MESSIAH, he is saying *all* of them are! So, we must look to JESUS, and JESUS alone, to find all of the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge!

And in a very similar way, Paul once wrote: “**To those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.**”^c (*Emphasis Added*)

Imagine with me, the unfathomable power of GOD! He speaks and matter springs into existence from absolutely nothing! He utters His voice, and the sun forms, and marches through the heavens on the fixed path GOD set for it! And that sun (that GOD formed with mere words, friends) generates so much power that the University of Tennessee’s Institute of Agriculture stated: “*if all the sunlight energy striking the Earth’s surface in Texas alone [in one hour] could be converted to electricity, it would be up to 300 times the total [hourly]*”

^a MESSIAH Theology = a return to the Apostolic principle that the Bible must be interpreted through the lens of what Scripture reveals about JESUS the MESSIAH, His teachings, His example, His disciples, and the 27 books written by His Disciples.

^b Colossians 2:2-3

^c 1 Corinthians 1:24

power output of all the power plants in the world!” (7)

Nothing we can say can help us imagine how powerful our GOD truly is! Our tongue could never do Him justice! After all, He created a universe of innumerable suns much larger than ours, simply by speaking! No wonder His voice is compared to the sound of many rushing streams of water!

Yet Paul tells us that the MESSIAH (not the universe) is the power of GOD revealed! And Paul also explained that the MESSIAH created all things! All things were made by JESUS and for JESUS, and by His strength they came into being and continue to exist!

Now, please try to imagine with us the incomprehensible wisdom of GOD! When He spoke all things into existence, He instantly encoded into their molecular structure the ability to live, reproduce, and continue their kind from generation to generation! You and I have never seen a single plant, animal, or human on this earth that was not a genetic descendant of all that our GOD created! And all of the beauty, variety, and complexity of life we still marvel at flows out from the infinite wisdom of the great I AM, the eternally existing One! Meanwhile, JESUS (not DNA) is all of that glorious wisdom of GOD in the flesh!

So, if the Bible is the inerrant, infallible, sufficient, inspired Word of our Almighty GOD, and our sole source of infallible authority on earth for faith and practice (and it most certainly is!), what role does JESUS, the wisdom and knowledge of GOD revealed, play in how we must handle the Word of the LORD?

Well, Paul gives us another important clue in one of his letters to the Corinthian church. He wrote: **Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless, when one turns to**

the Lord, the veil is taken away.^a (*Emphasis Added*)

In this passage, Paul makes it abundantly clear that JESUS is the key to understanding what he called “the Old Testament” written by Moses. And the Apostle states plainly that when a person turns to JESUS the veil is taken away, and they can understand “the Old Testament” correctly!

However, before we learn how looking at every syllable of the Bible with the MESSIAH in mind accomplishes this amazing feat, this passage brings us to the first point we want to make, which is this: *JESUS is the Key to accurately understanding Biblical languages and words.*

What languages did JESUS speak? What manuscripts of the Bible did He quote? How did JESUS speak about and address the Father? What did JESUS say about the HOLY SPIRIT? How did JESUS define marriage? We can answer these questions and thousands more by carefully studying the way JESUS (and the Disciples He mentored) handled languages and words!

We have unbelievably ancient manuscripts from very close to the time JESUS rose from the grave and the Apostles and Disciples He trained wrote the final books of the Holy Bible. So, we can look to those stunningly preserved manuscripts and our modern compilations and translations to learn just how the MESSIAH communicated.

Now, with that understood, the first observation we should share with you today about how JESUS and His Apostles understood Scripture is this: not one of the Disciples of JESUS recorded in the Holy Bible ever referred to Genesis to Malachi as “the Old Testament”, or Matthew to Revelation as “the New Testament”! The only time the phrase “Old Testament” is used in the translated words of Scripture was the passage we read a moment ago in Paul’s “second” letter to the church in Corinth.

But Paul did not say that Genesis to Malachi was the “Old Testament”! He specifically indicated (in a parallel sentence) that *Moses* wrote what Paul considered to be “the Old Testament”!

^a 2 Corinthians 3:12-16

However, Moses only wrote the first five of the 39 Books of what most Christians call their “Old Testament”! And you can be sure from some of Paul’s other writings, Paul did not consider all that Moses wrote to be part of what he called the “Old Testament” (or Covenant)!^a

Please consider the respect and authority Paul attributes to Moses and the Law as he writes: **Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?**^b (*Emphasis Added*)

If Paul considered all that Moses wrote “old” and done away with, why would he appeal to Moses and the Law to establish his central point here? If the Apostle truly felt about the Law as some teachers claim, his usage of the Law here would be like someone arguing from some antiquated Roman regulation in a modern American courtroom!

Also, in this passage, Paul indicates that GOD was the true Author of the “Law of Moses”. And he explains that GOD was concerned with more than just oxen when He gave Moses the above-mentioned commandment in the Torah, or Law, or Pentateuch; which are simply three different names for the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

So, you may be wondering: *“If JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples did not call Genesis to Malachi ‘the Old Testament’, what did they call that vast section of the Holy Scriptures?”* And the answer is very easy to find!

JESUS was referring to those books in His most famous sermon of

^a The word translated as “testament” in 2 Corinthians 3:14 is Strong’s #G1242 - **dee-ath-ay'-kay**. And this word is translated “covenant” in the NKJV 27 times, while it is only translated as “testament” in 2 Corinthians 3:14, Hebrews 9:16 and Hebrews 9:17.

^b 1 Corinthians 9:8-11

all, the Sermon on the Mount, as He emphatically said: **“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”**^a

Here we should explain: “the Law” (or in Greek: the “*nomos*”^b) was what JESUS and the people of the first century called the books of Moses; while the people of the first century called the remaining books up to Malachi: “the Prophets”. So, typically they called the collection of books that spanned from Genesis to Malachi the Greek equivalent of: “the Law and the Prophets”.^c

But occasionally, JESUS and the people of the first century made another division, and called the same list of books the Greek equivalent of: “The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings”. You see, when certain books were occasionally considered separately from “the Law and the Prophets”, they were called: “the Writings”. And this third group contained the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and several other books that recorded the inspired histories and experiences of the children of Israel. (8)

The Law, The Prophets, and the Writings

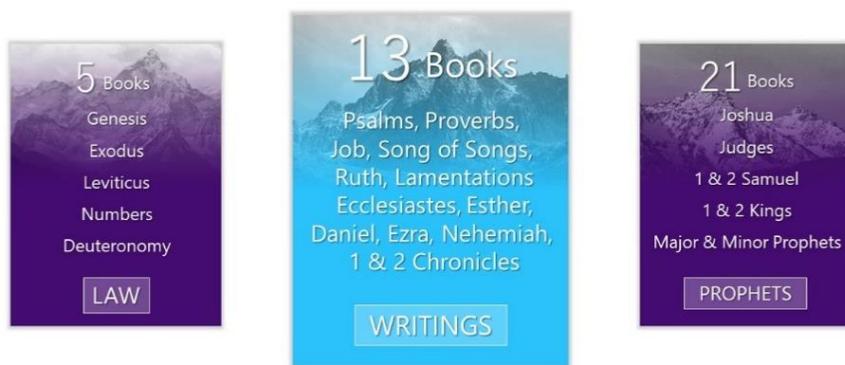


Figure 1

So, the books we have all been told to call: “the Old Testament”,

^a Matthew 5:17

^b Strong’s Number G3551: νόμος, nom'-os; from a primary νέμω némō (to parcel out, especially food or grazing to animals); law (through the idea of prescriptive usage), genitive case (regulation), specially, (of Moses (including the volume); also of the Gospel), or figuratively (a principle):—law.

^c Luke 16:16, Matthew 11:13 (Chronological statements, not Theological)

our LORD and Savior called: “The Law and The Prophets” several times^a. And once He called them: “The Law, The Prophets, and the Psalms”^b, because “the Psalms” were the most prominent book in the section they knew as “the Writings”.

Meanwhile, the reason so many have been *mised* to label Genesis to Malachi “the Old Testament” is this: although JESUS plainly said “**Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.**”^c, almost every theological system ever invented mistakenly “thinks” JESUS came to abolish or set aside most or all of the Law and the Prophets! And this error flows out of a misunderstanding of the very precise word JESUS used when He said “**I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill**”. (*Emphasis Added*)

Many have been led to believe that JESUS came and “*fulfilled the requirements of the Law*” so we don’t have to. And with this mindset, they are taught that the requirements of “the Law and the Prophets” were “accomplished”, or “satisfied” by JESUS so that we no longer have to “satisfy” what was written in them. However, according to every ancient Greek manuscript we have available to study, the word JESUS used here was “plērōsai”; and in context, this word means: “to fill to the full”, or “to fill to overflowing”. (9)

^a Matthew 5:17, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 11:13, Matthew 22:40

^b Luke 24:44

^c Matthew 5:17

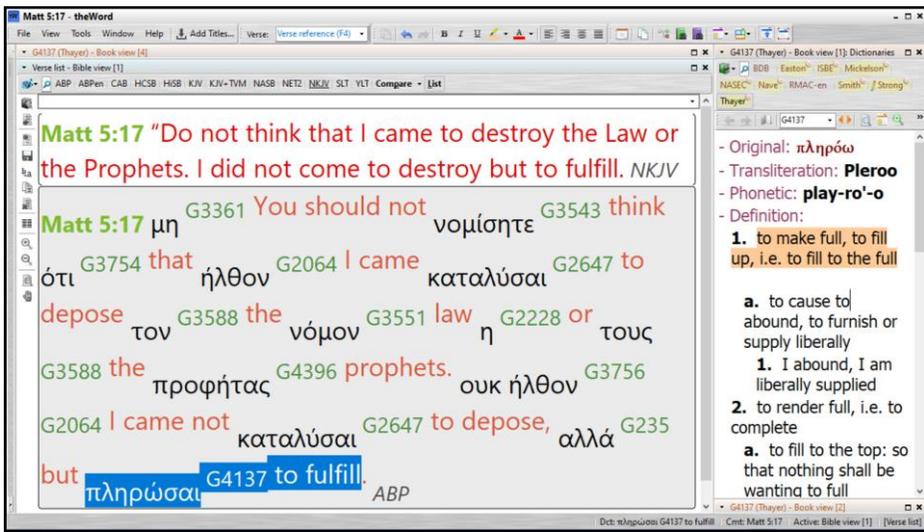


Figure 2

This is why, in the same Sermon just after commanding all who were listening “not to think” that He came to abolish or set aside the Law or the Prophets, JESUS said things like: **“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ “But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.”^a**

Brothers and Sisters, if the 6th commandment was a bucket of water, JESUS just filled that bucket up until it was overflowing, and spilling all over the ground it was sitting on! And that image is exactly the picture our MESSIAH was painting when He explained that He came to literally **“fill the law to the full”!** You see, JESUS filled *the moral requirement* of the Commandment against murder up to a higher level by explaining that we can murder our brother with our tongue!

And later, JESUS was “filling the Law up to overflowing” when He said: **“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her**

^a Matthew 5:21-22

in his heart. “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. “And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”^a

Truly, Moses was only given a Commandment against *physical* acts of Adultery, but JESUS ‘filled the Law and the Prophets to the full’, when He made it clear: we can commit adultery *in our hearts*, and end up in hell for it!

We ask you, which do you think is easier: to not *physically* murder your enemy, or to love them and pray for them? Is it easier to avoid *physical* adultery than it is to avoid adultery *in the heart*? Was the *Law of Moses* harder or easier than the *Law of CHRIST*? As JESUS once said: **“to whom much is given, much is required”!**^b

The Son of GOD died for our sins, but only lambs and goats were sacrificed for the sins of the children of Israel! And more importantly, only Prophets, Priests, and Kings were filled with the HOLY SPIRIT in the First Covenant, but now every individual disciple of JESUS is filled with the SPIRIT! In fact, in the New Covenant, our bodies are now “the temples” of the LIVING GOD! So, based on the LORD’s principle **“to whom much is given, much is required”**, do you think the moral standards have been raised or lowered by our holy MESSIAH?

The Law’s righteous requirements most definitely still stand, and that is why Paul wrote: **For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**^c (*Emphasis Added*)

Truly, CHRIST in You brings the hope of glory! His HOLY SPIRIT

^a Matthew 5:27-30

^b Luke 12:48

^c Romans 8:3-4

empowers us to (please don't miss this) *fulfill* the righteous requirement of the Law! And Paul is most certainly indicating: the righteous requirements of the Law are not abolished! Therefore, Paul explained: to *fulfill* the righteous requirements of the Law, all we have to do is allow the HOLY SPIRIT to lead us!

So - if JESUS did not abolish the Law and the Prophets, if He commanded us not to even think such a thing, and if He called what so many others call “the Old Testament”, “the Law and the Prophets” - the million-dollar question is: “What was Paul calling ‘the Old Testament’ in his inspired letter to the Corinthians?” Brothers and Sisters, the confusion surrounding the answer to this question is the reason there are so many Christian denominations in the world today!

Also, the answer to the question: “*What was Paul calling “the Old Testament?”*” leads us to our second point. And that second point is: *JESUS is the Key to accurately understanding Biblical phrases and concepts.*

The book of Hebrews (which we consider to be the most profound theological treatise on MESSIAH Theology that will ever be written) explains that JESUS has become an eternal High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. And it goes on to explain that the tribe of Judah (from which our LORD descended) was never mentioned in the Law as being associated with the priesthood.

Then, with point after point (and with great detail), the epistle goes on to establish that JESUS is a *better* High Priest, He offered *better* sacrifices, He has declared *better* promises, He presides over a *better*, heavenly Tabernacle, and His laws are written in a *better* place – namely on the hearts and minds of His people! Then, after describing the various ways the New Covenant was “better”, Hebrews explains: **In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.^a**

Did you notice that Hebrews did not say that JESUS did away with the priesthood, the tabernacle, or His laws? Instead, we are told that He simply offers *better* versions of *the same things*! Please

^a Hebrews 8:13

consider, who gave Moses the Law, the priesthood, the promises, and the Tabernacle of the first covenant? GOD, right? Do you think that GOD made any mistakes when He gave those things to Moses?

If it would help you answer the question, Hebrews explains: **For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.**^a (*Emphasis Added*)

Friends, shadows always look just like the object that creates them; and if GOD created the Levitical system to foreshadow the ministry of the MESSIAH, you can be sure it was perfectly designed down to the last detail! So, if you honestly and accurately want to understand our MESSIAH and His heavenly priesthood, don't throw out the Law! Take a closer look at the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, with the MESSIAH in mind!

And if you want to understand what aspects of the First Covenant were imposed until the time of the New Covenant in the MESSIAH, take a closer look at the book of Hebrews, where it is written: **Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.**^b (*Emphasis Added*)

With all our heart (and with 100% confidence), we can guarantee to

^a Hebrews 10:1

^b Hebrews 9:6-11

you today; if you honestly search the Scriptures and look for the parts of the Law Paul and His fellow Apostles considered “old”^a, you will find that they all fall very neatly under the description of: **“foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation”^b**! No one will ever be able to produce a single Bible verse to successfully challenge this assertion. And if you allow Hebrews 9:10 to frame what you consider to be the “Old Testament”, every other passage of Scripture will fit together perfectly for you, we promise! (Please see MESSIAH Theology Volume III: Biblical Continuity^c, for more information on this subject)

JESUS is our true Reformer! He made the shadows of the Levitical system a reality, through His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and sending of the HOLY SPIRIT! Plus, the entire Exodus of Israel from Egypt was orchestrated by GOD so that we would understand our salvation in the MESSIAH properly!^d

Did you know that JESUS was crucified on *Passover*?^e The writers of the Gospels make it very clear that the last supper was a Passover meal^f and JESUS was crucified on the same day the Passover lamb was slain! This is why Paul tells us that **“CHRIST our Passover was sacrificed for us”^g**!

Then, as the evening shadows grew long and the First *Day of Unleavened Bread* approached, our sinless MESSIAH was placed in the tomb, as The Unleavened Bread from Heaven Who brought life to the world through His death.^h

Later, as *the Day of Firstfruits* dawned (on the day after the Sabbath that followed the first day of Unleavened Bread), death lost its tenuous grip on our Savior. And JESUS rose victoriously from the

^a Philippians 3:2-11

^b Hebrews 9:10

^c bit.ly/messiahtheology3

^d 1 Corinthians 10:1-6

^e John 19:14

^f Luke 22:15

^g 1 Corinthians 5:7

^h John 19:41-42

grave, securing our hope forever!^a

Also, exactly 50 days later (on *the Day of Pentecost* (also known as the “Feast of Weeks” or “Shavuot”)), JESUS sent the promised HOLY SPIRIT to empower and guide His disciples!^b So, the SPIRIT wrote the Law on our hearts and our minds, just as the prophets promised!^c And He enables us to fulfill the righteous requirement of that glorious Law; as we walk in His guidance, and die to the flesh!^d

So, now we wait for the great sound of a trumpet,^e that will blow on *the Feast of Trumpets* to herald the return of our triumphant KING! And, at that great sounding of the last trumpet, we shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye; as we are caught up to meet JESUS in the air!^f

Then, JESUS will rid the earth of all lawlessness^g, He will imprison Satan^h, He will discard the Beast and the False Prophetⁱ, and finally, He will be “at one” with His Bride on *the Feast of Atonement!*^j

Therefore, we will “Tabernacle” forever and ever with our MESSIAH, on a new earth, under a new Heaven, as the fulfillment of *the Feast of Tabernacles!* And, after 1000 years of us ruling and reigning with JESUS, the New Jerusalem will descend in all of its glory, so our heavenly FATHER can dwell in our midst, for eternity!^k

While it is most certainly true that GOD made several different “covenants” with mankind throughout history, He only called one of those Covenants “*the Covenant!*”^l GOD only had one holy Ark made to carry the Tablets of what He called *His Covenant!*^m And He only

^a Matthew 28:1 SLT, Leviticus 23:10-11, Leviticus 23:15-16, 1 Corinthians 15:20, Acts 2:1

^b Acts 2:1

^c Hebrews 10:15-17

^d Romans 8:4

^e Matthew 24:31

^f 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, Revelation 11:15

^g Matthew 13:41-42

^h Revelation 20:2

ⁱ Revelation 19:20

^j Revelation 20:4

^k Revelation 21:3

^l Exodus 34:28

^m Deuteronomy 10:5

had a holy Tabernacle built to house *that* very special Covenant!^a

GOD met with Moses at the mercy seat that rested above *that* Covenant!^b And the Commandments *of the Covenant* are what JESUS and His disciples consistently taught, from Matthew to Revelation!^c

Additionally, while it is most certainly true that Paul occasionally used a Greek word that some have translated into English as “dispensation”, the word Paul used never contextually referred to a period in time! When accurately translated, the word “oy-kon-om-ee'-ah” means stewardship or administration! (10)

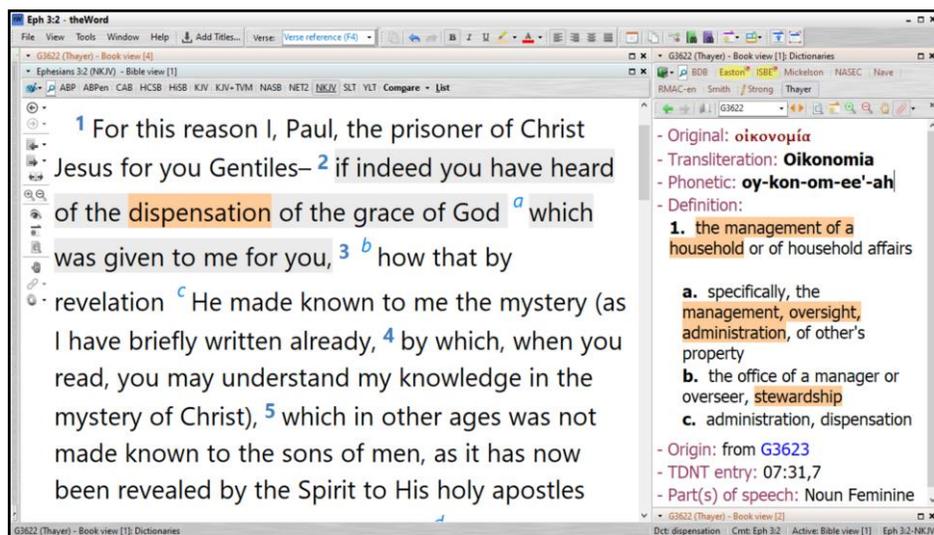


Figure 3

But most importantly, we must note: Covenantalism and Dispensationalism look at the Scriptures as if GOD completely revised the way He dealt with mankind; instead of seeing the Law and *all* of its components as a perfect foreshadowing of the MESSIAH's ministry!

Meanwhile, when we carefully read Hebrews, Scripture makes it clear: *every* aspect of the Law still exists in Heaven, except the

^a Numbers 9:15-16, Exodus 31:18

^b Exodus 30:6

^c Matthew 5:19, Matthew 19:17, John 15:10, Romans 13:9, 1 Corinthians 7:19, 1 John 2:3-4, 1 John 5:2-3, 2 John 1:6, Revelation 12:17, Revelation 14:12, Revelation 22:14

fleshly items concerned with **“foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances”** like physical circumcision, that were **“imposed until the time of reformation”**^a in JESUS.

Just as the Israelites were set free from slavery in Egypt on Passover by the blood of the Passover lamb in the First Covenant; we are set free from our slavery to sin, by the MESSIAH’s blood shed at Passover in the New Covenant!^b

Just as the Israelites were reminded to rid themselves of all leaven for the week of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the First Covenant; we are reminded each year at the Feast to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, and walk in holiness and righteousness in the New Covenant!^c

Just as the Israelites had a reminder of the hope of a harvest in the promised land on the Day of Firstfruits in the First Covenant; we have a reminder of our sure hope of a resurrection harvest in an eternal Promised Land, each year on the anniversary of the LORD’s resurrection in the New Covenant!^d

Just as the Israelites received the Creator’s Laws on tablets of stone at Mt. Sinai, on the day of Pentecost in the First Covenant; we remember how the HOLY SPIRIT wrote those same laws on our hearts and minds each year in the New Covenant!^e

Just as the Israelites were to remember at the Feast of Trumpets how GOD descended to Mt. Sinai at the sound of the trumpet in the First Covenant; we remember that GOD will descend once again at the sound of a trumpet in the New Covenant!^f

Just as, once a year, the Israelites sent the High Priest into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement to cleanse the Tabernacle in the First Covenant; we are to remember that one day the Occupant of the Holy of Holies (our Heavenly High Priest) is coming to cleanse the earth and be “at one” with His bride, and we must be ready for

^a Hebrews 9:10

^b John 8:34, Romans 6:1-7, 2 Peter 2:19-21

^c 1 Corinthians 5:7-11

^d 1 Corinthians 15:20

^e Hebrews 8:8-13

^f 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

that awesome day in the New Covenant!^a

And, just as the Israelites remembered their journey in the wilderness to the promised land by living in Tabernacles (or booths/tents) each year in the First Covenant; we are to remember that we are on a journey through the wilderness to the true Promised Land! And one day we will Tabernacle with our KING, forever and ever, as the fulfillment of the promises of the New Covenant!^b

We must never discard a single inspired Word of the Holy Scriptures!^c Instead, as we all travel along our own personal 'road to Emmaus', we must allow the MESSIAH to teach us how He is the key to understanding it all: from the very first Hebrew word in Genesis to the very last Greek word in Revelation!

^a 2 Peter 3:10-12

^b Revelation 21:3

^c 2 Timothy 3:15-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Matthew 22:29

Chapter Two: The MESSIAH and the Truth

In a song written in 1983 by B.J. Thomas entitled “*That’s What’s Wrong with The World Today*”, the chorus solemnly observes: “*That’s what’s wrong with the world today. It’s easier to sell a lie, than to give the truth away*” (11). The haunting words of that song very accurately describe the rapidly darkening spiritual condition of the deceived world we live in.

Advertisers inundate the public with subtly deceptive exaggerations and omissions involving their products. Politicians spin every circumstance to their advantage, make promises they know they can’t deliver and arrange secret back-room compromises. Media outlets manipulate the headlines and the stories they produce to lure in the maximum possible number of consumers. And, seeker-sensitive churches modify the timeless truth of the Gospel to appeal to the ever-changing culture.

The popular majority has become so successful at selling half-truths and outright lies in the public marketplace that the truth now seems boring to many people or even offensive and hateful to a growing number of deceived souls!

In these last days, distractions from the truth and outright contradictions against it have exponentially multiplied, and there are more and more ways in which the charlatans can distribute their seductive lies in the culture. But Scripture records there were similar periods in ancient history when the prophets of GOD found themselves facing the same disturbing situation the song was describing.

One such prophet that faced those dark days of deception was named Isaiah. During such a time, he wrote: **Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. So, truth fails, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.**^a

As we recite those words, we can’t help but think about Pastor Justin Hoke of Trinity Bible Presbyterian Church in Weed,

^a Isaiah 59:14-15

California. In 2019, Justin went out to the front of his church, opened up the plexiglass cover on his church's sign, and installed some carefully chosen letters that spelled out the following message: *“Bruce Jenner is still a man, Homosexuality is still sin, The Culture may change, The Bible does not.”*

There is not a geneticist in the world who could honestly debate the fact that Bruce Jenner is *still* a man. Every cell in Bruce Jenner's body contains a “male” identifying Y chromosome, and nothing short of a miracle can change that fact.

Also, there is not a theologian in the world who could honestly and successfully debate the incontrovertible fact that Paul repeatedly labels homosexuality a sin in his inspired letters, just as it was labeled a sin over and over again in the books of the Bible that were written before the Apostle Paul was born.

Likewise, there is not a trustworthy historian in the world who could honestly debate that culture does indeed change, but the Bible has remained unchanged for the past 2000 years. Truly, anyone who cares to test the unchanging nature of the Bible can compare a modern literal translation to the ancient dead sea scrolls, the Septuagint, and the thousands of early Greek manuscripts we have of the Final 27 Books of the Bible!

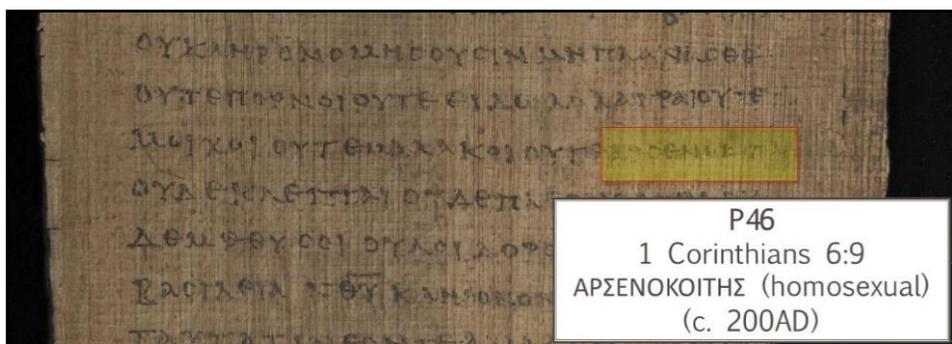


Figure 4

So, we can scientifically, theologically, and historically prove that every single word Justin spelled out on that church sign was 100% true and factual. But sadly, the congregation of Trinity Bible Presbyterian Church in Weed, California did not stand with Justin. Instead, they eventually fired him from his pastoral position.

Now, with Justin's situation in mind, please listen to Isaiah's words again. The prophet lamented: **Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. So, truth fails, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.**^a

Men like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many others have been persecuted for speaking the truth every time *deception* gains a firm foothold in a culture. When deception takes the majority captive, those who choose to speak and live out the truth become prey to the lawless people around them. And you can be sure that deception has overcome a society when churches fire pastors for simply speaking the truth!

So, because the culture (and even the church) is losing track of what truth is, today we will go back to the basics and answer the question: *What is truth?*

Please imagine that someone told you that it was going to rain today, but someone else told you it was going to snow. What if other folks told you that the day would be sunny, or cloudy, or windy, or hot? What determines which person was telling you the truth?

Well, *reality* determines truth; because truth is that which accurately corresponds to reality! So, if it rains for part of the day and it is cloudy for the rest of the day, then the rain and cloud predictions were true. But any descriptions that did not match the reality of the day were false! And the first thing we must learn from this simple analogy is that reality actually exists and it is knowable, therefore truth also exists.

You would think that the conclusion "*truth exists*" would be very well agreed to since it is the foundational basis of all logic, reasoning, study, morality, and much more. But sadly, it has become fashionable to question the existence of universal truth to twist mankind's understanding of reality. And this delusional denial of reality and truth is now so prevalent because of the twisted preferences and vanities of the individuals that currently inhabit this planet.

^a Isaiah 59:14-15

Throughout history, this trend has led to a phenomenon people have labeled “*relativism*” (12). And this very dangerous perspective of “relativism” states that “*there is no such thing as an absolute truth that applies to all people everywhere*”.

Also, this ill-conceived assertion has led to the self-defeating expression “*what is true for you, may not necessarily be true for me*”. Now please let us show you a way in which this statement can be true, and then we will show you a way in which the same statement is never true at all.

Let’s say that the person who told you it would be sunny today lived thousands of miles away, in a different location. Weren’t they speaking the truth from “their geographic perspective” if it rained where you were, while it was sunny that day at their location? Technically yes! And that is why we don’t watch the weather forecast for faraway places when we want to know the weather for *our* location!

But now let’s move our thinking up to some larger and more important issues that have nothing to do with geography or isolated realities like local culture or politics. Or, in other words, let’s move our thinking up to the types of issues that *normally* elicit the ridiculous response: “*what is true for you, may not necessarily be true for me*”.

Please imagine that someone claimed: “*there is nothing morally wrong with homosexuality*”. How do you prove that adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, or similar things are wrong for all people at all times?

Is morality only in the eye of the beholder? Is morality relative to time, geography, or politics? Do we determine what is right or wrong simply based on the perception of the masses or some perceived biological benefits, or do we base our understanding of what is right and wrong on something higher than ourselves?

In other words: *what determines the reality of morality?* And what one single reality can establish a timeless morality that *cannot* be challenged by any nation, group, or individual?

Well, the truth is: the *only* reality that can establish an unchallengeable moral truth is... *the existence of GOD!*

Universally, the title “GOD” conveys the concept of the Creator, the Lawgiver, the Judge, the Supreme Being above all other beings, and much more. And the title GOD conveys all of this because those ideas are all part of the standard definition of the word “GOD”. Therefore, wrapped up in the very definition of GOD, there is a sense of an absolute, inescapable moral standard that is beyond every single created thing.

This is why many people choose atheism or agnosticism as their Theology! These theological positions provide a shallow intellectual defense for those who refuse to submit to GOD while allowing the individual to continue making up their own arbitrary rules for themselves as they go along in life.

We should mention here that some people when they hear the word “theology” think of ivy-covered seminaries, pipe-puffing professors, or long complicated books that don’t seem to have much of an impact on how we all live our lives each day. But we contend that when we properly define the word “theology”, we find that everyone has one; and even more importantly, a person’s theology ultimately defines who they are!

Now, you may be thinking: “*an atheist does not have a theology!*” But we would have to gently disagree. You see, the term “theology” comes from two Greek words: “thay’-os”, which means GOD, and “lo’-gos”, which has come to mean “the study of something”, or “a comprehensive understanding of something”.

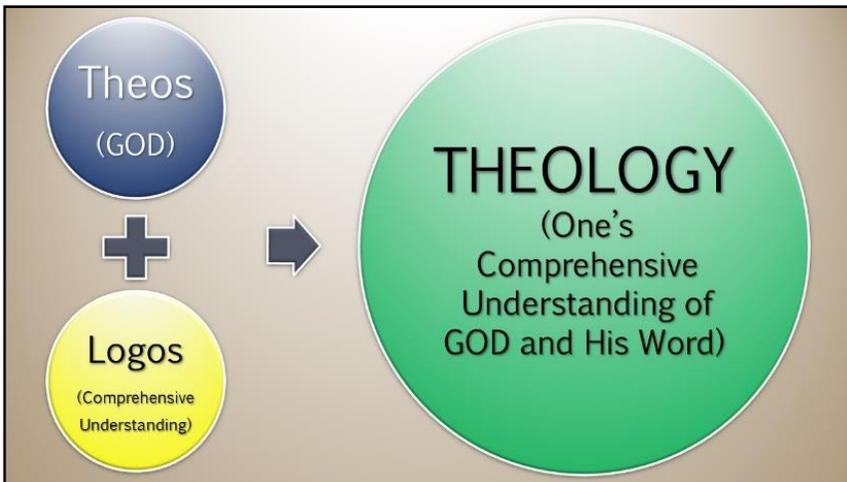


Figure 5

So, an atheist's "comprehensive understanding" of GOD is that He does not exist, and that is a theology! Plus, the term "atheist" originates from the same Greek root word the term "theology" comes from, which was "thay'-os". But instead of using the suffix "ology", the term "atheist" uses the prefix "A", which indicates disbelief in someone or something.

For example, an Amillennialist does not believe that there will be a literal 1000-year long reign of JESUS CHRIST in the future. An Agnostic person does not believe that we can have certain "knowledge" of whether there is a god or not. Something that is A-typical is something that is not typical. And someone that is A-moral is someone who does not believe in morals. So, technically speaking, an Atheist is *defined* by their theology, because the Greek word for "god" is the basis of how they define themselves.

So, it is indeed because an Atheist does not believe that GOD exists, that they typically do not believe in absolute moral values that universally apply to all people at all times. Therefore, we can conclude: because the theology of the Atheist determines their perception of morality, if their theology is wrong, and GOD *does* exist, their perception of morality is dangerously wrong.

But, just as the theology of an atheist or an agnostic directly affects the way they perceive the world, morality, human life, and more; all other forms of theology are equally as important! Truly, what we believe about GOD ultimately determines everything else we believe and do! And the most important thing any human being can do *intellectually* is to develop an accurate theology (or understanding of GOD).

Is it morally wrong to murder Christians and Jews? If your theology is that of a fundamentalist Muslim, you will answer that question with a "No!". Is it morally wrong to worship many gods? If your theology is that of a Hindu, you will answer that question with a "No".

Now, at this point we hope we can all agree with these foundational statements, which are:

- Every moral truth that exists flows directly out of the reality of the existence of GOD

- Thus, knowing GOD accurately is the key to accurately knowing the truth, and living correctly.



Figure 6

Also, the facts we have established so far equally demonstrate the opposite side of the moral equation that states: *If we don't know GOD accurately, we won't know what He expects of us, and we will fail to live correctly!* But all of this leads us to the next important question, which is: *"Is GOD knowable?"*

Given enough time, we can establish that *GOD exists* by appealing to the linguistic nature and complexity of DNA, the lack of overwhelming entropy in the universe, or the precision of the cosmological constant. Likewise, we can establish that a Creator exists by acknowledging how the expansion of our visible universe proves that space, time, matter, and energy had a beginning; and the cause of the Universe had to be beyond space, time, matter, and energy! But none of this answers the question *"Is GOD knowable?"*!

If GOD were knowable, He would have to somehow reveal Himself to His creation. And ideally, He would even provide evidence of His revelation of Himself that is reasonably testable, so that we could establish the truth of Who He is.

Consequently, if that revelation occurred through historical interactions with our human ancestors, there would have to be a

written record preserved; a record we could test scientifically.

And when we use the tools of Historiography, Archeology, Philosophy, Anthropology, Paleontology, Biology, Mathematics, Logic, Genetics, and Geology to test all of the various religious documents that claim to reveal the GOD who created us, no other document but the Holy Bible passes all of these tests and provides a logically consistent, confirmable, and harmonious picture of a divine Creator revealing Himself to His creation.

Plus, within the 66 books of the Holy Bible, various inspired writers insist that we must not “add to” the words written in GOD’s revelation of Himself to mankind. So, we refuse to develop any authoritative theological principles that go beyond the inerrant, sufficient, and infallible words found in the holy pages of the Bible.

Therefore, after analyzing the creation and all of the various books that claim to describe the Creator, we have adopted the 66 books of the Bible as our sole rule of faith and practice. And this is not “blind” faith! It is logical faith based on scientific analysis, textual research, personal experience, and the reality of millions of changed lives.

The Bible is, therefore: GOD’s timeless revelation of Himself to man! And we *can* know GOD and develop an actual relationship with Him through the words He has recorded in the Scriptures for us. Additionally, while we can use experience, science, reason, and research to confirm the Bible, we do not rely on these tools to authoritatively reveal GOD to us; because the Bible is the fixed and reliable method GOD has inspired for that purpose.

Thus, we proclaim: the only sure way to know Truth is to know GOD, and the only sure way to know GOD is to know the Holy Scriptures. Meanwhile, anything that contradicts Scripture and the Biblically revealed nature of GOD is not true. And with this firm and unshakable foundation, we can begin to test all things against the fixed measuring rod of the Bible, and eliminate any theological errors that may be leading souls astray from GOD and His exclusive Truth!

So, let’s quickly review all that we have established so far.

- First: Truth is that which accurately corresponds to reality;

and reality exists, therefore, truth exists.

- Second: If GOD exists, absolute moral values exist, and GOD exists, therefore absolute moral values exist.
- Third: Accurately knowing GOD is a prerequisite to accurately knowing truth and living correctly (and, the term “theology” is referring to a person’s comprehensive knowledge of GOD); therefore, an accurate theology is a prerequisite to knowing the truth and living correctly.
- Fourth: If GOD is knowable, He must have revealed Himself to His creation at some point in human history; and many mutually exclusive and contradictory religious books claim to record GOD revealing Himself to mankind. However, of those books, only the Bible can withstand all forms of honest scrutiny and testing. Therefore, the Bible is GOD’s revelation of Himself to mankind.
- And Fifth: Several different inspired writers of Holy Scripture directly warn against *adding* to the inspired words of the Bible, and the canon of Scripture was closed upon the death of the last Apostle of JESUS the MESSIAH^a (or CHRIST^b). Therefore, the 66 books of the Bible are the final, unquestionable, and authoritative Word of GOD in all matters of faith and practice, and we cannot add to the Holy Scriptures.

Now, with those first five foundational principles of truth firmly established, let’s discuss a theological question that deals with a very present dilemma within Christian theology. If someone said to you: “*It was morally wrong to practice divination before JESUS died and rose again, but after those monumental events occurred, it is no longer morally wrong to use tarot cards or an Ouija board*”; are they correct?

They may rightly say that divination was forbidden in the books their theology labels “the Old Testament”, but it was never mentioned in what their theology calls “the New Testament”. Or they may claim that their theology teaches that they can “reclaim” pagan practices like divination for the LORD, and turn tarot cards and Ouija boards

^a Jude 1:3

^b John 1:41, John 4:25-26

into forms of worship and prayer. But how can you know if their claims are true? Or more importantly, how can you authoritatively prove that divination is still morally wrong in the New Covenant?

First, we must recognize: if a person's theology (or understanding of GOD) begins with the subjective presupposition that 39 of the 66 Books of the Bible are "old" and "no longer applicable" to them, how do they justify claiming things like divination, soothsaying, or bestiality are still morally wrong? None of those items were directly prohibited in the Final 27 Books of the Bible; so, without the words of the Law and the Prophets (that many Christians call "The Old Testament"), how can we condemn these horrible acts?

Before we answer that very telling question, we want to make sure that we very clearly explain: the first five foundational principles we have established brought us to the sound conclusion that the Bible is true and it should be the *sole* authority of faith and practice for the Christian.

However, those who rightly call themselves Christians and affirm those first five principles begin to theologically separate immediately after the principle of truth number five. And the reason is: after agreeing to these first five principles, most Christians rely on their man-made theology as their sixth principle of truth.

Meanwhile, within the analytical framework we have laid out so far, *whatever we consider "our sixth principle of truth" will become the way we read and interpret the Holy Bible.* Therefore, (please don't miss this...) every Christian's sixth principle of truth becomes their first principle of Biblical interpretation.

Principle of Truth 6 - (<i>and Principle of Biblical Interpretation Number 1</i>) A Person's Theology
Principle of Truth 5 - The 66 books of the Bible are the Final, Unquestionable, and Authoritative Word of GOD in All Matters of Faith and Practice, and We Cannot Add to the Holy Scriptures
Principle of Truth 4 - The Bible is GOD's Revelation of Himself to Mankind
Principle of Truth 3 - An Accurate Theology is a Prerequisite to Knowing Truth and Living Correctly
Principle of Truth 2 - GOD Exists Therefore Absolute Moral Values Exist

Principle of Truth I - Reality Exists Therefore Truth Exists

Figure 7

Yes, every Christian's theology becomes their first principle of Biblical interpretation. However, based on their theology, some Christians believe that certain parts of the Bible can be set aside as "*no longer directly applicable to them*".

Or, in other words, all reasonable and orthodox theologies agree that the canon of Scripture is closed and we cannot *add* to the Holy Scriptures. And they all agree that the Scriptures must be our *sole* authority for faith and practice in the Church. But while we all agree that we cannot *add* to the Scriptures, the dilemma and divisions arise over the question of whether we can "*take away*" from them, in a theological sense.

Based on our own firsthand experiences, the labels: "Covenant Theology" and "Dispensational Theology" directly refer to the concept that certain clear and authoritative parts of Scripture "*no longer directly apply* to: 'the New Covenant believer' or 'the believer within this present Dispensation'".

So, within the framework we have presented so far: we believe that, for those beloved brothers and sisters who hold to Covenant Theology and Dispensational Theology, it is immediately after principle number five that we all separate. Thus, for consideration, please allow us to humbly suggest that we all contemplate uniting behind what we will now present as the only *infallible* principle of truth number six.

Friends, we are contending that our sixth principle of truth and our first principle of Biblical interpretation should be *JESUS Himself!* And we are contending that every Christian's ultimate standard of Biblical interpretation must be JESUS the MESSIAH!

So, if we can agree that we should look to JESUS our LORD as the first principle of how we interpret Scripture, *His* perspective towards Scripture should become *our* perspective towards Scripture.

THE ULTIMATE STANDARD OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS: JESUS THE MESSIAH!

Figure 8

We all agree that the Bible is the ultimate standard and we cannot add to it, but when it comes to how we interpret the Bible, we believe that we must remember how JESUS Himself declared: **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”**^a And: **“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.”**^b

Is Covenant Theology’s perspective “the truth” or is our LORD’s perspective “the Truth”? Is Dispensationalism’s perspective “the truth” or is our LORD’s perspective “the Truth”? Is a Hebraic perspective “the truth”, or is our LORD’s perspective “the Truth”? Please remember, the Bible teaches we are only true disciples of JESUS if we abide in His Word and follow Him.

The men the MESSIAH mentored, called to be His Apostles, and inscribed on the very foundations of the New Jerusalem, wrote in no uncertain terms: **“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”**^c

And: **“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, and evil suspicions.”**^d

So, if we make our sixth principle of truth (and our first principle of Bible interpretation) JESUS Himself, we will carefully study how JESUS spoke of and quoted the Scriptures, just as we carefully study all that He taught! Truly, careful observation of JESUS is the only way to form a trustworthy understanding of GOD and His Word. And we believe that if we do this, we will have taken one giant step forward in unity, as Brothers and Sisters in CHRIST!

Plus, if we make our second principle of Biblical interpretation the MESSIAH’s Apostles and disciples who wrote the Final 27 Books

^a John 14:6

^b John 8:31

^c 2 John 1:9

^d 1 Timothy 6:3-4

of the Holy Bible, we think we can find guidance, harmony, and joyous confidence in their Biblically authoritative perspectives!

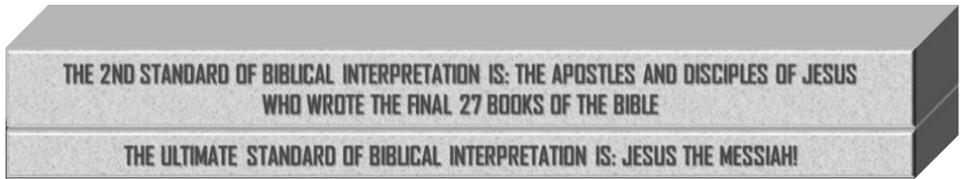


Figure 9

Truly, when we speak of Christian Theology, every Christian group that names the name of JESUS and refuses to add to GOD’s Word has presupposed principles of truth one through five. However today we are asserting that Scripture itself teaches that the mandatory next step for a Christian in developing their understanding of GOD and His Word is to **“abide in the doctrine of the MESSIAH”**, first and foremost!

Principle of Truth 6 - <i>(and Principle of Biblical Interpretation Number 1)</i> The Teachings, Perspectives, Actions, Responses, Quotations, and Theology of JESUS
Principle of Truth 5 - The 66 books of the Bible are the Final, Unquestionable, and Authoritative Word of GOD in All Matters of Faith and Practice, and We Cannot Add to the Holy Scriptures
Principle of Truth 4 - The Bible is GOD’s Revelation of Himself to Mankind
Principle of Truth 3 - An Accurate Theology is a Prerequisite to Knowing Truth and Living Correctly
Principle of Truth 2 - GOD Exists Therefore Absolute Moral Values Exist
Principle of Truth 1 - Reality Exists Therefore Truth Exists

Figure 10

When we cannot be certain of the MESSIAH’s position on a fundamental issue, we can look to those He discipled to learn how we should view, label, perceive, and handle Holy Scripture. And based on these first two principles of Biblical interpretation (and our first seven principles of truth) we can say that our Theology must come directly from Scripture, and our Theology must treat Scripture as JESUS and His disciples treated Scripture in the Final 27 Books of the Bible for it to truly be “Christian” Theology.

Principle of Truth 7 - <i>(and Principle of Biblical Interpretation Number 2)</i> The Teachings, Perspectives, Actions, Responses, Quotations, and Theology of Our LORD's Apostles and Disciples
Principle of Truth 6 - <i>(and Principle of Biblical Interpretation Number 1)</i> The Teachings, Perspectives, Actions, Responses, Quotations, and Theology of JESUS
Principle of Truth 5 - The 66 books of the Bible are the Final, Unquestionable, and Authoritative Word of GOD in All Matters of Faith and Practice, and We Cannot Add to the Holy Scriptures
Principle of Truth 4 - The Bible is GOD's Revelation of Himself to Mankind
Principle of Truth 3 - An Accurate Theology is a Prerequisite to Knowing Truth and Living Correctly
Principle of Truth 2 - GOD Exists Therefore Absolute Moral Values Exist
Principle of Truth 1 - Reality Exists Therefore Truth Exists

Figure 11

So, this leads us to the principle of truth number eight, (*and our third principle of Biblical interpretation*), which states: *we must never set aside a single word of the Holy Scriptures unless JESUS or His apostles clearly and indisputably set it aside*. And this rule is derived directly from the Bible, plus it agrees with our first two laws of Biblical interpretation.

Principle of Truth 8 - <i>(and Principle of Biblical Interpretation Number 3)</i> We Must Never Set Aside a Single Word of the Holy Scriptures Unless JESUS or His Apostles Clearly and Indisputably Set It Aside
Principle of Truth 7 - <i>(and Principle of Biblical Interpretation Number 2)</i> The Teachings, Perspectives Actions, Responses, Quotations, and Theology of Our LORD's Apostles and Disciples
Principle of Truth 6 - <i>(and Principle of Biblical Interpretation Number 1)</i> The Teachings, Perspectives, Actions, Responses, Quotations, and Theology of JESUS
Principle of Truth 5 - The 66 books of the Bible are the Final, Unquestionable, and Authoritative Word of GOD in All Matters of Faith and Practice, and We Cannot Add to the Holy Scriptures
Principle of Truth 4 - The Bible is GOD's Revelation of Himself to Mankind
Principle of Truth 3 - An Accurate Theology is a Prerequisite to Knowing Truth and Living Correctly
Principle of Truth 2 - GOD Exists Therefore Absolute Moral Values Exist

Figure 12

For example, it is written: **“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”^a** And: **“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”^b**

And Scripture also says: **“Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”^c** And: **“I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”^d**

So, the last book of Moses, (the Prophet who recorded the *first* five books of the Bible according to JESUS^e) warns that no one should add *or take away* from the Word of the LORD.

The wisdom-filled book we call “Proverbs”, in the same chapter JESUS quoted in the gospel of John^f, warns against *adding to* GOD’s words.

And the final book of the Bible, in what is almost certainly a quote of JESUS^g, we find a stern warning against “*adding to*” or “*taking away from*” the inspired words of the Book.

All of these warnings (and our stated usage of them) are consistent with the doctrine of the LORD! Because during His time of testing

^a Deuteronomy 12:32

^b Deuteronomy 4:2

^c Proverbs 30:5-6

^d Revelation 22:18-19

^e Luke 24:44, Luke 20:37, Mark 12:26

^f John 3:13

^g Notice “I testify in Revelation 22:28 is followed by: He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” in Revelation 22:20. JESUS is the one saying “I am coming quickly”, and He is the same one who testified in Revelation 22:18.

in the wilderness, JESUS resisted the devil by saying: **“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”**^a (*Emphasis Added*)

From this interaction, we can call out some additional principles of Biblical interpretation based on our foundational premise that JESUS is the Ultimate standard of interpretation.

- First, JESUS (and satan) considered the Holy Scriptures authoritative enough to settle this dispute.
- Second, JESUS quoted from the Book of Deuteronomy and treated it as authoritative Scripture, so every Christian should still treat it as such.
- And third, JESUS said man (not the Jew or the Hebrew) should live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of GOD!

Our King *often* referred to the books of Moses as authoritative. And He explained to the Sadducees: **“You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. “But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”**^b

You see, the Sadducees were *Scriptural reductionists*, and their theology led them to discard the authority of every book of their first century Bibles not written by Moses! Therefore, this error led them to deny angels, spirits, and the resurrection^c. So, after JESUS told them they were wrong, He told them that part of the reason they were so wrong was: they did not know the Scriptures (plural), meaning: the other books of the Bible they had discarded *based on their theology!*

And then, JESUS used a passage from the parts of Scripture they still recognized as authoritative to show them that they were

^a Matthew 4:4

^b Matthew 22:29-32

^c Acts 23:8

mistaken. And we believe our LORD will do the same for us if we will let Him!

Brothers and Sisters, if you have been wrongly taught to only hold the Final 27 Books of the Bible as authoritative in your theology, carefully look at the Biblical *quotations* within those 27 Books and you will find that the inspired men who penned those 27 Books all considered the First 39 Books of the Bible *perpetually* authoritative!

In chapter one, we proved beyond all doubt that JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples never called any Book or list of Books from the Bible “the Old Testament”. Plus, we also established how the Book of Hebrews made it clear that the term “Old Testament” was referring to the earthly Tabernacle that represented a perpetually existing heavenly tabernacle, an earthly priesthood that represented a perpetually existing heavenly priesthood, and earthly sacrifices that represented the perpetually atoning sacrifice of our heavenly Savior.

We saw how Scripture itself makes it clear that the only items of the first covenant that did not transfer to the New Covenant, were: **the foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation!**^a (*Please see MESSIAH Theology Volume III: Biblical Continuity*^b for more information on this subject)

So, if we adopt the idea that *only* JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples who compiled the Final 27 Books of the Holy Bible have the authority to set earlier principles of Scripture aside, we will agree to our proposed third principle of Bible interpretation. And based on that very sound principle, we will agree to let Scripture, and Scripture alone determine if an earlier commandment, law, or testimony has been set aside.

^a Hebrews 9:10

^b bit.ly/messiahtheology3

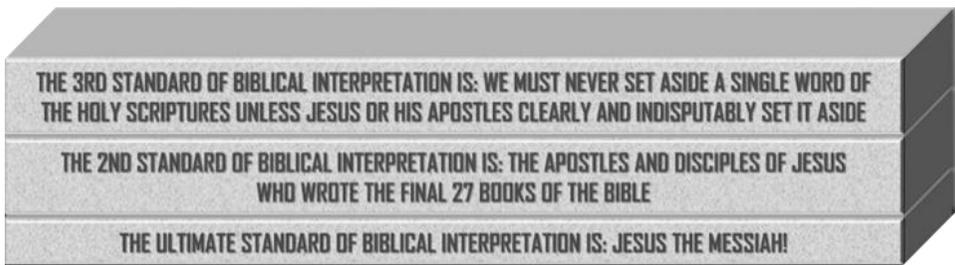


Figure 13

Truly, if we apply these three simple principles of Biblical interpretation, we will hold fast to the doctrine of CHRIST! Yes, we must hold fast to the perspective of JESUS, as well as the Biblically recorded perspectives of His Apostles, while never setting aside a single word of the Holy Scriptures unless they clearly and indisputably set it aside! Only then will we be able to comprehend the absolute truth of the Word of GOD as they did, from the very first Hebrew word in Genesis to the very last Greek word in Revelation!

Chapter Three: The MESSIAH's Final 27

The Bible is the most influential collection of writings of all time. No other volume records history from the creation of space, time, matter, and energy, all the way to the re-creation of space, time, matter, and energy. No other assortment of writings penned by such a diverse group of princes, kings, scribes, shepherds, tax collectors, fishermen, or Pharisees could ever hope to fit together as perfectly as the writings of the Bible fit together. And no other literature has ever inspired the heart of men and women to fruit-bearing-faith, enduring hope, and sincere love; like the Holy Bible has.

The word "Bible" comes from the Greek word "bib'-los" that most commonly referred to a "scroll" in the first century, but by the second century, the same word commonly referred to a "book". And as of October 2017, the complete Bible has been translated into 670 languages, the Final 27 Books of the Bible have been translated into 1,521 languages, and there are more than 450 translations of the Bible in English alone! (13) But with so many different Bible versions available, at some point, many sincere followers of the MESSIAH ask: "*Which Bible should I rely on?*"

Because two thousand years have passed since the Bible was completed, because time and translation have a noticeable effect on the Bible's transmission, and because we no longer speak the Biblical languages of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic in our day-to-day lives, we will have to dive into the history of how we have received our modern Bibles, to answer that important question.

But, as with all things Biblical, we will state very clearly at the start: JESUS our MESSIAH, and the writings of His Apostles, Prophets, and Disciples will be the key to answering all of the most important questions we will ever have!

Thus, with that key in mind, we should mention that the Greek word for Bible is what JESUS used, when - in the very last chapter of the very last book of the Bible - He said: **For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this b-i-b-l-i-o-u (Bibliou): If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues**

that are written in this b-i-b-l-i-o (Bibliō); and if anyone takes away from the words of the b-i-b-l-i-o-u (Bibliou) of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Tree of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this b-i-b-l-i-o (Bibliō). He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen.^a (*Transliteration Added*)

Scholars can debate if JESUS said this or John, but we believe the context indicates that JESUS said it just before He explained that *He* was “coming quickly”. And scholars can also debate if JESUS was possibly referring to the entire book we know as the Bible when He said those words, or if He was *only* referring to the book of Revelation; but after many years of consideration and prayer, we choose to believe and teach that our omniscient Savior purposely said these words in the final verses of the last chapter of the last book of the Holy Bible to warn every single person who reads His holy Word not to *add* or *take away from* any part of His Holy Bible.

But, before the Bible was known by that name, it was called the Hebrew or Greek equivalent of: “the Word of GOD”^b or “the Holy Scriptures”^c. And, the English word “Scripture” comes from the Latin word “Script-ura” which means “writings”. Meanwhile, in the First Century (when Greek was the most common language) they called the Scriptures: the “graf-ay”, which also means “writings”.

Today, in a very similar-sounding way, we call the original physical writings of the Holy Scriptures the “auto-graphs”; and this ancient term comes from the Greek word “auto-graphon” which means: “written with one’s own hand”. So, the original physical letter of Paul to the saints in Rome would have been the “autograph” of Paul’s longest letter. Or, the original physical writings of Moses that formed Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, would have been the “autographs” of the first five books of the Bible.

Every single book of the Holy Bible has an “autograph”, and it is that original writing that we consider to be inspired, inerrant, infallible, and perfect in every way. But those original writings were frequently read and studied, so copies of the originals had to be

^a Revelation 22:18-20a

^b Mark 7:13, Luke 8:21, Ephesians 6:17, Etc.

^c Romans 1:2, 2 Timothy 3:15

made. And because, until the 18th century, copying was done by hand; extremely careful methods of hand-copying were employed by professionals known as “Scribes”.

Scribes would use detailed counting techniques to add up each letter from each line of every document they copied, and later they compared that numerical value to the hand-written copy they were creating. They also memorized vast portions of the Holy Scriptures to avoid making mistakes, and this is how they became known as experts in all that the Word of GOD taught.

By the way, the hand-written copies ancient scribes created are now called “manuscripts”; and this term comes from the Latin words “scriptus” which means: “written”, and “manu” which means: “by hand”.

Typically, those manuscripts were written on scrolls of parchment (which are prepared animal skins), or papyrus (which was an ancient form of paper painstakingly made by crisscrossing the inner part of the stem of the papyrus plant, drying the resulting sheet under pressure, and polishing the sheet after it dries). Meanwhile, between the ink, the writing surfaces, the time it took the scribes to do their work, and the infinitely valuable words those scrolls contained, manuscripts of the Bible have always been considered unbelievably valuable!

So, now that we have all of these basic terms defined and some understanding of how the Scriptures have been recorded, we can explain: scholars don’t believe that the *autographs* of any of the 66 books of the Bible have survived until our current time. We are willing to speculate that GOD may have them all in Heaven, but we don’t currently have physical access to those originals today. Meanwhile, even after acknowledging that fact, we can still say: we can be sure that each of the 66 books of the Bible has been perfectly preserved over the years through the copying process, just not in any one individual copy.

Now, we said: “not in any one individual copy” because, copyists and scribes are only human after all; and even with careful numerical checks and balances, small errors and differences can develop between the hand-written copies and the originals.

Therefore, when manuscripts are compared and a difference is found, those differences are called “textual variants”. Any minor variation in wording is counted as a textual variant; including word order, an omission of a word, an addition of a word, or even spelling differences.

So, to summarize how many textual variants there are that make a difference in any way, we should begin by noting that seventy percent of all textual variants are only differences in spelling. And less than one percent of all textual variants have a high probability of changing the meaning of the text; especially if we only consider the variants that are found in enough early manuscripts to be considered “authentic”. Consequently, it is this very small group of “meaningful” and “viable” textual variants that we must carefully consider, to determine what the original reading of any passage is.

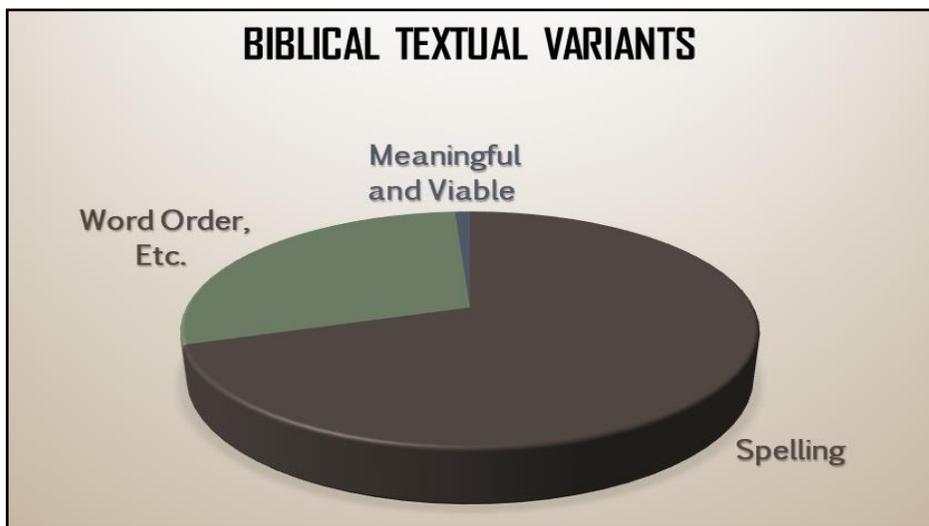


Figure 14

But we should also note here that no major doctrines depend on any of those meaningful and viable variants that make up less than one percent of the total number of variants that exist! Yes, nearly all textual variants are inconsequential, affecting nothing; and over 99% of textual variants fall into this category. Even Bart Ehrman, an agnostic who wrote the book *Misquoting Jesus* to attack the transmission of the Final 27 Books of the Bible, had to reluctantly admit: “*Essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual*

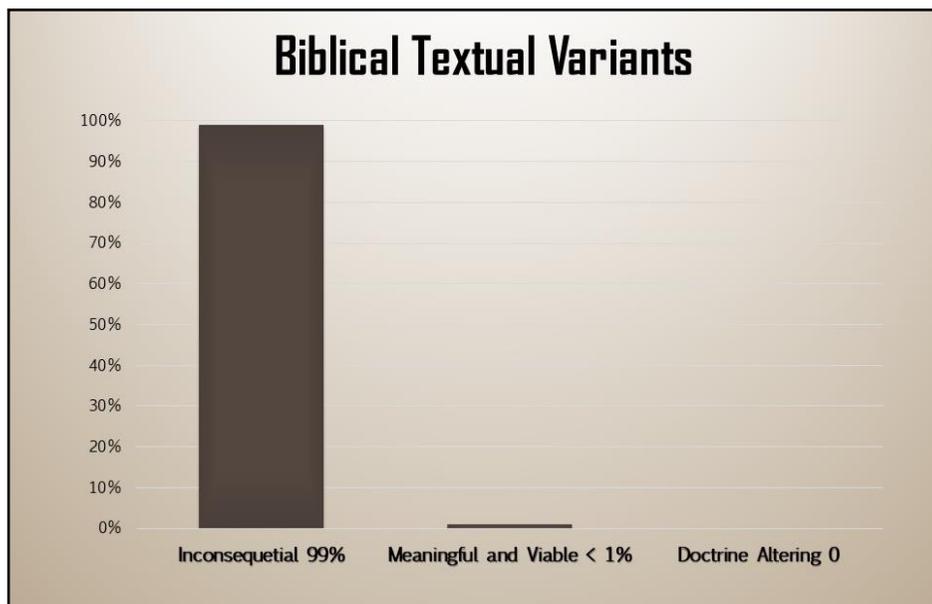


Figure 15

And with these facts understood, we can see that this issue we are about to discuss in regards to which Biblical manuscripts are the best (and which Bible translations use the best manuscripts) is secondary, and it does not mean that we cannot use other translations based on different manuscripts.

Instead, it simply means that, the deeper we study the Word of GOD and the more precise we become, the more minor interpretational problems we may encounter if we use Bible translations based on the less accurate manuscript families. And, if someone is not aware of the best manuscripts that harmonize all of Scripture together, to them it might occasionally seem like there are contradictions in the Bible! But rest assured, the true reading of Scripture has been preserved, we can eliminate every apparent contradiction, and we can know for certain what GOD has spoken through His holy prophets!

You see, by carefully analyzing all presently available copies (especially the copies that were made closest to the time of the

^a Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 2005), page 252

originals) we can deduce with certainty what the autographs originally said. And this science of analyzing all of the available manuscripts to arrive at the original reading is called: “textual criticism”.

And here, before we learn about textual criticism, we need to pause to explain, the Final 27 Books of the Bible are the most well preserved and attested to documents in all of ancient literature! There are over 5800 Greek manuscripts of those books, and we are up to 23,986 manuscripts if we count copies of every language!

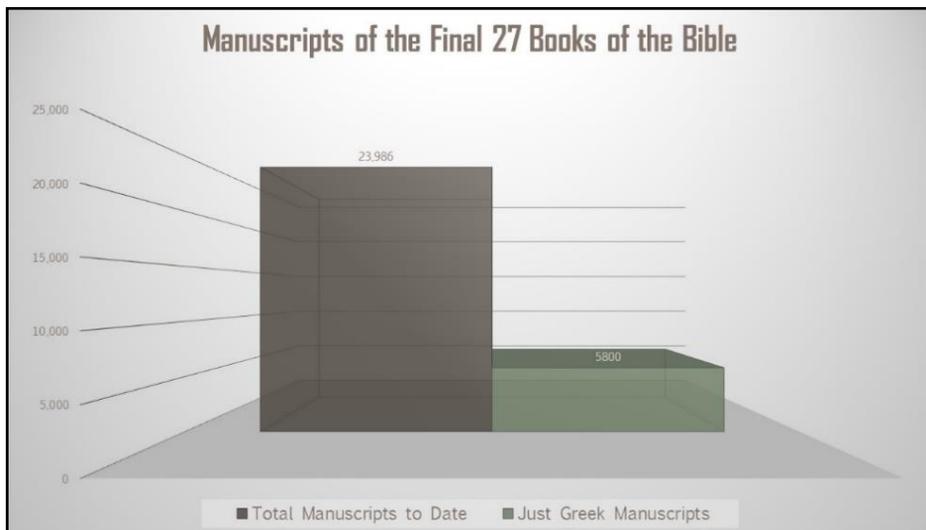


Figure 16

If we count each copy or part of a copy we have found of each book of the Final 27 Books that dates to sometime *before* the 5th century, there are 29 very early Greek witnesses to the Gospel of Matthew, at least 16 very early Greek witnesses to the Gospel of Mark, 21 very early Greek witnesses to the Gospel of Luke, and 38 very early Greek witnesses to the Gospel of John!

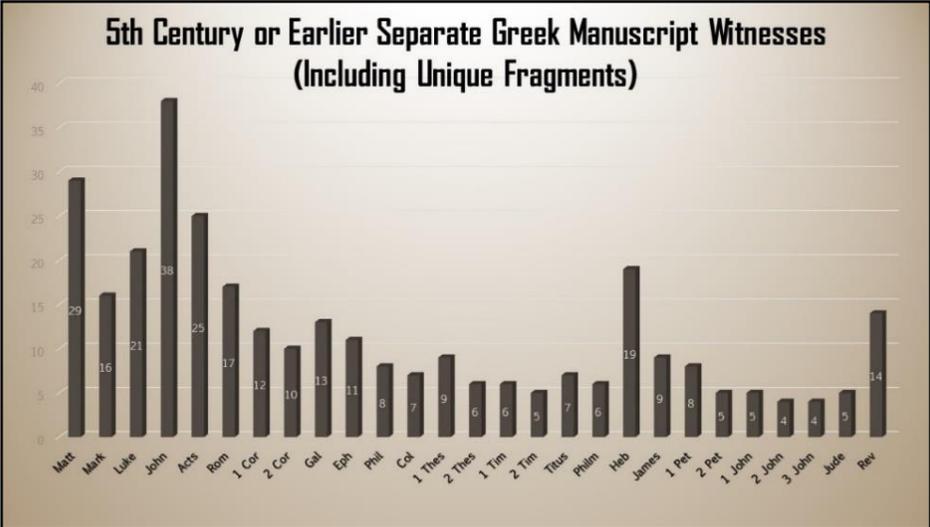


Figure 17

2nd and 3rd John are the only two Books of the Final 27 Books of the Bible with *less* than 5 separate very early direct Greek witnesses, but that is still amazing compared to all other ancient hand-copied books of that period. Especially when we consider the indirect contemporary witnesses to these books, and the manuscripts we have from after the fifth century.

You see, the works of Caesar only have 10 manuscripts to verify them, and the earliest of those manuscripts was written around 1000 years after the original. Plato only has 7 manuscript witnesses, and the earliest of those seven manuscripts is from around 1200 years after the original was penned! But when we count up all of the individual manuscripts we have located (so far) for the Final 27 Books of the Bible, there are over 23,000!

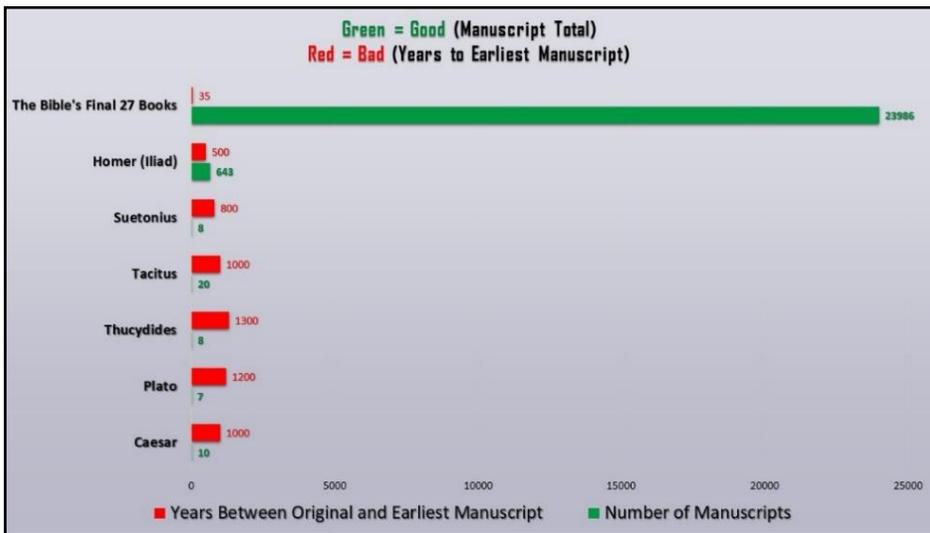


Figure 18

We even have a manuscript fragment of the Gospel of John from within 25 to 50 years of the original! Plus, each of the Final 27 Books has at least one very early Greek manuscript witness of no greater than 285 years.

1st and 2nd Timothy are the only books with slightly later manuscript witnesses (copied approximately 285 years after the time Paul wrote them) but these letters were mentioned by Clement of Rome in 95 A.D., Ignatius of Antioch in 110 A.D., and Polycarp in 130 A.D. So, although no extremely early manuscripts survive for these letters, very early witnesses attest to their Pauline authorship and existence. And similar, extremely early church witnesses and quotations can be found for each one of the Final 27 Books; confirming beyond all reasonable doubt that they belong in our Bibles, and the entire church considered them authoritative.

We even have multiple *ancient* Bibles to study. There is the all-Greek *Codex Vaticanus* that is only missing a few books from the front of the Bible and a few others from the back; namely some of Genesis, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation. And the *Codex Vaticanus* was penned in approximately 315 A.D. or around 200 years after John wrote the book we now call: “the Revelation”!

Plus, we also have the all-Greek *Codex Sinaiticus* from

approximately 350 A.D. (or around 250 years after Revelation was written)! And the *Codex Sinaiticus* contains all of the 66 books we currently have in our Bibles today, plus 9 extra books that were often read as important historical works, but not actual Scripture.

So, with at least a tiny glimpse into the wealth of ancient manuscripts we have, some key things to consider when looking at “meaningful and viable” textual variants are:

- What do the available manuscripts *closest in time to the original* say?
- What do the *majority* of the manuscripts *from that early time* say?
- And, which variant is the most *consistent with the unquestionable portions* of the same chapter, book, or writer?

Correspondingly, when it comes to textual criticism (when possible) we will follow our first three rules of Biblical interpretation, which are:

- The ultimate standard of Biblical interpretation is JESUS the MESSIAH.
- The second standard of Biblical interpretation is The LORD’s Apostles and Disciples who gave us the Final 27 Books of the Bible.
- And, the third standard of Biblical interpretation is, we must never set aside a single word of the Holy Scriptures unless JESUS or His Apostles clearly and indisputably set it aside.

Those familiar with the traditional rules of textual criticism may think *these* interpretational rules might not apply since the record of the words of JESUS and His Apostles are what we are seeking to establish. But if the Textual Critic were to apply these rules carefully, they would realize that these rules simply mean:

- We must seek the original reading of the Final 27 Books of the Bible *before* we seek the original reading of the First 39; since there are many more manuscripts for the Final 27, from a much larger geographic area.
- In places where multiple readings are available from similarly early manuscripts, *internal consistency* with the

undisputed words of JESUS and His Apostles should determine the best reading.

- And, the Final 27 Books of the Bible should *harmonize* with the First 39, and vice-versa.

Now without diving too deeply into the many man-made rules (or the competing, man-made schools) of textual criticism, we can simply explain that *three* compiled Greek text readings of the Final 27 Books of the Bible have developed over the last few centuries. Or said another way: when textual critics compared the earliest available manuscripts of the Final 27 Books of the Bible, three different ways of evaluating those manuscripts caused three (slightly different) compiled readings of the available Greek texts to develop.

The first compiled Greek text reading to develop is known as “the Textus Receptus”, or “The Received Text”. And this reading (that is heavily based on *tradition*) is the basis of the King James Bible translation. But when the Textus Receptus was compiled, Erasmus (the scholar who compiled it) did not have nearly as many early manuscripts as we have today; therefore, some serious issues can be found in this reading.

Next, our favorite compiled Greek text reading (after years of study and comparison), is known as “the Majority Text”. And the Majority Text reading is essentially represented in the New King James Bible translation. This reading fixes the glaring errors of the Textus Receptus and proves to be the most internally consistent, and doctrinally sound reading, in our opinion.

But the most commonly used compiled Greek text reading in modern Bibles is known as “the Critical Text”. Fundamentally, *every* popular English translation that is not a King James, or New King James falls into this category. And this reading relies very heavily on a relatively small number of early manuscripts; plus, it is based on some assumptions that we cannot agree to.

Textus Receptus	Majority Text	Critical Text
<p>The “Received Text” was published in 1516 by Desiderius Erasmus. Erasmus only had access to a small number of very late Greek manuscripts. So, in the areas where he lacked actual Greek manuscripts to develop an Greek based text, he translated the Latin Vulgate into Greek to fill in those gaps.</p>	<p>The Majority Text is a majority reading based compilation of Greek New Testament manuscripts. The reading of the majority of manuscripts is considered the most accurate reading, also the earliest Byzantine text-type manuscripts tend to be preferred.</p>	<p>The Critical Text is a preference based compilation of Greek New Testament manuscripts. The reading of the earliest manuscripts is considered the most accurate reading, also the earliest Alexandrian text-type tends to be preferred.</p>

Figure 19

For example, in every textual criticism experiment we have ever conducted, the *majority* reading closest to the time of the original writing is correct. And to explain what we mean by that: please imagine an original document that said: “See *spot run*”. Then imagine ten separate people copied that tiny sentence, and not long after, somehow the original was destroyed. Then imagine a second group of ten separate people copied the first ten copies that were located in ten different cities.

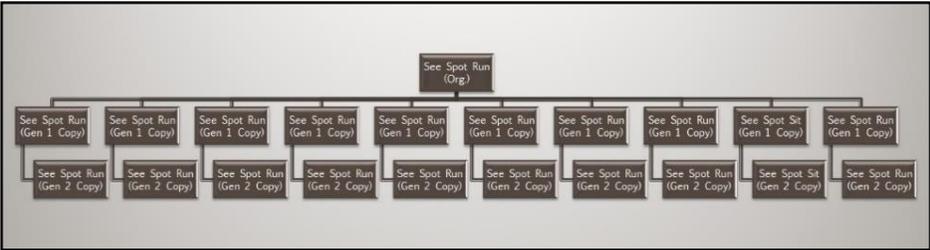


Figure 20

If you surveyed the first group of copies and found that 9 of them said “See *spot run*” but 1 said “See *spot sit*”, which reading do you think most likely represents the original? The majority reading, correct? Next, if you found that the second group of copies had 9 that said “*run*” and only 1 with the word “*sit*”, which reading do you think most likely represents the original? You see if we assume that the people copying the sentence were *honest*, and if we assume that they did not try to modify the sentence (even if we had no idea

what the original said), we would assume the *majority* to be right in both generations, correct?

However, what would happen if we picked favorites among the 10 earliest copies; perhaps based on their handwriting style, the paper they used, or the geographic location of where the copy was created? Or, what if we assumed that the people who made the copies with the majority reading were *not* honest? Sadly, if we make assumptions like the ones listed above (assumptions that go beyond the text itself) we are thinking like many of the scholars who have developed the Critical Text!

They have created rules like: “the western reading should be preferred”, “the shorter reading is to be preferred”, “the least harmonious reading is to be preferred”, and “the minority reading is to be preferred”!

Friends, we can completely understand the idea that the *earliest* reading should be preferred (especially if it does not contradict the *majority* reading or the *internal* Scriptural evidence), but many of these *other* assumptions are based on an unfounded suspicion that *dishonest* Christian scribes were “adding words to” and “trying to harmonize” the documents they were copying!

We reject that unfounded suspicion! And we suggest that we should assume that the vast majority of all early Christian copyists were careful, GOD-fearing, and competent disciples of JESUS. Thus, we think it is logical to conclude: while small mistakes may have entered the text at random times in random locations, mistakes don't enter the text in *many* cities all at one time! This means that a recently-made mistake in a copy of a book in Corinth, would *not* also be present at the same time in a copy of the same book in Ephesus! And if we compare the earliest *majority* readings, we can be confident that random, honest mistakes are not *geographically* contagious in a way that renders the *majority* reading untrustworthy! Instead, they are only *chronologically* contagious in a way that tends to spread *very* slowly!

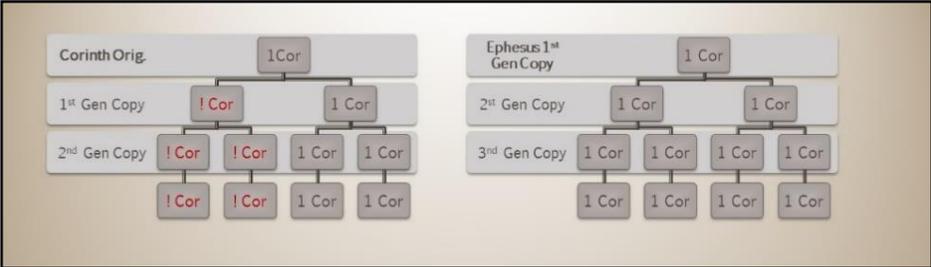


Figure 21

So, now that we have some idea of how the three slightly different readings of the Final 27 Books of the Bible developed over the last few centuries (and why we recommend *the Majority Text*) let's take a look at one of the approximately 230 meaningful and viable variants scholars have found in the manuscripts.

Textus Receptus	Majority Text	Critical Text
<p>Based on a very small number of very late Greek witnesses and the Latin Vulgate translation. Defenders appeal to relatively recent traditional use, but there are far too many issues with this reading for it to compete with the other two readings.</p>	<p>Based on the Majority Reading most commonly found in the eastern Greek manuscripts, but some other considerations are involved, such as the earliest Greek witnesses. Defenders appeal to the vast numbers of manuscripts that follow the Majority Text reading, and internal doctrinal consistency. (A possible explanation of why the Byzantine Text Type begins later than the Alexandrian/Western Text Type is: Jews traditionally buried older, worn out copies of the Scriptures)</p>	<p>Based on a small minority of early Egyptian/Western Greek witnesses, and many assumptions that indicate a mistrust of the Majority reading, and a mistrust of the Christian scribes. Defenders appeal to early, well preserved Alexandrian Greek witnesses, a very powerful argument, and those early witnesses should not be ignored. However the Majority reading should not be ignored either.</p>

Figure 22

In Matthew chapter 9, the Textus Receptus and Majority Text readings are: **When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”^a (Emphasis Added)**

And the same passage in a Bible based on the Critical Text reads:

^a Matthew 9:12-13 NKJV

But when Jesus heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. “But go and learn what this means: ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”^a

The difference here in this meaningful and viable variant contains only two words (in English). And even if we didn't have these two words, we could prove from scores of other passages that JESUS most certainly came: to call sinners to repentance. So, that is why we say: none of these variants ultimately affect any major Christian doctrine.

However, if someone took this verse out of context, and employed the shorter reading of the Critical Text, they *could* heretically use it to claim: “*JESUS calls sinners to come as they are, so repentance is not necessary*”.

To combat such a lie, we would immediately take them to where JESUS said: “**unless you repent you will all likewise perish**”^b, “**there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance**”^c and “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**”^d; but what if someone did not know all of those verses? Could the two small words: “**to repentance**” being missing in a Bible based on the Critical Text, *harm* someone?

We have sadly seen direct evidence on multiple occasions that proves: those words being missing in certain translations most certainly *can* harm people and make them comfortable with living in sin. Therefore, these omissions can be very dangerous.

Meanwhile, we should note: in Luke chapter 5, the same occasion and words are recorded with no doubt as to the original reading! And the words “**to repentance**” are most certainly present in Luke's account. Therefore, while it is true that these two words are not in the *Codex Sinaiticus* or the *Codex Vaticanus* in the Book of

^a Matthew 9:12-13 NASB

^b Luke 13:3

^c Luke 15:7

^d Matthew 4:17

Matthew, they *are* recorded in both of those ancient Bibles in the Book of Luke! Yes, whether we get the correct and full reading from Luke or the Majority Text, the *complete* reading of this text includes the words: **“to repentance”**.

And one more example of the minor differences between the Critical Text and the Majority Text is found in Matthew chapter 5. In this passage, the New King James Bible translation (that consults the Majority Text and the Textus Receptus) reads: **“But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.”**^a. (*Emphasis Added*) Meanwhile, the Critical Text-based New American Standard Bible translation reads: **“But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court.”**^b

If we ignore the very different translation styles for now and focus primarily on the missing words, we see that (in English) there are *two* missing words in the Critical Text version. And those two missing *English* words are based on a short, four-letter-long Greek word that means “*without just cause*”. So, was JESUS saying you can never, ever (under any circumstances) be angry with your brother?

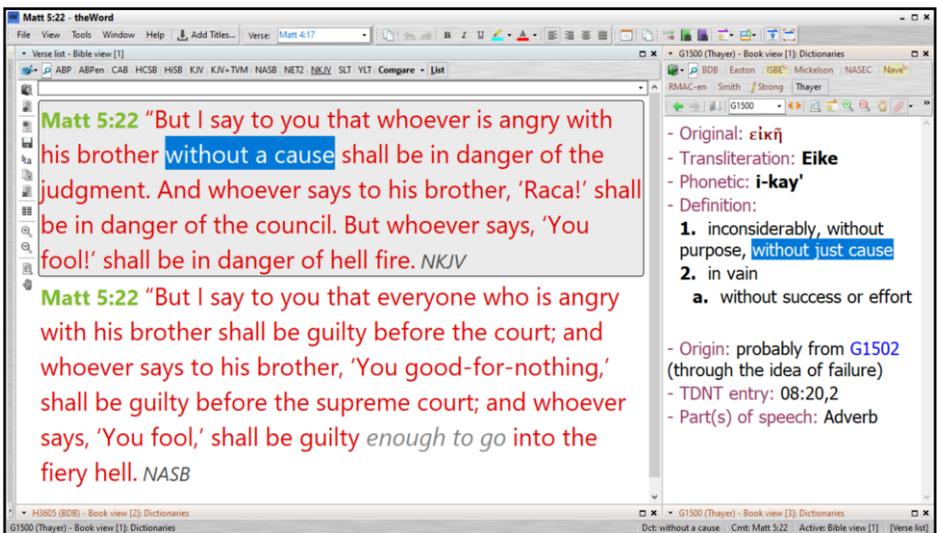


Figure 23

^a Matthew 5:22 NKJV

^b Matthew 5:22 NASB

Well, in Matthew it is written about JESUS: **He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! “For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”^a (*Emphasis Added*)**

But in that same Gospel, it is also recorded about our LORD: **He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”^b**

Did you notice how the translators used an exclamation point after JESUS called Peter “satan”, (which simply means: *adversary or opposer*)? The original manuscripts of the Final 27 Books of the Bible don’t have punctuation marks. No, to save paper and space, all of the *earliest* manuscripts (which were *all* written in Greek) were written in capital Greek letters; with no spaces, no periods, and no exclamation points. So, Bible translators typically add an exclamation point to the LORD’s words, because it certainly seems like JESUS was angry with Peter when He called him “satan”.

So, in Mathew’s Gospel, JESUS seemed to get angry at His spiritual brother Peter! Therefore, we think that it is safe to say: the four-letter Greek word “i-kay’ ” (that means “**without just cause**”) belongs in Matthew chapter 5! Truly, JESUS our *sinless* Savior most certainly was *not* “in danger of the judgment”! And, in example after example, when we compare the minor differences between the Critical Text and the Majority Text, the following common features always come up:

- The Critical Text always seems to be *missing* words found in the Majority Text, and (in our experience) when hand-copying documents, it is always easier to *miss* a word than it is to accidentally add one.
- The Majority Text always seems more *doctrinally consistent* with the rest of the undisputed readings of Scripture, compared to the Critical Text, so that makes the Majority Text the better reading.
- And the Majority Text tends to come from *the Eastern area*

^a Matthew 12:49-50

^b Mark 8:33

of the Roman Empire, meaning: closer to Jerusalem. But the Critical Text tends to come from the *Western area* near Rome and Alexandria.

Common Critical Text Issues		
Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3
The Critical Text always seems to be missing words found in the Majority Text, and - for an honest scribe - when hand-copying documents, it is always easier to miss a word than it is to accidentally add one.	The Majority Text always seems more doctrinally consistent with the rest of the undisputed readings of Scripture, compared to the Critical Text, so that makes the Majority Text the better reading.	The Majority Text has a tendency to come from the Eastern area of the Roman Empire, meaning closer to Jerusalem. But the Critical Text tends to come from the Western area near Rome and Alexandria.

Figure 24

And since our Savior and all of His apostles centered their ministries, worship, and lives around *Jerusalem* in the *Eastern* area of the Roman Empire, we tend to prefer early readings that trace back to that region! After all, the Apostles did not head to *Rome* in Acts chapter 15 to settle the circumcision dispute! No, they met in *Jerusalem*; the city where our MESSIAH will reign from when He returns!!!

So, these are our carefully considered reasons for choosing the Majority Text reading; but other well-educated people have different reasons for choosing the Critical Text.

In the end, the difference between the two texts is not large enough for it to be a point of division in the body of CHRIST. We just wanted to take some time to explain *why* the various English Bible translations have some very minor differences, and which reading appears to be the *most* accurate, according to all of the available evidence.

Without a doubt, GOD has accurately preserved the Final 27 Books of the Holy Bible for us, over the last two thousand years! And you can trust the Majority Text *and* the Critical Text compilations of the ancient Greek manuscripts!

Consequently, based on all that we have learned so far, we can now explain: The Apostles and their close associates began writing

the original 27 documents many now call the “New Testament” shortly after JESUS ascended into heaven in 30 A.D., and they were finished writing around the year 98 A.D.

Those documents circulated among the churches they were addressed to, and the churches would have sent emissaries to one another to make copies. Then those first-generation copies would have been widely distributed among all of the churches.

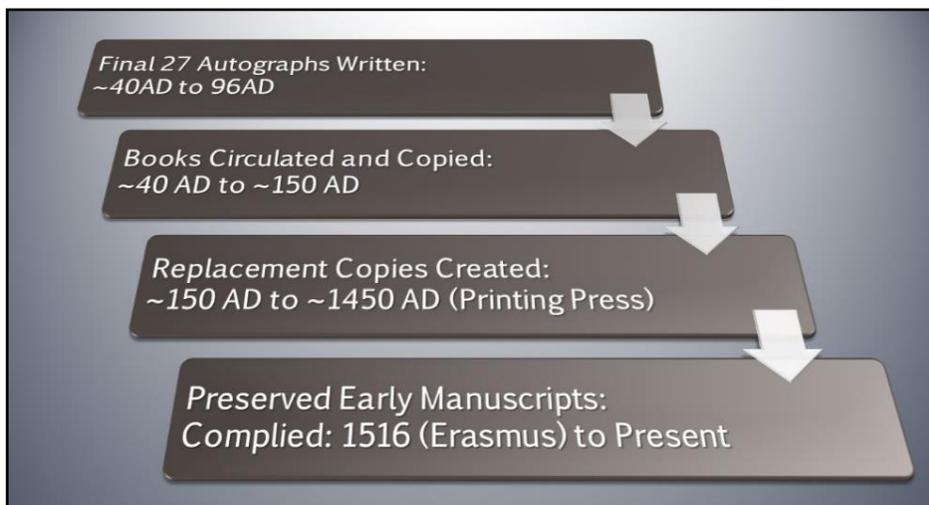


Figure 25

If a copy or an original was wearing out or showing signs of damage, a new first-generation (or possibly a second-generation) copy was made; and all of these hand-made copies are called manuscripts.

While scholars don't believe that we have any parts of the original 27 “autographs” remaining today, they know that we do have very, very early manuscripts of every book. And all of these very early manuscripts are universally written in the language of Greek.

Here we should mention, the distinctive way the Greek letters in a manuscript were written is one tool scholars use to estimate the age of a manuscript. For example, if the Greek letters are all written in capital form, it is considered older. Also, scholars look at what type of material the manuscript is written on, and the script of the Greek letters, to help determine when the copy was made.

Using these techniques, the earliest copy we know of (and have in

a protective library today) is called *P52*, or *Papyrus 52*. And Paleographers (who study ancient handwriting) have dated this fragment from the Gospel of John (that contains text from when JESUS was standing trial before Pilate) to around 30 years from John's original writing.

It is very reasonable to assume that this fragment is from a first or second-generation copy of the original! After all, we know these scrolls were highly valued, and we know from extra-Biblical first-century writings that Jews were accustomed to using a "Yad" (or a small metal pointer shaped like a hand) to avoid touching and defiling their sacred scrolls. So, a scroll lasting 30 years is not hard to imagine!



Figure 26

So, let's assume a hypothetical 50-year life cycle for a well-cared-for scroll or codex (which is simply an ancient manuscript text in book form). That would mean that our earliest complete Bibles could be as few as 3 generational copies old! And there are hundreds of early fragments and sections much younger than those *complete* Bibles!

Truly, the Bible is most definitely *not* like "the telephone game"! We did *not* receive the Final 27 Books of the Bible through each generation making successive copies of copies over two thousand years! Instead, we currently have *directly* received *very early copies*, and even complete Bibles from less than 250 years after the originals were written!

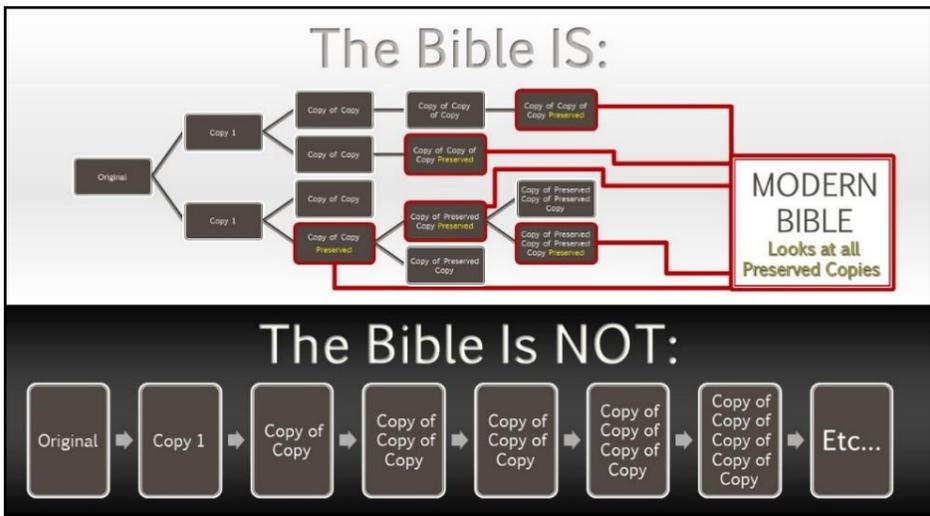


Figure 27

Then, we compare all of the earliest manuscripts to form a compiled Greek text reading, of which there are essentially *two* slightly different (but trustworthy) versions. When the Majority Text and the Critical Text are compared, there are *only* approximately 200 *very small* differences between those two Greek textual readings; and earlier, we intentionally looked at two of the larger differences in those texts. We saw that they did not change the meaning of the passage in any significant way, but the missing words of the Critical Text could confuse a reader who is not very familiar with the rest of the Scriptures. So, the truth is: a Bible's translation style has more effect on our understanding of Scripture than those tiny differences do!

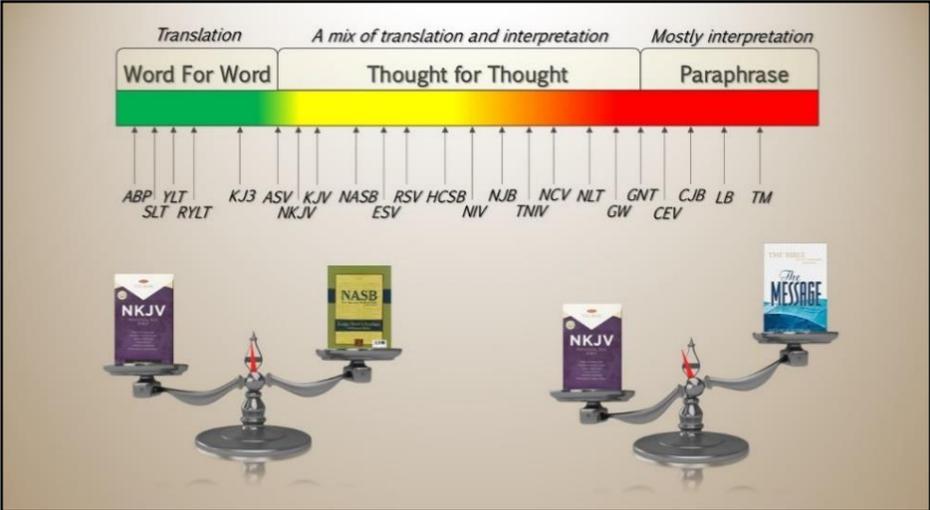


Figure 28

Therefore, when it comes to the Final 27 Books of the Holy Bible: when you directly consult a compiled Greek text reading or a literal English translation, you have the words your MESSIAH inspired! And by looking through the lens of those Final 27 miraculously preserved Books of the Bible that fully reveal our MESSIAH, we can understand all of the Scriptures accurately: from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation!

Chapter Four: The MESSIAH's First 39

By what authority did JESUS resist the devil in the wilderness? What did JESUS repeatedly label as the main cause of error in the religious leaders of the first century? How did JESUS speak about the commandments? What attitude did JESUS have towards Moses and His writings? How did JESUS and His Disciples treat the existing Scriptures of their day? What did they call those sacred writings? When we properly answer these questions, we will find that *the MESSIAH's* perspective of the First 39 books of the Bible is different from the popular perspective most Christians have inherited.

JESUS resisted the devil in the wilderness, by quoting Deuteronomy three times. He told the religious leaders of His day, they were deceived because they did not know the only existing Scriptures of their time, the First 39 Books of the Bible. He told everyone to obey the commandments and warned against breaking or 'teaching against' even the least of them. He not only told the people to listen to those who sat in the seat of Moses to read His words, but He also met and spoke with a glorified Moses on the mountain when He was transfigured! Brothers and Sisters, JESUS, and every one of His Apostles and Disciples treated the First 39 books of the Bible as perpetually authoritative and they called them: "The Word of GOD" and "the Holy Scriptures"!

They believed the Final 27 Books of the Bible that they participated in recording were built on the solid, unchanging foundation of the First 39 books. And that is why they quote the First 39 writings, over 855 times! Plus, every one of those citations treats the words of the First 39 Books as holy, unchallengeable, authoritative Scripture! Not one single writer of the Final 27 Books thought they were replacing or setting aside a single book of the Holy Bible! And this is evident because they wrote things like: **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.**^a (*Emphasis*

^a 2 Timothy 3:16

Added)

Just before Paul wrote that famous passage, which declares Genesis to Malachi is inspired Scripture, Paul told his faithful young protegee Timothy: **From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**^a These are not the words of someone who thought we should throw out or diminish the *only* Scriptures that were in existence since Timothy was a child! These are the words of an Apostle who settled every single dispute by appealing to the First 39 Books of the Bible!

And Paul was not the only Apostle of our LORD to do that! In Acts 15, after Peter spoke about what he witnessed at the home of Cornelius, James said: **“Men and brethren, listen to me: “Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. “And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ‘After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things.’”**^b

In the Book of Acts, during the greatest internal controversy that the Church ever faced, James quoted *Amos* to begin to settle the dispute. Then James alluded to the writings of *Moses* and the things he described *even* Gentiles could be defiled by. So, *Amos* and *Moses* were the foundation of the Jerusalem decision of Acts chapter 15! Truly, the words of our MESSIAH and His Apostles were a continuation of the Holy Scriptures, not a replacement of them! And we need to see the First 39 Books as *they* saw them!

Imagine trying to explain JESUS as our High Priest without referring back to the First 39 Books of the Bible. Imagine trying to comprehend **“*the wages of sin is death*”**^c without picturing the *sacrifices* the Levitical priests offered up for the sins of the people at the bronze altar of the Tabernacle, or even the *stonings* that the Bible prescribed for unrepentant sinners within Israel who rejected

^a 2 Timothy 3:15

^b Acts 15:13-17

^c Romans 6:23

the Law.

Could we truly understand how *blood* could set someone free without learning about the first Passover? Without a doubt, the First 39 amazing, infallible, inerrant, sufficient, inspired Books of the Bible are the foundation required to properly understand the Final 27! And no one can fully comprehend the First 39 Books of the Bible without the MESSIANIC revelation of the Final 27!

But, before we can plumb the unfathomable depths of GOD's Word, we need to establish *how* we have received the First 39 Books of the Bible that lie between Genesis and Malachi, and which Biblical manuscript tradition was being quoted over 800 times in the Final 27 Books!

As we learned in the chapter entitled "the MESSIAH's Final 27", the *autographs* (or original, physical hand-written documents that men like Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and David wrote) are not in any human being's possession at this point. Instead, we rely on handwritten copies called "manuscripts", and even ancient *translations* of the Hebrew Scriptures, to know the reading those original documents contained.

But we have an unparalleled advantage when it comes to evaluating the available manuscripts of the First 39 Books of the Bible, and that advantage is the MESSIAH Himself! All we have to do is learn which manuscript tradition *He* relied on as our perfect, omniscient Creator, and we will know exactly what manuscripts *we* should prefer!

As we have *already* learned, at this present time in history, modern translations of the Final 27 Books of the Bible can have some *tiny* differences depending on three very different approaches to choosing the best manuscript reading. When facing the approximately 230 meaningful and viable textual variants of the Final 27 Books, will we choose the very limited textual base of *the Textus Receptus* just because of recent tradition? Will we choose the harmonious and consistent reading preserved in the largest number of manuscripts, as found in *the Majority Text*? Or will we choose the difficult, skeptical, minority, reading of *the Critical Text*?

We carefully reviewed the basic philosophies and thinking behind

each of those three readings, and we explained that we choose the Majority Text reading because it always seems to be the most consistent reading with all the MESSIAH taught! And, just as the MESSIAH helped us choose which school of textual criticism to prefer (in regards to the Final 27 Books); He can likewise help us choose which manuscripts of the First 39 Books we should rely on when choices arise.

We have discussed how a *manuscript* is “a hand-written copy of an ancient document”, and with that definition in mind, we can now explain: the manuscripts we have to compare for the First 39 Books of the Bible can be broken down into five basic categories. The chronologically earliest category of ancient manuscripts would be the Dead Sea Scrolls since some of the scrolls have now been dated to the third century BC. But, *in a chronological tie*, another *very* early witness to the ancient manuscripts of the First 39 Books (that has also been dated to the third century B.C.) is the Greek translation of the Holy Scriptures called “*The Septuagint*”.

The Dead Sea Scrolls	The Septuagint (LXX)
<p>Composition began in the Third Century BC and continued into the First Century AD.</p> <p>The majority of the scrolls were written in Hebrew, but approximately 15% were written in Aramaic or Greek.</p>	<p>Composition began in the Third Century BC and continued into the Second Century BC.</p> <p>This Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures was reportedly undertaken by 72 Hebrew scholars commissioned by Ptolemy II.</p>

Figure 29

Next, the third category of ancient manuscripts of the First 39 Books of the Bible is a second century A.D. translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (and most, but not all of the Final 27 Books) into Syriac, called *the Peshitta*.

Plus, the fourth category of ancient manuscripts that contains only the five Books of Moses is most likely chronologically tied with the Peshitta; because this group has a disputed date of the first or second century A.D. But the text of this manuscript family is

obviously altered because it disagrees with *all* of the other manuscript families (and more importantly, JESUS) concerning where GOD was to be worshipped! Yes, this text that replaces Jerusalem with Mt. Gerizim^a is known as the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The Dead Sea Scrolls	The Septuagint (LXX)	The Syriac Peshitta	The Samaritan Pentateuch
Composition began in the Third Century BC and continued into the First Century AD. The majority of the scrolls were written in Hebrew, but approximately 15% were written in Aramaic or Greek.	Composition began in the Third Century BC and continued into the Second Century BC. This Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures was reportedly undertaken by 72 Hebrew scholars commissioned by Ptolemy II.	Composition began in the Second Century AD. This Aramaic translation of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures was missing the books: 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation until 616 AD.	Composition most likely began in the First or Second Century AD. This Samaritan alphabet based version of the five books of Moses substitutes Jerusalem with Mount Gerizim as the central location of worship.

Figure 30

And this brings us to the fifth category, which is chronologically the farthest away from the writing of the originals; and this seventh to ninth century AD category is known as the Masoretic Text.

Sadly, the Masoretic text was chosen to be the textual basis of essentially every popular, modern, English Bible's translation of the First 39 Books; even though the Masoretic Text has the composition date that is farthest from the original writings it claims to preserve. Thus, it is not surprising that there are obvious problems within the Masoretic Text when compared to the Final 27 Books of the Bible.

^a John 4:20

The Dead Sea Scrolls	The Septuagint (LXX)	The Syriac Peshitta	The Samaritan Pentateuch	The Masoretic Text
Composition began in the Third Century BC and continued into the First Century AD. The majority of the scrolls were written in Hebrew, but approximately 15% were written in Aramaic or Greek.	Composition began in the Third Century BC and continued into the Second Century BC. This Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures was reportedly undertaken by 72 Hebrew scholars commissioned by Ptolemy II.	Composition began in the Second Century AD. This Aramaic translation of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures was missing the books: 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation until 616 AD.	Composition most likely began in the First or Second Century AD. This Samaritan alphabet based version of the five books of Moses substitutes Jerusalem with Mount Gerizim as the central location of worship.	Composition began in the Seventh Century AD and continued into the Tenth Century BC. This Hebrew compilation copied and edited by the Masoretes is reflected in the 9 th Century Aleppo Codex and the 1008 AD Leningrad Codex.

Figure 31

For example, our MESSIAH was *definitely* quoting Isaiah, when He said: **“Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ “For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.”^a**

But the seventh to ninth century A.D. Masoretic Text records Isaiah saying: **Therefore the Lord said: “Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.”^b**

The Masoretic Text in our popular modern Bibles *never* records Isaiah saying: **“in vain they worship me”** at all!!! And, instead of the phrase **“teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”** - indicating someone replacing GOD’s commandments with man’s doctrines - the Masoretic Text speaks of the fear of GOD being taught by the commandments of men.

Friends, if all we had was the Masoretic Text to compare the words of our MESSIAH to, we would be forced to assume that JESUS misquoted Isaiah. And we say this because JESUS specifically

^a Mark 7:6-9

^b Isaiah 29:13f

followed the quote of Isaiah by saying: **“For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men”**. And that condemnation is directly connected to the *specific* reading JESUS presented of Isaiah.

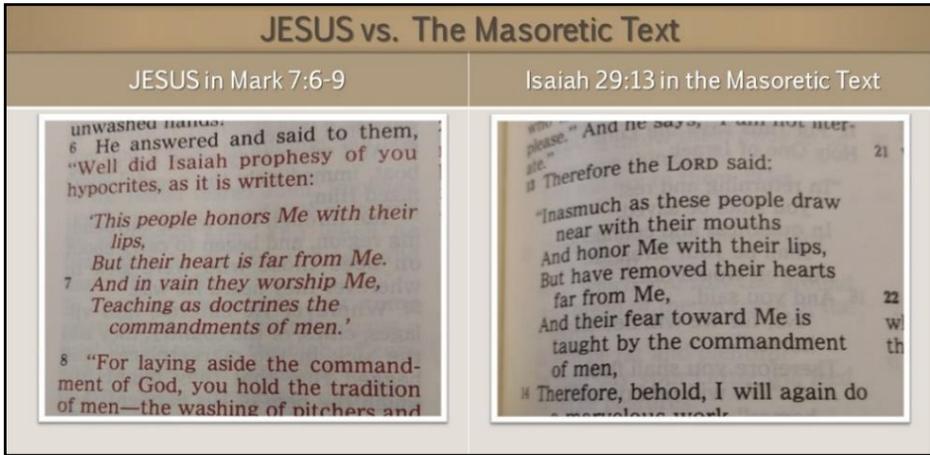


Figure 32

And now we must attempt to describe something that can be slightly difficult to comprehend. JESUS quoted Isaiah in the first century and we have manuscripts that record His words from at least 250 A.D., but the Masoretic Text is essentially quoting Isaiah around 600 years *after* JESUS quoted him, because the earliest available manuscripts of the Masoretic Text date to the 9th century!

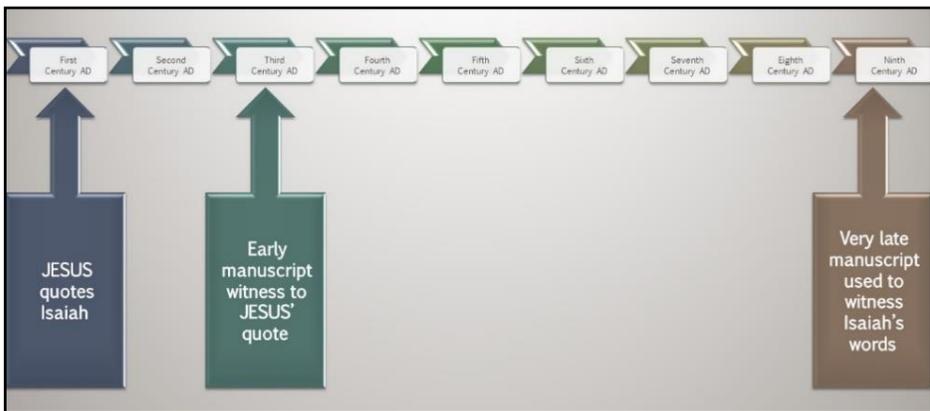


Figure 33

We find this hard to grasp because we rightly think of Isaiah’s words coming *before* the LORD’s quotation of his words, but the issue, in

this case, is all about when in time *the manuscripts quoting Isaiah* were written! And, when we compare the manuscripts that scholars chose to base the Final 27 Books on to the manuscripts they chose to base the First 39 Books on, the manuscripts that record JESUS quoting Isaiah in our modern Bibles are *much* closer to the time of Isaiah than the manuscripts used in our modern Bible record Isaiah's words!

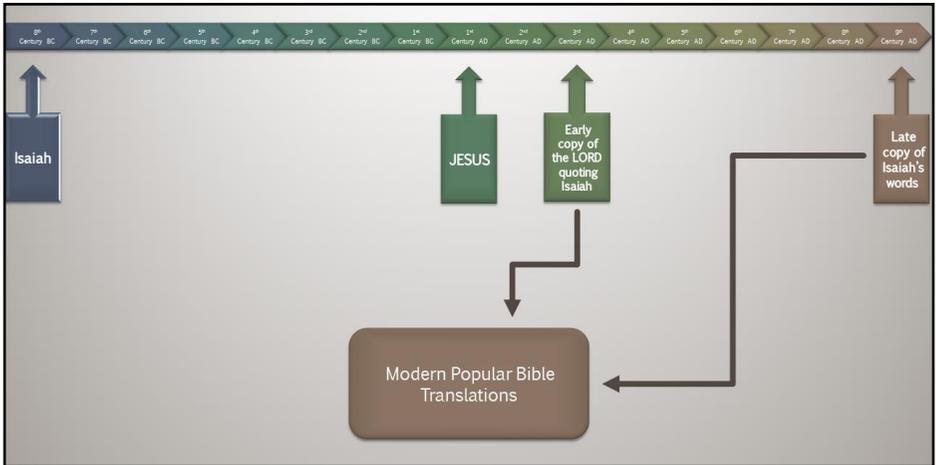


Figure 34

It is mind-bending to think that our *modern Bible translations* used earlier manuscripts to witness the words of JESUS quoting Isaiah than the witnesses they chose for what Isaiah said, but that is exactly what they did! And, the Masoretic Text is a manuscript tradition that dates to a time long *after* JESUS quoted the prophet. So, before we learn which text represents the Bible JESUS was quoting, this issue should lead us to wonder: “Are there any other problems like this in the Masoretic Text?”

Remembering that JESUS and His disciples are quoting the First 39 Books around 600 years closer to the time they were written compared to the Masoretic Text used in most modern Bibles, we read that Stephen said: “**Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, seventy-five people.**”^a So here is an ancient record much *older* than the Masoretic Text manuscripts, and it records 75 people migrating to Egypt with

^a Acts 7:14

Jacob.

But many centuries later, in the Masoretic Text that most modern Bible translations rely on, it is recorded: **All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.**^a

At first, because Genesis was chronologically written long before the book of Acts, and it comes much earlier textually in our Bibles, we are tempted to believe that Stephen is making the mistake here. But neither Genesis nor Stephen made a mistake! Scholars are the ones who blundered when they wrongly decided to use the manuscripts farthest away from Genesis to translate from!

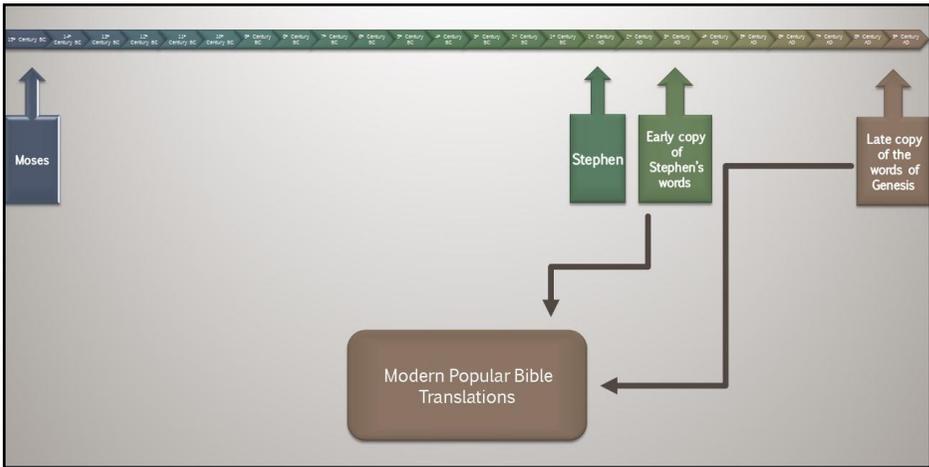


Figure 35

It can be very troubling when you turn to Acts 7:43 in a modern English translation like the New King James and read Stephen quoting Scripture to the Sanhedrin, saying: **“You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, images which you made to worship; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.”**^b

But then you turn in that same Bible to Amos 5:26, the passage Stephen was quoting, and read: **“You also carried Sikkuth your king and Chiun, your idols, the star of your gods, which you made for yourselves.”**^c Yes, on the surface this is troubling for

^a Genesis 46:27

^b Acts 7:43

^c Amos 5:26

sure! Does anyone think that Moloch and Remphan sound like Sikkuth and Chiun? They don't sound even remotely similar, right!

So, why didn't the Sanhedrin correct Stephen, or accuse him of misquoting the Bible? Well, the Bible does not record the Sanhedrin correcting Stephen, because the men of the Sanhedrin knew: 75 people went down with Jacob into Egypt, and they knew that Amos used the same names that Stephen quoted.

These items that appear to be misquoted are often falsely labeled as contradictions in the Bible. However, they are simply *more textual variants* like the ones we learned about in the previous chapter!

Yes, between the Masoretic Text and the Final 27 Books of the Bible, there are around 340 of these textual variants that, when combined indicate quite clearly that the Masoretic Text is not the best available preservation of the Scriptures as JESUS and His Disciples (or even the Sanhedrin) knew them!

So, the next logical question to ask is: *which of the 5 manuscript families of the First 39 books of the Bible match the Bible JESUS and His Disciples quoted over 800 times?* It clearly wasn't the Samaritan Pentateuch, because JESUS told the Samaritan woman at the well: Samaritans “**did not know Who they worshipped**”.^a Plus, our MESSIAH wept over Jerusalem and spoke frequently of her importance, not Mount Gerizim as the Pentateuch would claim.^b

Likewise, the Peshitta has the same conflicts with the quotations of the First 39 Books in the Final 27 that the Masoretic Text does; such as 70 people going into Egypt with Jacob, Isaiah *not* saying “**In vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men**”, and Amos naming false gods different from the ones Stephen mentioned in Acts. So, we have eliminated all but two options, so far.

Therefore, the only two options left for us to consider are the Dead Sea Scrolls and the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures known as the Septuagint. Surely, one of these very ancient Bible manuscript collections that predate the MESSIAH's

^a John 4:20-22

^b Matthew 23:37

birth in Bethlehem by at least one hundred years or more, preserved the Scriptures that JESUS and His Disciples were quoting!

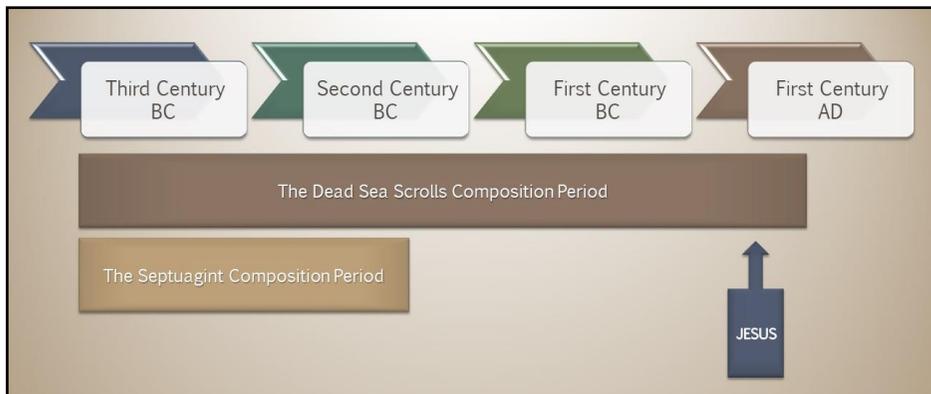


Figure 36

Well, at this point, we would imagine that our brothers and sisters in the Hebrew Roots movement would assume that it must be the Dead Sea Scrolls. And we say this because many (but not all) of those ancient manuscripts were written in *Hebrew*, and those in the Hebrew Roots movement believe a *Hebrew* perspective is the key to properly interpreting Scripture. But the fact is, we can prove beyond all reasonable doubt that JESUS was *not* quoting from a Hebrew Bible.

JESUS and His Apostles were *most certainly* quoting the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures known as the Septuagint. And there are at least 340 quotations of the First 39 Books in the Final 27 that can prove this assertion! (14)

But before we show you some choice examples from those 340 undeniable proofs (along with the solutions to the passages we have looked at already) please let us share with you the most powerful evidence there is that *the Septuagint* was the Bible your MESSIAH and His Disciples relied on. (15)

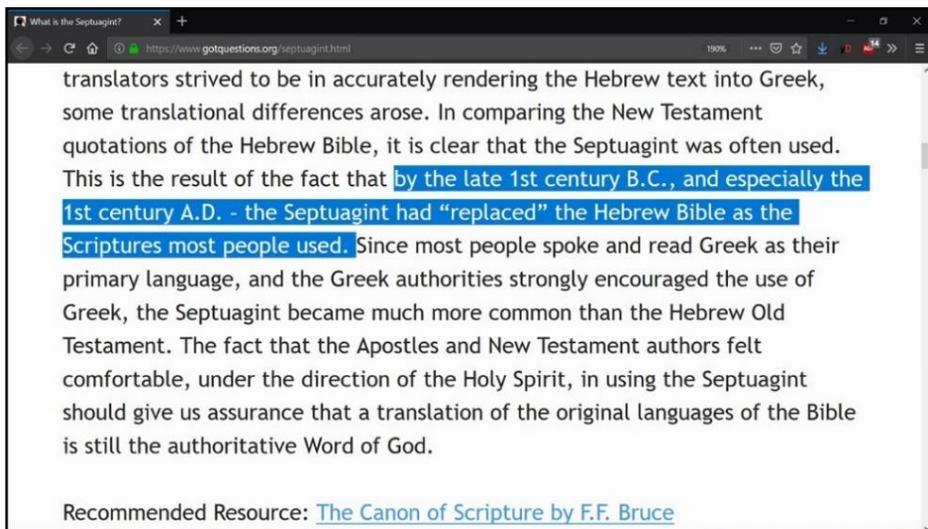


Figure 37

Two of the passages from Deuteronomy that JESUS quoted to satan in the wilderness included the name and title of our Creator. In a Hebrew text, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, or the Masoretic Text, we see the holy name of our Creator is represented by four Hebrew letters: **Yōd Heh Vav Heh**. These four Hebrew letters are commonly known as *the Tetragrammaton*; a Greek word that simply means: “*consisting of four letters*”.

But, before we learn *how* JESUS quoted these passages in the Gospels, we should learn some background about the Name above all names!



Figure 38

In the Gospel of John, JESUS summarized the four letters that make up the Name with two Greek words: “Ego” and “I -mee”, the

Greek equivalent of “I Am”. (16)

Also, because the MESSIAH applied that holy Name from the Septuagint translation of Exodus 3:6 to Himself, the people who heard Him that day tried to stone Him to death for blasphemy!

Meanwhile, since JESUS said the Tetragrammaton means the equivalent of: “I Am” or “I have always existed”, translators often correctly translate the name of our Creator into English as “I Am”.

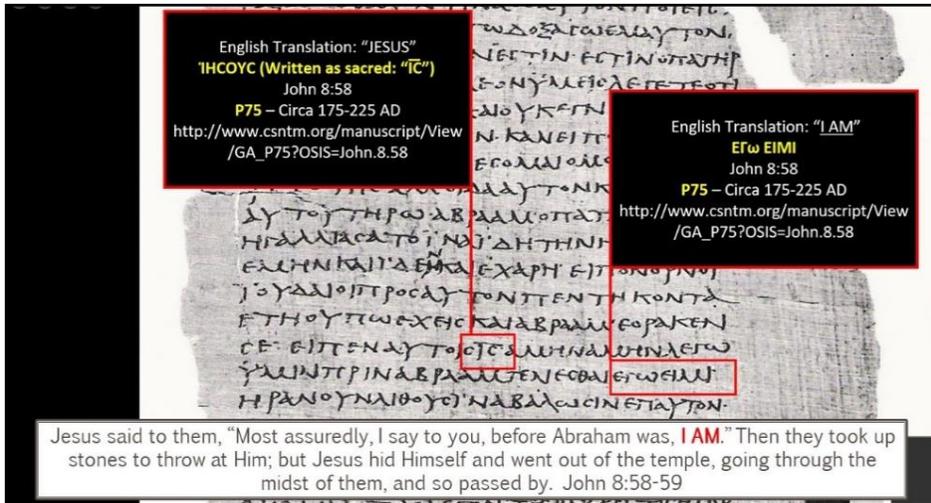


Figure 39

Now that we know what that holy name means in English, based on how JESUS said it in Greek, we can briefly discuss why some controversy surrounds how it is to be pronounced in Hebrew.

Ancient Hebrew was originally only written with consonant letters; and instead of writing down the vowels, they were simply implied by the context.



Figure 40

But because language is a very fluid thing, to keep track of how to pronounce Hebrew words, a system of lines and dots was created to be placed in different positions around the Hebrew letters of each word. However, traditionally the vowel pointing was intentionally changed around the letters: Yod Heh Vav Heh so that no one would accidentally pronounce “the Name” (Note: “HaShem” is Hebrew for “the name”) while they were reading.



Figure 41

So, the way they avoided saying the name of the Creator, which was written approximately 6,800 times in Scripture, was to combine the four letters (Yod Heh Vav Heh) with the vowels of the Hebrew word for “LORD”, which is pronounced “Adonai”.

Consonantal text for Adonai
with vowel pointing in red

אֲדֹנָי

YHWH combined with the vowels from
Adonai forming Yehovah or Yehowah

יְהוָה

יְהוָה

The Hebrew consonantal text for Yahweh YHWH
(The Tetragrammaton)

Figure 42

The first three vowel sounds in Adonai are A, O, and A; and when you combine those vowels with the English letters that some *misguided* scholars thought came closest to the Hebrew letters Yod Heh Vav Heh, you get the letters that spell out JEHOVAH.

But there is no equivalent to our English “J” sound in Hebrew, so *later* scholars determined the English letter “Y” was a better match to the Hebrew letter “Yod”. And, these days, you *may* hear some people pronounce the name of the Creator YaHoVaH. But this pronunciation is still using the vowel points of the word Adonai, even though we know for certain that they were not the original vowels used in GOD’s holy name.

Based on *some other* Hebrew words and names that (a) refer to the Name of GOD and (b) still have their accurate vowel pointing, most modern scholars now agree, it seems the best pronunciation of the name of the Creator is *YaHWeH*. And this is now the popular consensus on how the Creator’s name is to be pronounced.

Meanwhile, some sectarian groups insist on some less likely pronunciations of the Name. And the truth is: *all* of the various ways of pronouncing the Creator’s name have to be deduced because we simply don’t have the original vowel points to know for certain exactly *how* His name is to be pronounced. But the best evidence seems to lean towards the pronunciation *YaHWeH*, perhaps with

the small adjustment of pronouncing the “W” as a “V”.

We do however know *exactly* how to pronounce the *title* of our Creator in Hebrew; and the Hebrew word we translate into English as “GOD”, is: “Elohim”.

Interestingly, Elohim is *the plural form* of the Hebrew word that means GOD, and from the very first time the Creator reveals Himself in Genesis, He uses *plural pronouns and the plural equivalent of the word GOD* with singular verbs. This is because the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all equally Elohim! They act as *one* GOD and they share the same holy singular Name: *YaHWeH*.

And this brings us back to the MESSIAH’s encounter with satan in the wilderness. During that interaction, our English translations report that JESUS said to satan: “**It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’**”^a

But we should explain here, many who have learned about the holy Hebrew name and title of the Creator have assumed that it is wrong to say: “***the LORD your GOD***” instead of “***YaHWeH your Elohim***”. And such people mistakenly *retranslate* passages like this one, while insisting that people should use the sacred *Hebrew* names of GOD.

However, when they do this, they are *disagreeing* with JESUS and *all* of the textual evidence contained in the manuscripts of the Final 27 Books of the Bible! Because all of *the earliest* manuscript witnesses of the words of our MESSIAH reveal that He said the Greek words: “***Kurion ton Theon***”; Greek words that most certainly translate into English as: “***LORD your GOD***”. (17)

^a Matthew 4:7

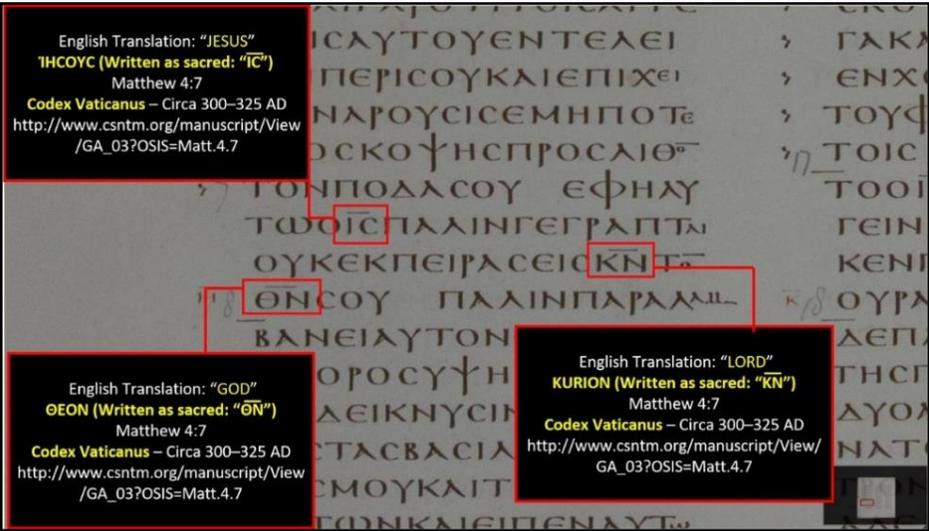


Figure 43

We are now ready to learn about one very important fact; a fact that proves which manuscripts of the Bible the MESSIAH considered reliable enough to quote as His Word! You see, the Greek word "Kurion" that JESUS used here is *not* Hebrew, and it isn't even a direct Greek translation of the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy!

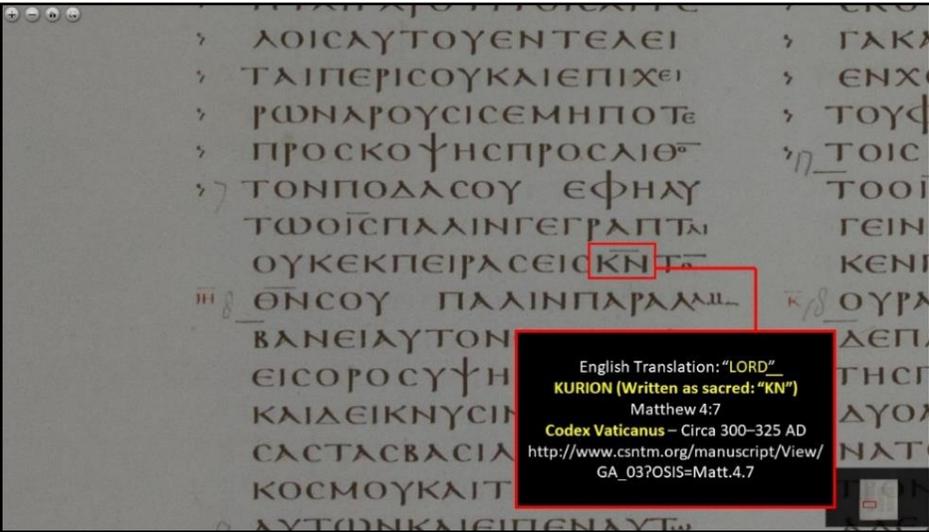


Figure 44

If JESUS chose to, He could have spelled out the Tetragrammaton in Greek letters, and Matthew, Mark, and Luke would have recorded it that way. If He chose to, JESUS could have translated the holy tetragrammaton into Greek, as He did in John's Gospel, with the

phrase: “Ego I-mee”, which means “**I AM**”.

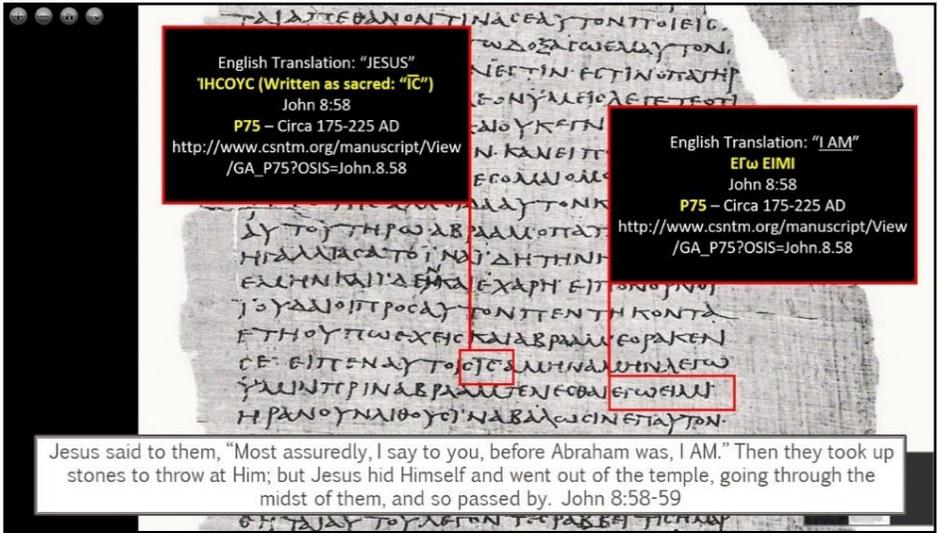


Figure 45

But the manuscripts record that JESUS used the word “**KURION**”; a Greek word that means “**LORD**” in English or “**Adonai**” in Hebrew.

Meanwhile, not one Hebrew manuscript tradition uses the word “Adonai” (the Hebrew equivalent of “Kurion”) in Deuteronomy 6:13; not the Dead Sea Scrolls **or** the Masoretic Text!



Figure 46

So, when JESUS quoted Deuteronomy 6:13, He was *indisputably* quoting the Septuagint! And we know this because the Septuagint was the first ancient manuscript to replace the Tetragrammaton with the Greek word “**KURION**”, which means “**LORD**”. (18)

Deuteronomy 6:13

6:13 ²⁹⁶² κύριον ³⁵⁸⁸ τον ²³¹⁶⁻¹⁴⁷³ θεόν σου ⁵³⁹⁹ φοβηθήση ²⁵³² και ¹⁴⁷³ αὐτῷ ³⁴⁴¹ μόνῳ

[²the LORD ³your God ¹You shall fear], and to him only

³⁰⁰⁰ λατρεύσεις ²⁵³² και ⁴³¹⁴ προς ¹⁴⁷³ αὐτόν ²⁸⁵³ κολληθήση ²⁵³² και ¹⁹⁰⁹ ἐπί

you shall serve, and to him you shall cleave to, and by

³⁵⁸⁸ τῷ ³⁶⁸⁶⁻¹⁴⁷³ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ³⁶⁶⁰ ὀμῆ

his name you shall swear an oath by.

Figure 47

This means that *even* JESUS used the word “KURIOS” in the place of “Yod Hey Vov Hey”! And He did not just this in one particular passage! The fact is, every single quotation of the First 39 Books of the Holy Bible in the Final 27 replaces the Tetragrammaton with the Greek word for “LORD”! And this is *one* critical piece of evidence that proves beyond all reasonable doubt that JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples used *the Septuagint* as their trusted source of the Holy Scriptures! (19)

Codex Vaticanus
300-325 AD

Then **Jesus** said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship **the LORD** your **God**, and Him only you shall serve.’” Matthew 4:10

Figure 48

And we should mention here (to anyone who might claim JESUS said words that don't match what the Final 27 Books of the Bible record) JESUS promised: **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”**^a

Did the LORD's words disappear for 500 years until a Hebrew translation was produced in the 6th or even the 14th century? If they did not, every sound-minded person who learns of this evidence must concede that JESUS quoted the Septuagint! (20)

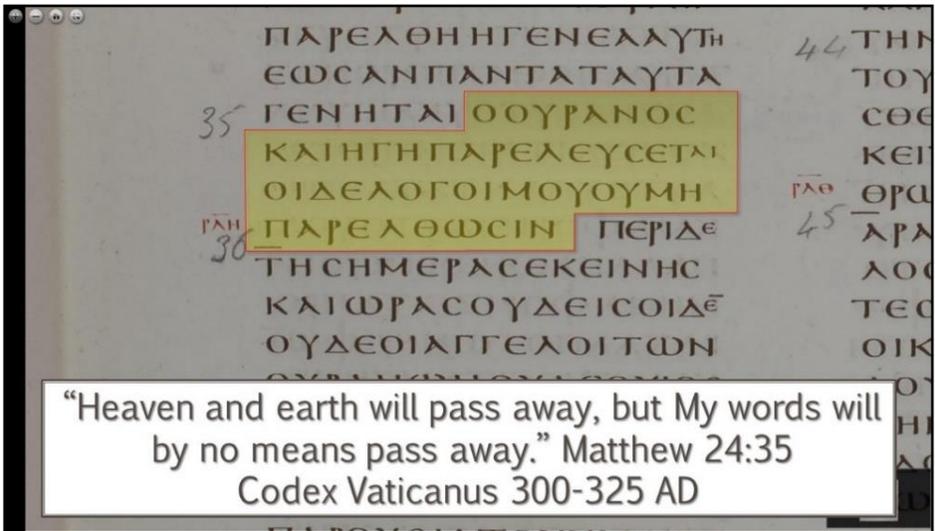


Figure 49

Likewise, we can say: if Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John wanted to record that JESUS said these words in Hebrew, they would have simply noted so, as Luke did in Acts.^b

For example, in Acts 26 (even though Luke recorded the account in Greek), Luke mentioned that JESUS spoke in the Hebrew language on this particular occasion. And, we should also point out: in each of the three places the Final 27 Books mention someone specifically speaking in Hebrew, the listeners were notably Jews that were hostile to JESUS and His message.

^a Matthew 24:35

^b Acts 26:14, Acts 22:2, and Acts 21:40

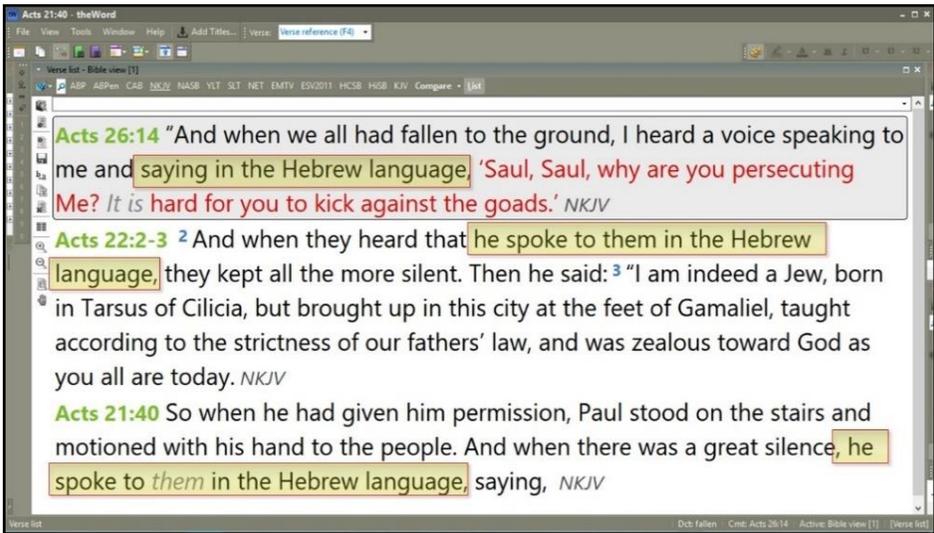


Figure 50

Truly, the Hebrew name and the Hebrew titles of GOD are most certainly holy! But the equivalent *Greek* names and titles of GOD (and His Son) are *equally* as holy! And that is why all of the earliest manuscripts of the Final 27 Books always render the Greek words that mean: LORD, GOD, JESUS, CHRIST, and SPIRIT as holy, anytime they refer to the Creator. So, to render those names and titles as *holy* (or *sacred*) words, the manuscripts use only the first and last letter of each word (or the first two letters when referring to the SPIRIT), with a distinct line over the top of the letters.

Earliest Manuscripts of the Final 27 Books of the Bible All Universally Use the Following Greek "Nomina Sacra" or Sacred Names:			
GOD	Θεός	Θ̄Σ̄	Θ̄Ῡ
LORD	Κύριος	Κ̄Σ̄	Κ̄Ῡ
JESUS	Ἰησοῦς	ῙΣ̄	ῙῩ
CHRIST	Χριστός	Χ̄Σ̄	Χ̄Ῡ
SPIRIT	Πνεῦμα	Π̄ΝᾹ	Π̄ΝΣ̄

Figure 51

So, we see: JESUS and His Disciples approved of *both* Greek and Hebrew! They used the Greek Septuagint translation of the Bible. And, when they wrote the Greek words that refer to GOD, they treated them as sacred words by only using the first and last Greek letter with a line over top.

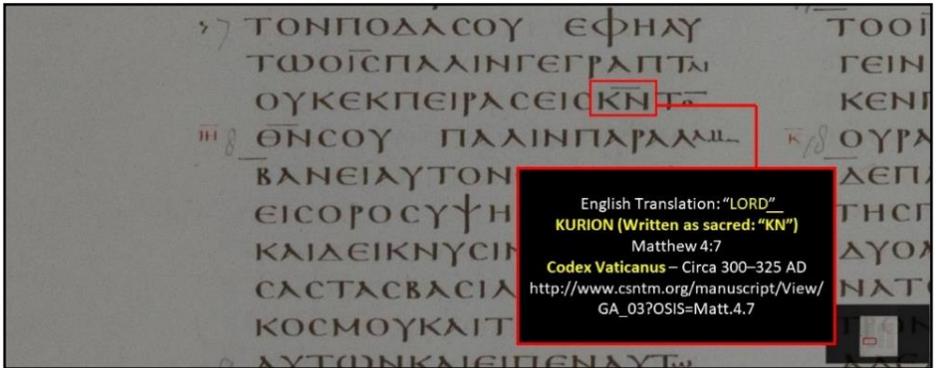


Figure 52

(In keeping with how the earliest manuscripts treated the names and titles that refer to GOD as holy, MESSIAH Theology recommends capitalizing *each* letter of the words: GOD, LORD, JESUS, CHRIST, MESSIAH, SPIRIT, and HOLY SPIRIT in honor of our blessed Creator)

With those facts understood, now we are ready to see how the Septuagint fixes the issues we saw before in Isaiah, Amos, and Genesis. As you can see in the following chart, our LORD quoted Isaiah perfectly when we compare His words to the ancient Septuagint. But His words do not match the reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Peshitta, or the Masoretic Text.

JESUS	Septuagint	Dead Sea Scrolls	Peshitta	Masoretic Text
Mark 7:6-9 NKJV	Isaiah 29:13 CAB	Isaiah 29:13 PPF	Isaiah 29:13 LTP	Isaiah 29:13 NKJV
He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. '	And the Lord has said, This people draw near to Me with their mouth, and they honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; and in vain do they worship Me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men.	And the LORD said, Inasmuch as this people draw near to honor me with their mouth and with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from me, and fear of me has been like a human commandment that has been taught them:	Therefore the LORD said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their reverence toward me is taught by the precepts and doctrine of men:	Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.

Figure 53

Also, Stephen quoted Genesis perfectly when we compare his words to the ancient Septuagint. But His words do not match the reading of the Peshitta or the Masoretic Text.

Stephen	Septuagint	Dead Sea Scrolls	Peshitta	Masoretic Text
Acts 7:14 NKJV	Genesis 46:27 CAB	Genesis 46:27 PPF	Genesis 46:27 LTP	Genesis 46:27 NKJV
Then Joseph sent and summoned his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five people.	And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in the land of Egypt were nine persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt were seventy-five persons.	Not Available	And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons; thus all the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy.	And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.

Figure 54

Plus, Stephen was most certainly quoting the reading of Amos found in the ancient Septuagint. But His words do not match the reading of the Peshitta or the Masoretic Text.

Stephen	Septuagint	Dead Sea Scrolls	Peshitta	Masoretic Text
Acts 7:43 NKJV	Amos 5:26 CAB	Amos 5:26 PPF	Amos 5:26 LTP	Amos 5:26 NKJV
You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch . And the star of your god Remphan . Images which you made to worship: And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.'	Yea, you took up the tabernacle of Moloch , and the star of your god Rephan , the images of them which you made for yourselves.	Not Available	But you carried the tabernacle of Malcom and Chiun your idol, the star which you made a god to yourselves.	You also carried Sikkuth your king And Chiun, your idols. The star of your gods, Which you made for yourselves.

Figure 55

And these three examples are just a small sampling of 340 different readings where the LORD and His disciples are indisputably quoting the Greek Septuagint, not the Peshitta, the Masoretic Text, or the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Other examples include:

- Luke's record of the MESSIAH's genealogy includes the son of Arphaxad, named: *Cainan*.^a
- The seven-fold manifestation of the Spirit of GOD in Revelation, and the seven spirits listed under the Spirit of the LORD in Isaiah chapter 11.^b
- GOD resisting the proud, but giving grace to the humble, as read in Proverbs 3:34.
- And hundreds of other examples!^c

So, we can be sure that *the Septuagint* preserves the reading our MESSIAH and His Disciples relied on and quoted in the Final 27 Books of the Holy Bible. And we are not the first to discover this fact!

Ph.D. Paul Lawrence states about the Septuagint: *“The four letters YHWH that form the personal name of God in the Hebrew Text are rendered ho Kyrios throughout the Septuagint. This is the usage, traditionally rendered “the LORD” in English versions, which is adopted by writers of the New Testament and is still by far the most common nomenclature for the divine name.”* (21)

^a Luke 3:36 & Genesis 11:12

^b Revelation 1:4, Revelation 3:1, Revelation 4:5 & Isaiah 11:2-3

^c James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5 & Proverbs 3:34

And, the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia states about the Septuagint: *“It was the Bible of most writers of the New Testament. Not only are the majority of their express citations from Scripture borrowed from it, but their writings contain numerous reminiscences of its language. Its words are household words to them.”* (22)

So, we know which manuscripts of the First 39 Books of the Bible the MESSIAH and His disciples relied upon! And scholars have proven: it was the reading of the ancient Greek Septuagint translation of the Holy Scriptures.

Also, we know that the Final 27 Books of the Bible have been faithfully preserved in the Majority Text. (But even the Critical Text can be considered “reliable” since the differences between those two readings are not nearly as significant as the differences between the Septuagint and the available ancient alternative readings.)

And with this information understood, we can finally recommend what we consider to be the most trustworthy English Bible translation of our current time, based on translation style and textual choice. And that translation is called: *The Apostolic Bible Polyglot*, translated by Charles VanderPool^a.

His excellent literal English interlinear translation of the ancient Septuagint and the Majority Text represents the Bible the MESSIAH and His Apostles relied on, and it allows you to see the Bible the way they knew it. (23)

^a MESSIAH Theology Ministries (MTM) is not affiliated with Charles VanderPool, and MTM does not profit in any way through sales of the Apostolic Bible Polyglot or through mentioning it. We simply recommend it impartially after years of careful study.

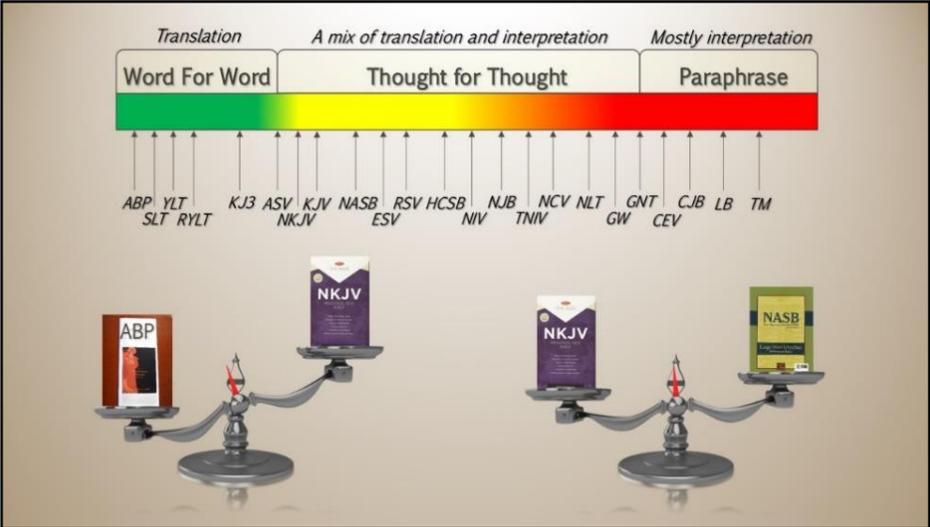


Figure 56

Thus, while we typically use the New King James Bible translation for group studies (because it is commercially available to everyone, it represents the Majority Text of the Final 27 Books, and it is relatively easy to read) it's less than absolutely literal translation style and use of the Masoretic Text in translating the First 39 Books means that the Apostolic Bible Polyglot is *vastly* superior.

The Apostolic Bible Polyglot is an English-Greek interlinear translation of the same Holy Scriptures that our MESSIAH quoted; and it is currently the most *accurate* English translation available for studying the Word of GOD from the very first originally Hebrew word of Genesis, to the very last Greek word of Revelation!

Chapter Five: The MESSIAH's Interpretation

To review what we have learned so far in our first four chapters together, we saw:

- Once we have concluded that the Bible is the Word of GOD, we next had to establish that we must not add to it or take away from it.
- Then, we had to analyze how the Bible was handed down to us over the last two thousand years. And by comparing all of the available readings of the Bible to the reading the MESSIAH and His Apostles relied on and taught, we were able to establish which reading *they knew* as the Scriptures in the first century, and which reading we should consider Holy Scripture today.

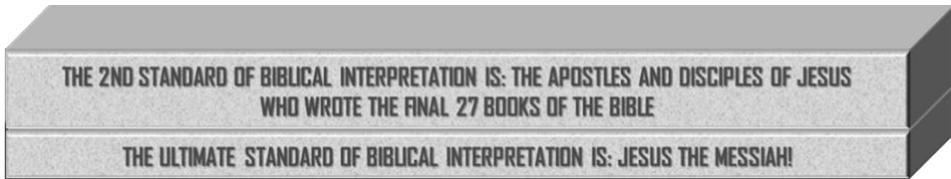
Now that we identified the text that *the MESSIAH* endorsed as Holy Scripture, we next have to address how we are to approach *interpreting* that inerrant, infallible, inspired, sufficient, and miraculously preserved collection of 66 writings that we call the Holy Bible. And, as always, our foundational principle in every category of Biblical study is *JESUS our MESSIAH, since He is the key to properly understanding the Word of GOD!*



THE ULTIMATE STANDARD OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS: JESUS THE MESSIAH!

Figure 57

Then our second standard of biblical interpretation is: *the writings of the Apostles and Disciples of JESUS also reveal the MESSIAH's infallible understanding of the Word of GOD.*



THE 2ND STANDARD OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS: THE APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES OF JESUS
WHO WROTE THE FINAL 27 BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

THE ULTIMATE STANDARD OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS: JESUS THE MESSIAH!

Figure 58

And our third standard of Biblical interpretation is: *we must never set aside a single word of the Holy Scriptures unless JESUS or His*

Apostles clearly and indisputably set it aside.

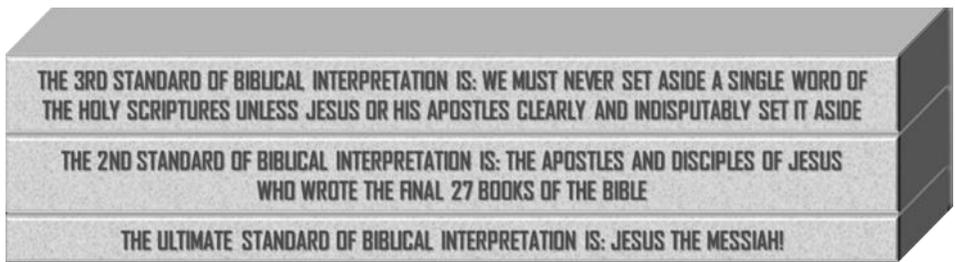


Figure 59

The MESSIAH (along with His Apostles and Disciples) was our guide to understanding textual criticism, and He will also guide us in our understanding of Biblical Interpretation (or hermeneutics) which we will be discussing in this chapter! So, let's begin by looking at a passage where JESUS quotes from the First 39 Books of the Bible in the Final 27, to see how our omniscient King interpreted Holy Scripture.

Matthew recorded: **The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?” And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”^a**

Here JESUS quoted the Septuagint *word for word* while asking the Pharisees if they had even *read* in Scripture how GOD instituted marriage in the beginning. And the second time JESUS quoted the exact Greek wording of the Septuagint, He quoted Genesis 1:27. But, it is very important that we not overlook how the MESSIAH made a direct connection between verse 27 and verse 1 of the first chapter of Genesis, when He said that “GOD made male and female” humans in his own image “at, from, or since **‘the beginning’**”.

^a Matthew 19:3-6

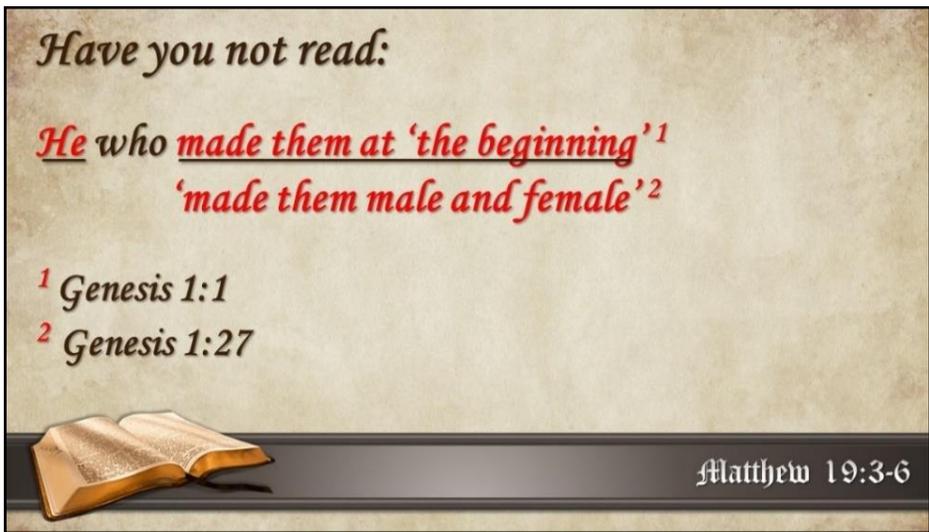


Figure 60

The verse JESUS quoted from says: **So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**^a But many people in our modern world would claim that verse 27 occurred *long after* “**the Beginning**”.

They might say things like: “each day of creation was a long period of time”, or “there was a long gap between verse one and verse two of Genesis chapter one”; but JESUS just made an inseparable connection between verse 1 that says “**In the Beginning**” and verse 27 that says “**GOD created man in His own Image... male and female He created them**”!

^a Genesis 1:27

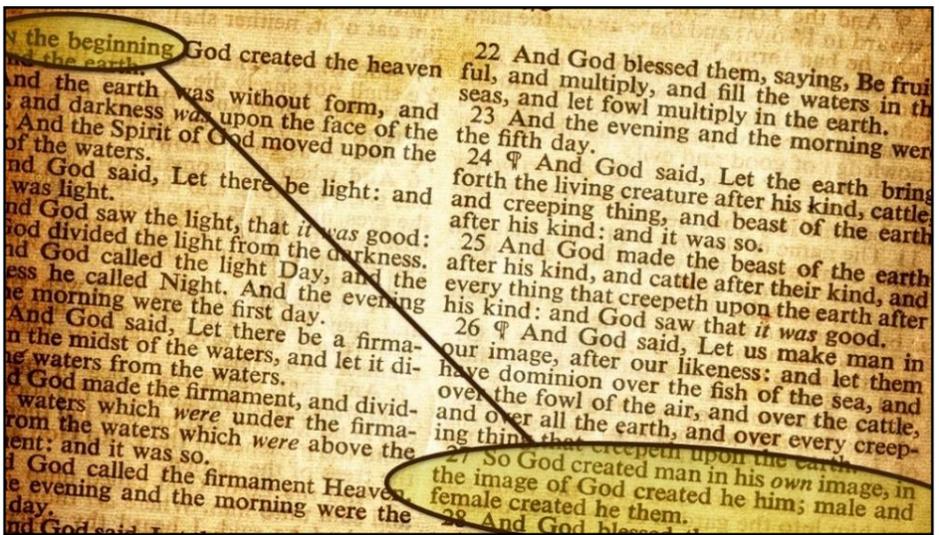


Figure 61

To try to explain how profound that connection is, please consider the genealogy of the MESSIAH given to us by Luke. In the third chapter of Luke's gospel, a direct lineage from Adam to JESUS is given, and there are 75 human fathers listed. If we assume an average age of 120 years when each son was born to His father (a very conservatively high average estimate) that means that there cannot be more than 9,000 years between the birth of JESUS and the creation of Adam! In reality, Septuagint-based calculations reveal that 30 A.D. was the equivalent of 5,367 years after Adam was created.

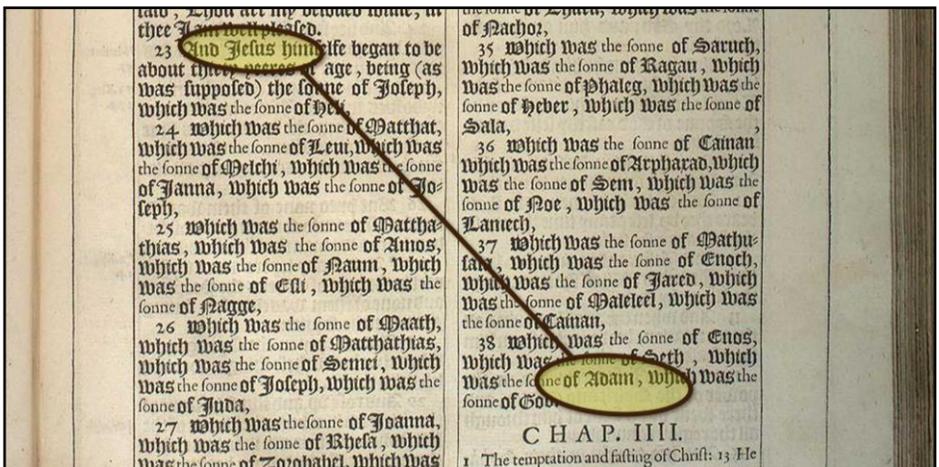


Figure 62

Therefore, if a person accepts “*the day-age theory*” that claims each day of creation was a vast period of time, or if a person accepts “*the gap theory*” that claims a massive period of time passed between the first and second verse of Genesis, *then* verse 27, (when GOD created man in His own image) could never be considered “**the Beginning**”, as JESUS said it was! No, those theories would place verse 27 of Genesis Chapter 1 more towards “*the middle*” of the history of the universe, or even “*the end*”!



Figure 63

So, already we begin to see how profoundly the words of JESUS should impact our reading of Scripture! The MESSIAH said “**GOD created man in His own image**” “*at the beginning*”, and that should settle all debates about the reading of Genesis chapter 1, once and for all!

Therefore, based on what we have just witnessed, we can introduce our fourth principle of interpretation, which is: *the simplest, most straightforward reading of Scripture is the reading JESUS always taught.*

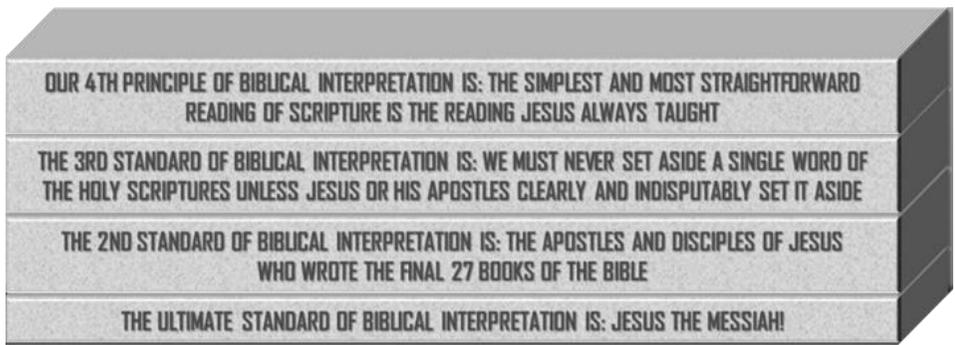


Figure 64

Another example of that principle can be seen in Matthew chapter 24. There JESUS said: **“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”**^a

Based on this passage, could anyone *honestly* argue that JESUS thought the flood was a non-literal, moral allegory? Plus, if someone wrongly treats Noah and the Flood as a moral allegory, will they treat the second coming of JESUS as a moral allegory?

The fact is that JESUS considered Noah to be a historical figure who literally entered a physical ark and survived a literal flood that took *“all”* of the people who did not enter the ark with Noah away. And He compared that literal, historical account to how things would be when He literally returned to the earth. And, because JESUS took the flood so literally, His apostles took it literally too!

After spending almost every waking moment with the MESSIAH for nearly three years, Peter wrote: **[GOD] did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.**^b None of us could ever hope to know more about how the MESSIAH perceived the Scriptures than the Apostle Peter. And Peter wrote that the entire *“ancient world”* was destroyed by a flood,

^a Matthew 24:37-39

^b 2 Peter 2:5

and *only* Noah and seven others were saved on the ark!

Peter did not teach a local flood, a metaphorical flood, or an allegorical flood! Peter taught a literal, global, catastrophic flood that destroyed the ancient “world”! Or, in other words, Peter was taught by JESUS to believe in a straightforward, *literal*, plain-sense, interpretation of the Holy Scriptures that accepted exactly what the Scriptures say!

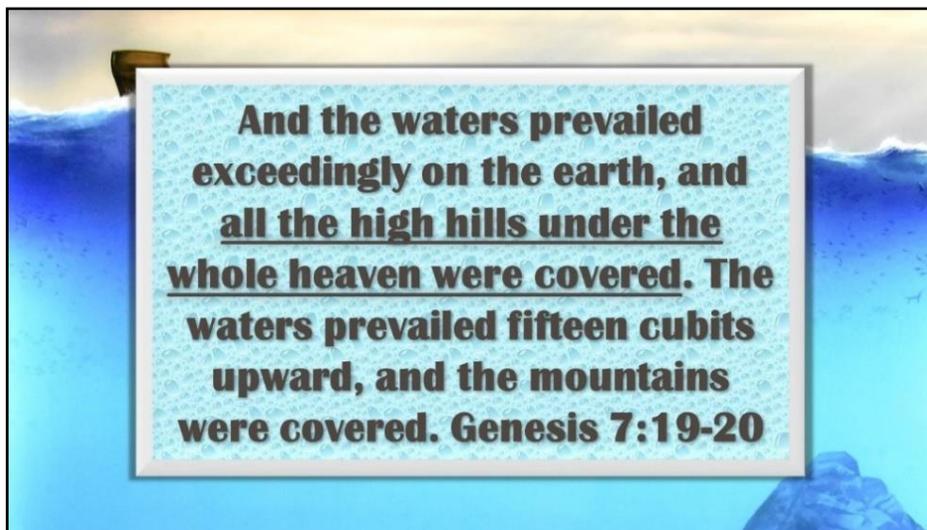


Figure 65

So, our fifth principle of interpretation is: *the most literal reading of Scripture that still makes sense in context is the reading JESUS always taught.* And we can see our fourth and fifth principles in action, as we look at how the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD viewed Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden!

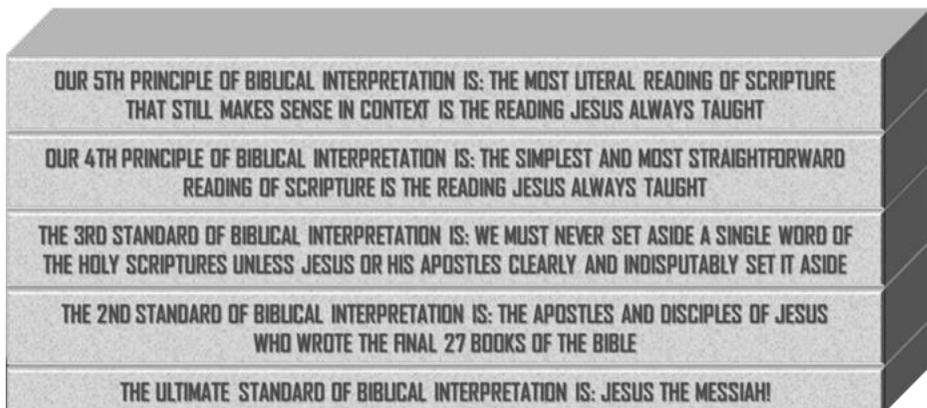


Figure 66

In Luke 3:38, Adam is listed as the first human in the MESSIAH's earthly ancestry, and that same Adam is mentioned by the Apostle Paul in his inspired first letter to Timothy.

Paul wrote: **Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.^a**

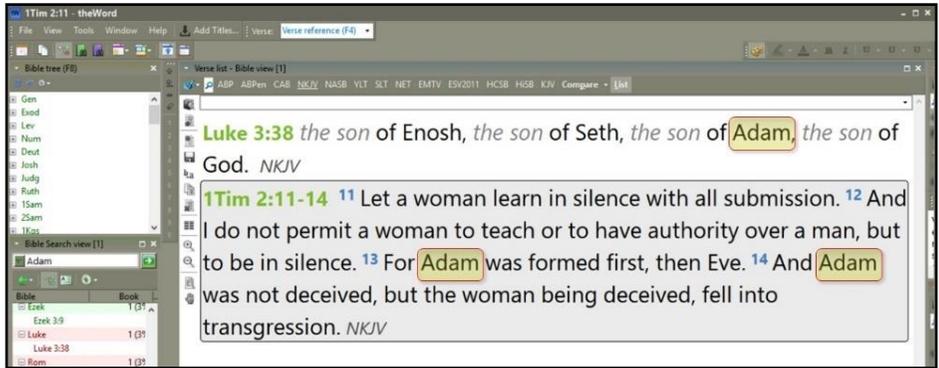


Figure 67

And in another letter to the church in Corinth, Paul wrote: **I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.^b** Modern theologians may find it fashionable to doubt the historicity of Adam and Eve (or even the serpent's temptation of Eve in the garden) but the Apostles of our LORD did not doubt those realities in any way!

^a 1 Timothy 2:11-14

^b 2 Corinthians 11:3

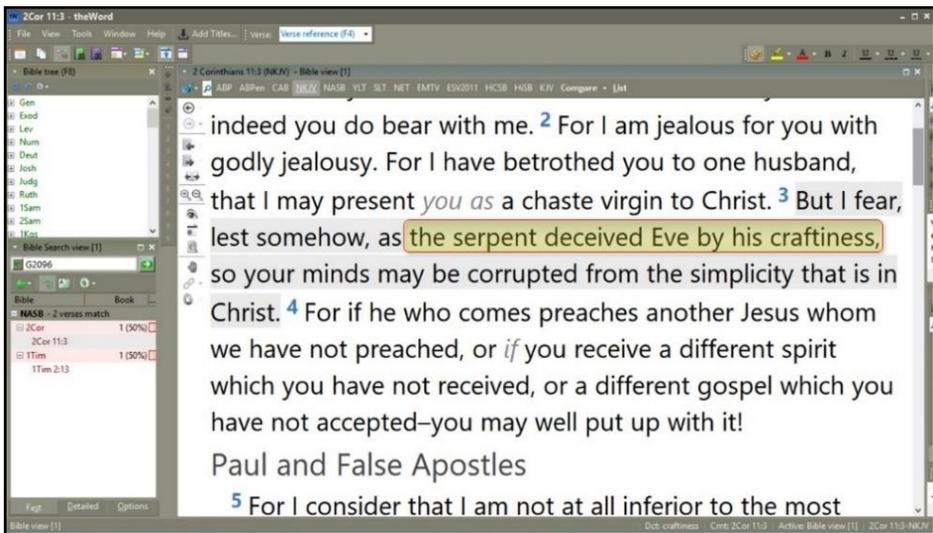


Figure 68

They based their understanding of the MESSIAH’s genealogy on a *literal* Adam! They based their understanding of authority, submission, and gender on a *literal* interpretation of Genesis! And they referred to the book of Genesis as *literal*, reliable, and even *infallible* history; the history that set the stage for every major doctrine and principle that came after it!

And now that we have a few examples of how JESUS and His Apostles interpreted Scripture under our belt, I want to discuss a word we read a moment ago (see Figure 67) in the writings of Paul, that is the key to Biblical interpretation and the MESSIAH’s approach to the Bible! And that keyword is “**submission**”.

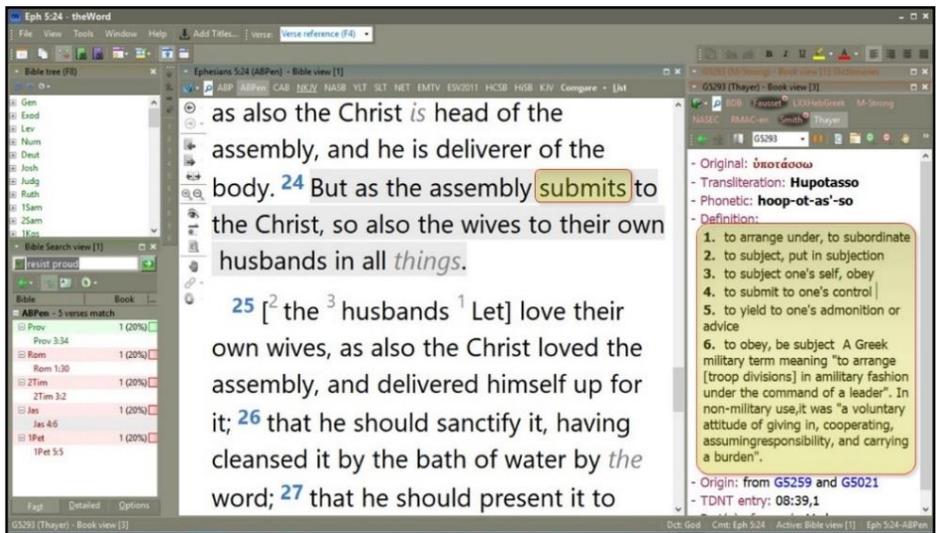


Figure 69

You see, there are two types of people in this world: those who seek to *submit* their every whim, wish, and perception to every single blessed word of the Holy Bible; or those who wish to *submit* every single blessed word of the Holy Bible to their whims, wishes, and perceptions.

When we approach the Bible with a spirit of *submission*, we approach it correctly, in the way JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples approached it. But when we approach the Bible with a spirit of *pride or rebellion*, we will try to make the Bible submit to us! And these two opposing spirits - the spirit of humble submission to the inspired words of GOD, as opposed to the spirit of pride and rebellion against the inspired words of GOD - have been warring against each other since the garden of Eden. One is the HOLY SPIRIT of the MESSIAH and the other is the unholy spirit of satan!

Please notice the spirit of holy submission in the words of our MESSIAH, Who said: **“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”**^a (*Emphasis*

^a John 12:48-50 (Emphasis Added)

Added)

And in another place, JESUS said: **“When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”**^a

Brothers and Sisters, the reason JESUS never sinned is that He never said or did anything that contradicted His Father’s will! He perfectly, willingly, and humbly *submitted* Himself to every single word that proceeded from His Father; and He has instructed us to do the same! So, this leads us to our sixth principle of interpretation, which is: *the most humble and submissive reading of Scripture is the reading JESUS always taught.*

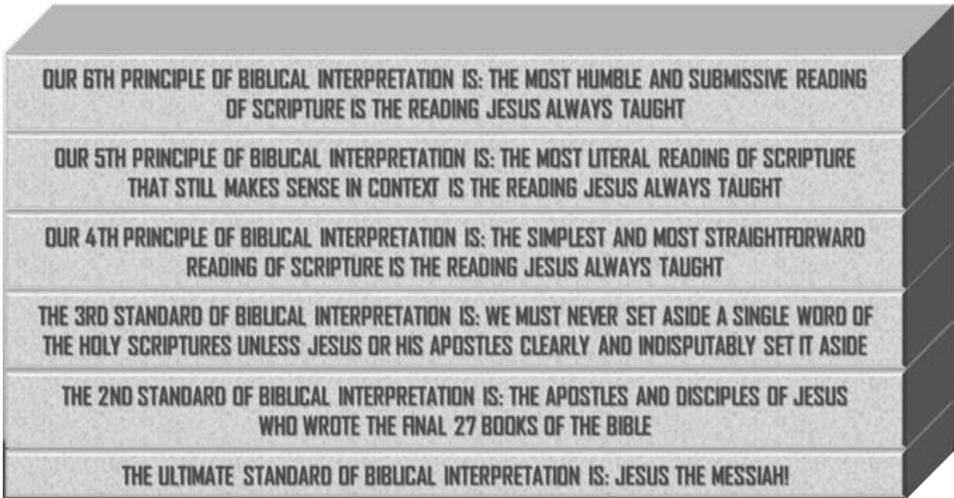


Figure 70

Meanwhile, satan always tries to twist GOD’s Word and tempt us to violate it! And this epic battle between GOD’s Word, satan’s lies, and our free will is the story of mankind! But please make no mistake, this saga has a direct impact on the history of Biblical interpretation!

Just as satan deceptively whispered to Eve in the garden **“has God indeed said?”**^b, and **“you will not surely die.”**^c to cause her to

^a John 8:28-29

^b Genesis 3:1

^c Genesis 3:4

question and even reject the truth of GOD’s Word; he still whispers similar lies to theologians to tempt them to look at things according to their own fallen and fleshly perspective.

Therefore, just as Eve fell when she began to evaluate her world according to *her own perspective*, we fall when we interpret the Bible with any *external perspective* that contradicts the literal, plain-sense perspective the Holy Scriptures present.

Or said another way: we must allow Scripture to speak for Itself, we must interpret Scripture with Scripture, and we must constantly adapt our perspective to match GOD’s perspective as it is plainly presented. Because if we don’t, we will *philosophically* add to or take away from GOD’s Word, in some very dangerous ways that are just as perilous as the groups that *systematically* add to or take away from the 66 books of the Holy Bible!

Group	Added	Took Away
Samaritans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mount Gerizim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 of the First 39 Books • Jerusalem from the 5 Books of Moses
Sadducees		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 of the First 39 Books • Angels, Spirits, and Resurrection
Roman Catholicism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacred Tradition • Magisterium • Apocrypha • Papacy • Mary/Saint Veneration • Sunday, Easter, Christmas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Seventh Day Sabbath • The Feasts of GOD • Local Church Autonomy
Mormons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Book of Mormon • The Pearl of Great Price • The Doctrine and Covenants • Eventual godhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOD’s exclusive divinity • GOD’s eternal nature
Man-Made Theologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple unbiblical understandings of the word “ek-klay-see-ah” or “Church” (See: Matthew 18:17, Ephesians 2, Romans 11, Galatians 3:28, John 10:16, Acts 7:38, etc. to learn the correct perspective) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The full weight and authority of the First 39 Books of the Bible • The universal application of the MESSIAH’s teachings, such as Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 • The literal understanding of Scripture • The Seventh Day Sabbath • The Feasts of GOD

Figure 71

In the first century, groups like the Sadducees and the Samaritans believed only *the books of Moses* were holy Scripture. And JESUS openly rebuked them for that error! And *in our century*, groups like the Mormons or the Catholics *systematically* add to and take away from Scripture. But we can *philosophically* do the same thing when we arbitrarily label the First 39 Books of the Bible as “old” or say unsupportable things as: “*the LORD’s words in Matthew 24 are only for the Jews*”.

As we have noted before, JESUS (and later Paul) appealed to the Law of Moses to establish the truth and affirm righteous behavior; so, they most certainly could not have considered all of the Law of Moses obsolete or “old”!

Plus, in a parallel passage to Matthew 24, JESUS ends His explanation of what to expect before He returns by saying: “**And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!**”^a So Matthew 24 cannot just be a message for the Jews as dispensationalist teachers claim.

All of the Apostles and Disciples of the LORD quoted the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings as infallible, perpetually authoritative, Holy Scripture! Therefore, they relied on those First 39 Books to settle disputes, guide the Church, and prove their teachings.

The only components of the First 39 books they considered “old” were the “**foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances**” of the first covenant, items that were “**imposed until the time of reformation**”^b inaugurated by the MESSIAH!

Likewise, a careful reading of Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians proves that Paul was most certainly referring back to the words of JESUS in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 (that many now call the Olivet Discourse) when he described *the rapture* that would occur at the return of the LORD!

^a Mark 13:37

^b Hebrews 9:10



Figure 72

Paul directly connected “*the Day of the LORD*” and “*the thief in the night*” together in his letter! Therefore, Paul’s connecting of those two concepts eliminates the man-made idea that JESUS will secretly come *before* “*the Day of the LORD*” “as a thief in the night”!

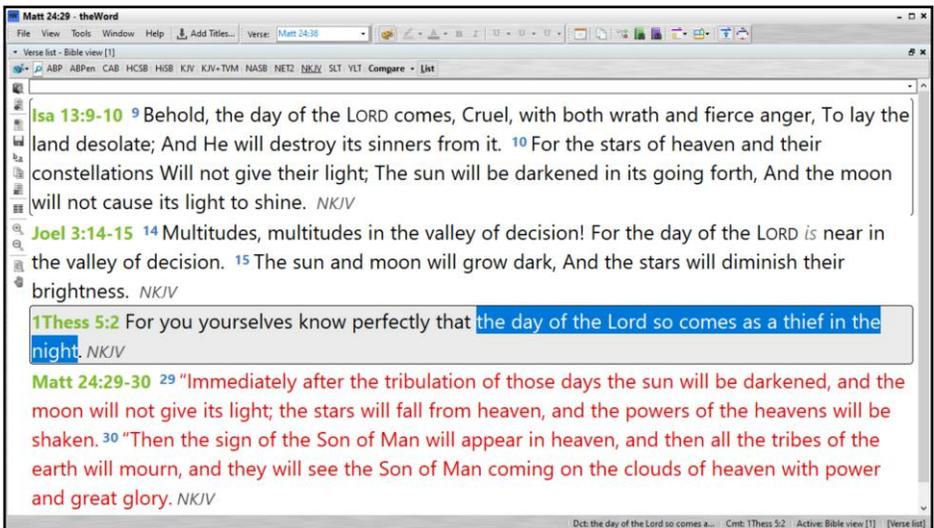


Figure 73

So, Scripture itself will always eliminate man’s faulty interpretations if we handle it honestly and thoroughly while seeking the truth with childlike trust! And this is why the MESSIAH so frequently asked: “*have you not read?*”, and essentially warned: “*you are mistaken*”

due to a lack of knowledge in the Scriptures”.

And this leads us to our seventh principle of interpretation, which is: *the most harmonious, all-inclusive, and comprehensive reading of Scripture is the reading JESUS always taught.*

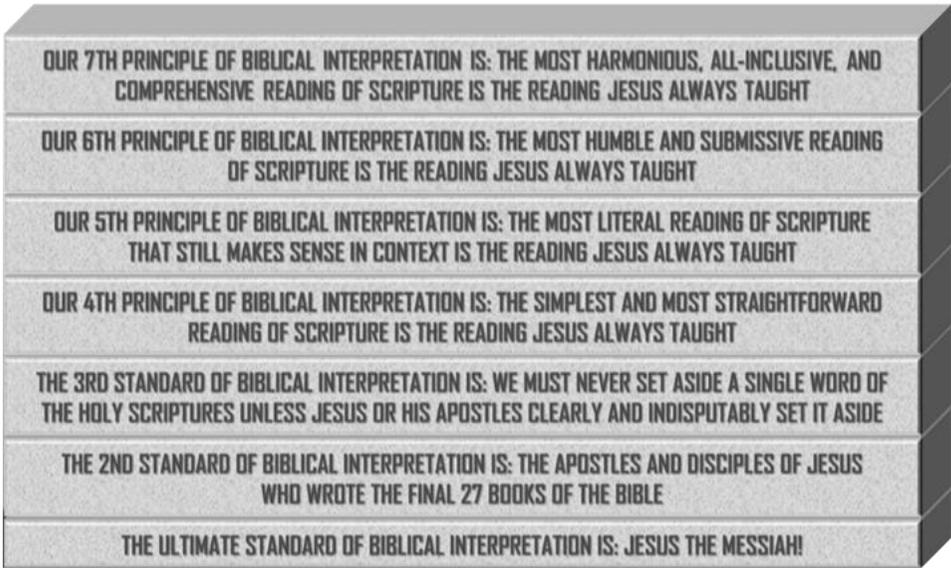


Figure 74

When the Pharisees focused exclusively on Deuteronomy 24 (where Moses introduced the exception of premarital fornication that permitted divorce), and they tried to expand that exception to include other reasons, JESUS focused their attention back on GOD’s original design of marriage in Genesis. Then He restated the very narrow exception that Moses originally intended.

The Pharisees	JESUS
<p>The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" Matthew 19:3</p>	<p>And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?' "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." Matthew 19:4-6</p>
<p>They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" Matthew 19:7</p>	<p>He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." Matthew 19:8-9</p>

Figure 75

When the Pharisees tried to place new restrictions on the Sabbath that made it a burden instead of a day of peace and rest, JESUS directed them to the real heart of GOD revealed in Scripture. He reminded them about: David and his hungry men eating the showbread only the priests could lawfully eat, the priests serving GOD in the temple on the Sabbath, and how it was lawful to help a suffering animal on the Sabbath. And JESUS did this to show them that GOD sees showing mercy and eliminating the urgent needs of others on the Sabbath as: right, good, and "lawful".

The Pharisees	JESUS
<p>At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!" Matthew 12:1-2</p>	<p>But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: "how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?" "Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?" "Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. "But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless." Matthew 12:3-7 Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?" "Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Matthew 12:11-12</p>

Figure 76

Matthew recorded that *JESUS surveyed Scriptures* to reveal how GOD wants all of His creation to be able to rest on His holy Sabbath, including the hungry, the trapped, the suffering, and the afflicted. And the Gospels record that JESUS taught and demonstrated mercy and lovingkindness by setting people free from their burdens on the Sabbath, so they could *rest* as GOD intended.

The Gospels also record: when the Sadducees tried to prove their incorrect view that there would not be a resurrection, they asked JESUS a question about a woman who married seven brothers. And they pretended to wonder which of the seven brothers would she be the wife of, after the resurrection.

Because the Sadducees only accepted the five books of Moses as authoritative Scripture, JESUS choose to correct them with a passage from Exodus. He said: **“You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. “But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”^a**

The Sadducees	JESUS
<p>The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: “Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. “Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. “Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. “Last of all the woman died also. “Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.” Matthew 22:23-28</p>	<p>Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. “But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Matthew 22:29-32</p>

Figure 77

^a Matthew 22:29-32

Hundreds of years after the death of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, GOD told Moses ***“I AM”*** (in the present tense) their GOD! He did not say, He “was” their GOD! And on the tense of that verb, JESUS proved **“He is not the GOD of the dead, but of the living”!**

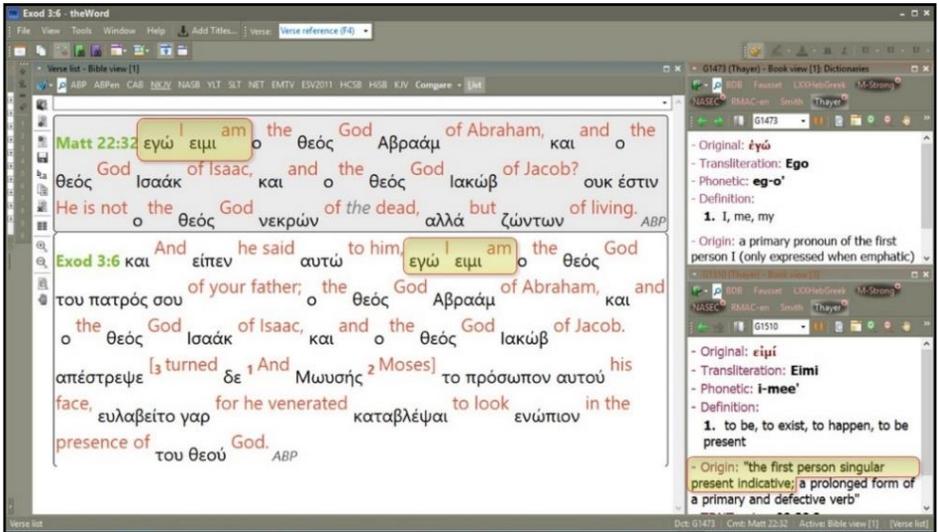


Figure 78

And this leads us to our eighth principle of interpretation, which is: every single word that proceeds from the mouth of GOD should be at least as important to us as food, *so a precise and careful reading of Scripture is the reading JESUS always taught.*

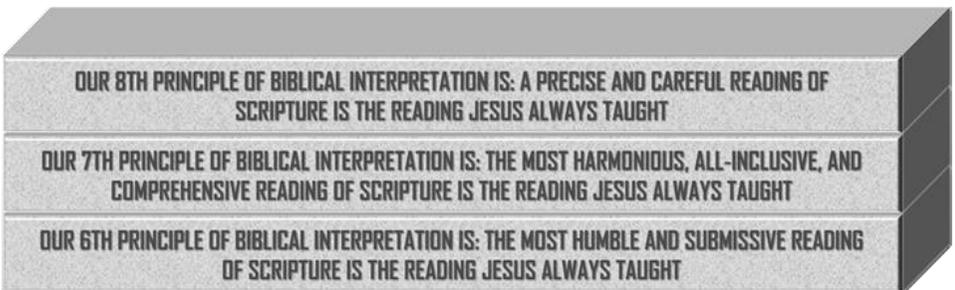


Figure 79

After fasting for 40 days, Scripture records JESUS was hungry. And at that moment the devil said to our LORD: **“If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”** But He answered and said, **“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of**

God.’ ”^a

Not only is JESUS relying on Deuteronomy here to authoritatively resist the devil, but He is also using this passage in the most straightforward, literal, submissive, harmonious, and precise way possible! And the MESSIAH’s three interactions with the devil in the wilderness confirm principles 4 through 8 very clearly!

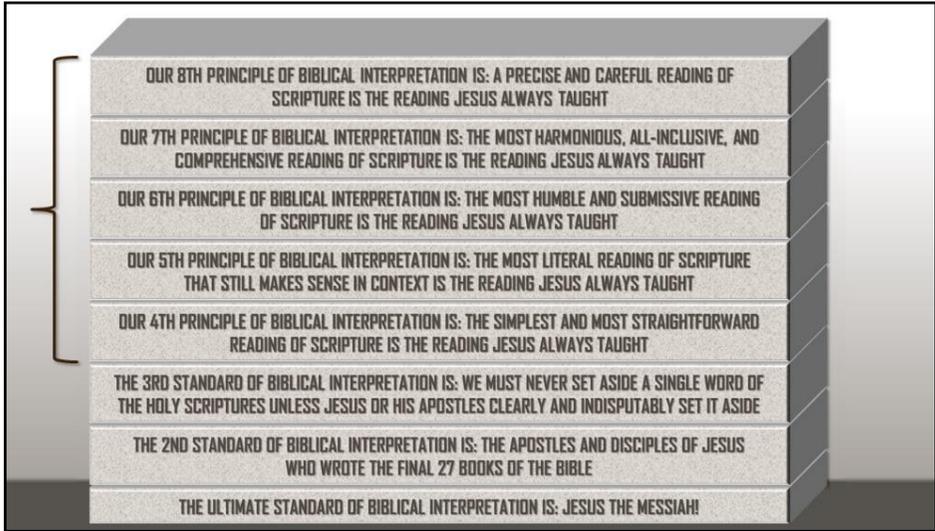


Figure 80

The MESSIAH quoted the words of Moses exactly as they were written in the Septuagint’s record of Exodus. He did not twist them or modify them from the *straightforward* way they were written.

^a Matthew 4:3-4

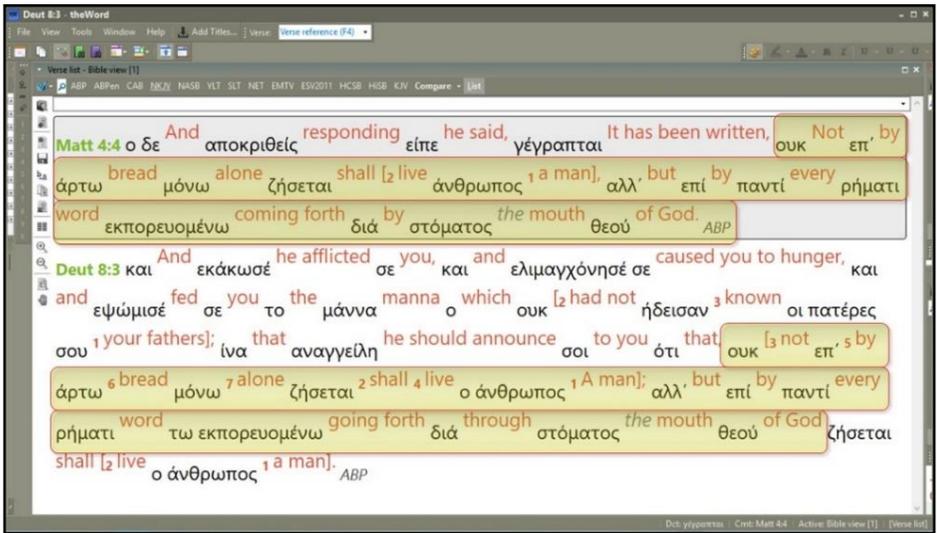


Figure 81

The MESSIAH applied the words of Moses about the people being tested, caused to hunger, and eventually receiving manna in the wilderness directly to His situation of being tested, caused to hunger, and waiting for His father to feed Him in His sovereign timing, in the most *literal* way possible.

The MESSIAH *submitted* to the literal, straightforward reading that perfectly paralleled His situation, so He refused to use His own divine power to feed Himself before the Father chose to feed Him.

The MESSIAH chose the verse that most directly *harmonized* with His hungry situation. Plus, in His second temptation, when the devil said to Him: **“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”**, JESUS *harmonized* all of the Word of GOD together to find the most appropriate verse. And He answered: **“It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”^a**

^a Matthew 4:6-7

The devil	JESUS
<p>“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”</p>	<p>“It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’ ” Matthew 4:6-7</p>

Figure 82

Then, the MESSIAH *precisely* rested His final reply to satan on one single word, when the devil said: **“All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”** To which, JESUS replied: **“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ”**^a Yes, the single word this very *precise* rebuttal rests on is the four-letter word “*only*” in English, or “m-o-n-o” in Greek.

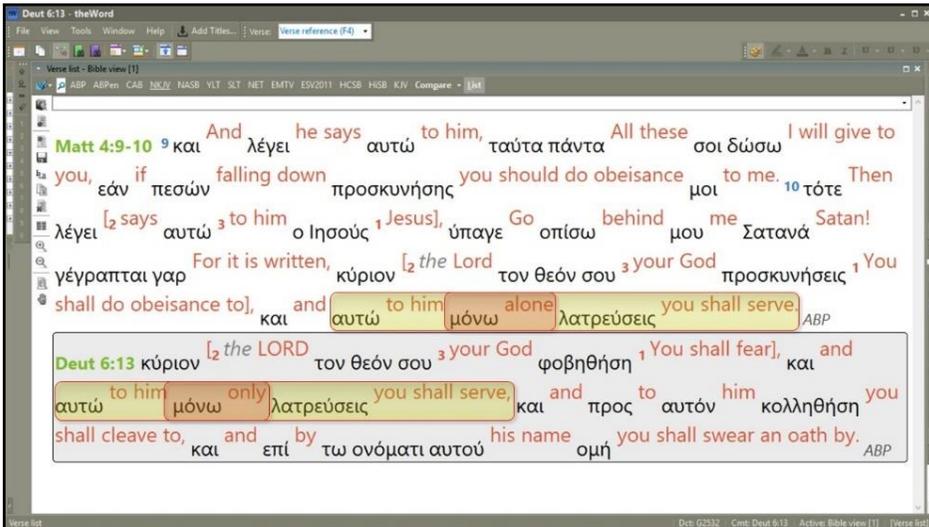


Figure 83

^a Matthew 4:9-10

So, JESUS taught and demonstrated that we must pay attention to every little word that proceeds from the mouth of our GOD, while we apply all of the other rules of interpretation that we have learned so far. And now that we understand how a firm foundation of interpretation must begin with a very straightforward, literal, submissive, harmonious, and precise approach, we are ready to learn about our ninth principle of interpretation, which is: *a sequential reading of Scripture that recognizes the principle of progressive revelation is the reading JESUS always taught.*

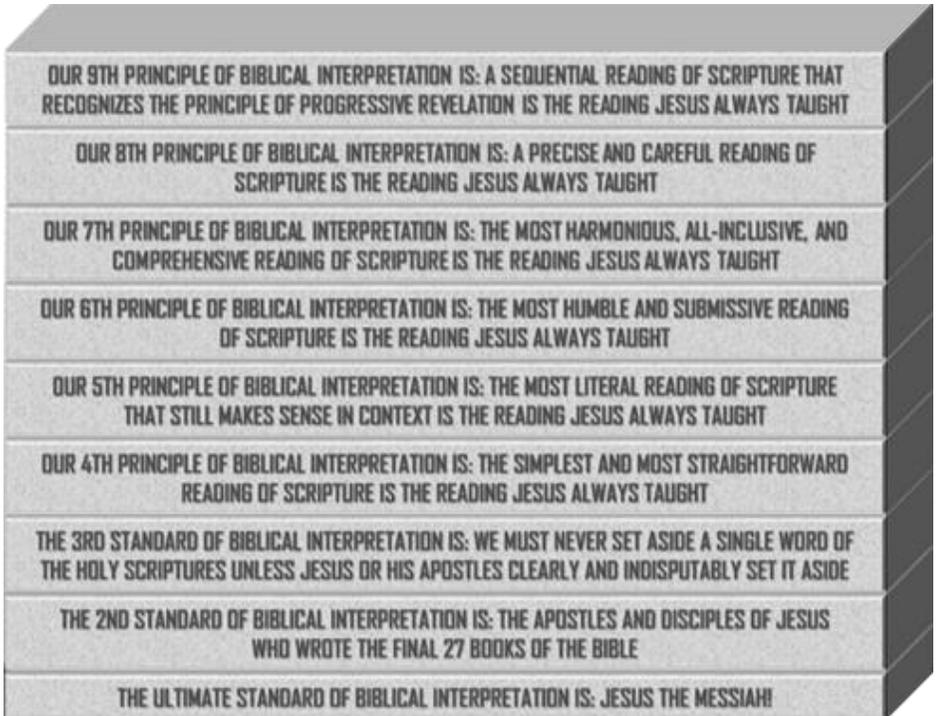


Figure 84

JESUS once told His disciples: **“Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; “for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”^a**

The fact is, the Creator has intentionally revealed the truth of His Word to His creation in a very systematic way, over several thousand years; so that each revelation is built on the principles

^a Matthew 13:16-17

established by the revelations that came before it. And we call this process “*progressive revelation*”.

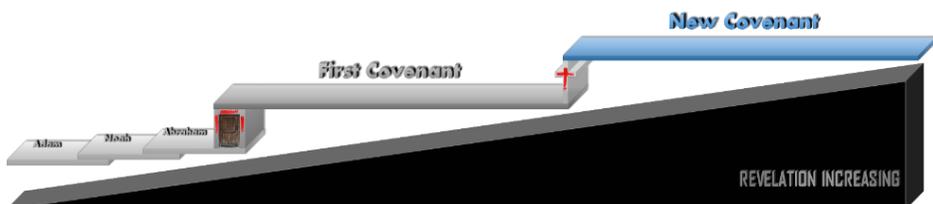


Figure 85

We can imagine how progressive revelation works by picturing one of the LORD’s parables. In His parables, JESUS used common, everyday realities, like a sower sowing seed onto four different soils, to help us understand the spiritual realities behind the various ways people receive His word.

We can all easily understand how birds can steal away seed from a pathway, how rocky soil can prevent roots from growing, how weedy soil can choke out a plant so that it cannot produce fruit, and how the best soil is the kind that produces the fruit we planted the seed to receive. And our Shepherd used this simple picture that we could easily relate to, to show us how we must receive His word, allow it to root deeply into our hearts, pull the spiritual weeds that hinder fruit growth, and bear fruit in obedient patience.

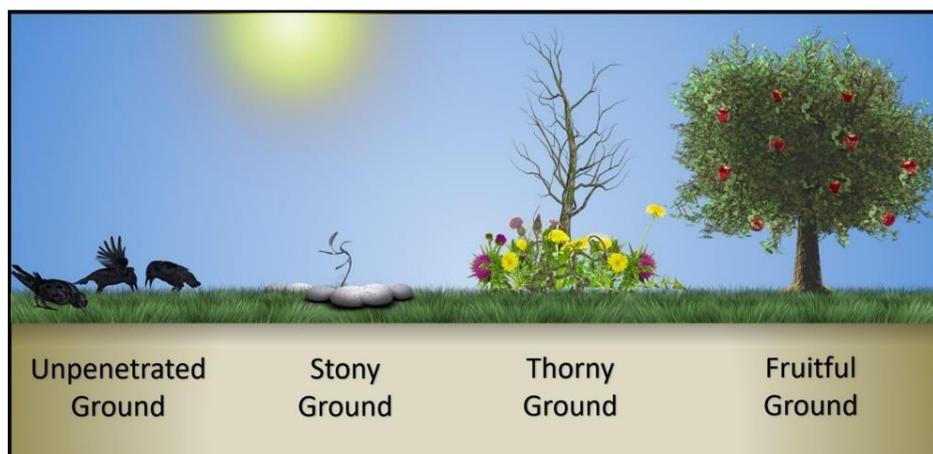


Figure 86

Just as the MESSIAH used simple *earthly* pictures like this one to teach us deeper *spiritual* realities, He uses earthly pictures in the First Covenant to teach us how to understand the New Covenant!

This does not mean that the history, principles, commandments, and situations of the first covenant are not to be understood as historically literal, morally literal, or implicationally literal. It simply means that we can *also* see them as typologically, or parabolically literal!

In other words, a man named Joseph truly did exist, and his brothers literally did betray him and seek to destroy him. Then, through their betrayal, he ultimately ascended to the right hand of one of the most powerful rulers on earth (at that time) and saved his people during the famine.

But all of these real-life circumstances were foreshadowing the MESSIAH's betrayal by *His* ancestral brothers, *His* ascension (after that betrayal) to the right hand of the Father in heaven, and *His* ability to save His people if they would only come to Him in repentance (as Joseph's brothers came to him).

These *types* of *parables* fill the pages of the First 39 Books of the Bible; and men like Moses, Joshua, and David are meant to point us to the MESSIAH, the ultimate revelation of GOD to mankind!

Therefore, the first covenant that began at Passover (when the people were set free by the blood of a lamb slain on the fourteenth day of the first month) pointed forward to the New Covenant that began at Passover (when the True Passover Lamb was slain on the fourteenth of the month)!

Plus, every event commemorated in the Feast cycle of the First Covenant represents a very specific Messianic event in the New Covenant in the MESSIAH's blood!

Truly, just as the people were set free from their slavery in Egypt in the First Covenant, we are set free from our slavery to sin in the New Covenant. Also, JESUS mediates the New Covenant in the place of Aaron and Moses, and He serves as the High Priest of a better covenant, in a better Tabernacle in the Heavens!

So, we must understand, JESUS did not come to tear down or set aside the shadows and types of the First Covenant! He came to fill them to the full while revealing the deeper truths they have always pointed towards in GOD's divine plan of progressive revelation! And we must not look at the First 39 Books of the Holy Bible as "no

longer directly relevant to us"! Instead, we must see them as *the framework* required to properly understand the glorious revelations of the Final 27 Books!

Therefore: we can only set aside those things the LORD and His Disciples indisputably set aside in the pages of Holy Scripture; such as the **“foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances”** of the First Covenant, that were **“imposed until the time of reformation”**.^a

This passage in Hebrews reveals that there are two different forms of progressive revelation in the Bible. There is the type of progressive revelation that **“adds to”** and **“builds on top of”** the foundations established in the First 39 Books, and there are a *few* very specific items from within the earlier revelation of the First 39 Books that were only “imposed” until the MESSIAH was fully revealed.

This is why we don't slaughter animals for sin sacrifices, we don't perform ritual washings for customary impurities, we don't compel anyone to be physically circumcised, and we don't judge one another over things like food or drink, or a particular of a feast, new moon, or Sabbath. Yet we insist (with the Jerusalem council) that all Christians must avoid sexual immorality, things offered to idols, things strangled, and blood. *(To learn more about this subject, please read MESSIAH Theology Volume III: Biblical Continuity^b)*

Thus, with a firm understanding of progressive revelation established, we are ready to learn about our tenth principle of interpretation, which is: *in passages that cannot be understood literally, there is a literal meaning confirmed by at least two or three other Biblical witnesses, and that literal reading is ultimately what JESUS wants us to understand.*

^a Hebrews 9:10

^b bit.ly/messiahtheology3



Figure 87

Even though JESUS said: “**I am the door of the sheep**”^a, no one who has read the rest of the Bible thinks that JESUS is a literal slab of wood hung on hinges with a handle. By reading *the rest of what the Bible has to say*, we understand that JESUS is the only way into the Kingdom of GOD, and the only way we can be saved. And, in that way only, He *metaphorically* resembles a door.

Additionally, even though JESUS said: “**Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.**”^b, He was not telling us to go home immediately and open our literal front door so he can come in and eat lunch with us today! Nor was He telling us to preach to *sinners* that JESUS is knocking at the door of their hearts, and they have to let Him in by “*accepting Him as their Savior*”. No, JESUS told us *exactly* what the metaphor meant,

^a John 10:7

^b Revelation 3:20

by its context, especially with the words He said *just before* the door-knocking metaphor!

You see, JESUS was speaking to the church in Laodicea when He said: **“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”**^a

So, this was said *to a church*, not an individual. And JESUS was *knocking* on their metaphorical door by rebuking and disciplining them. Plus, all they had to do to metaphorically open the door was **“be zealous and repent”**. And there is a big difference between “accepting JESUS as our Savior” compared to *zealously repenting* and calling JESUS “LORD”, which means “Master”!

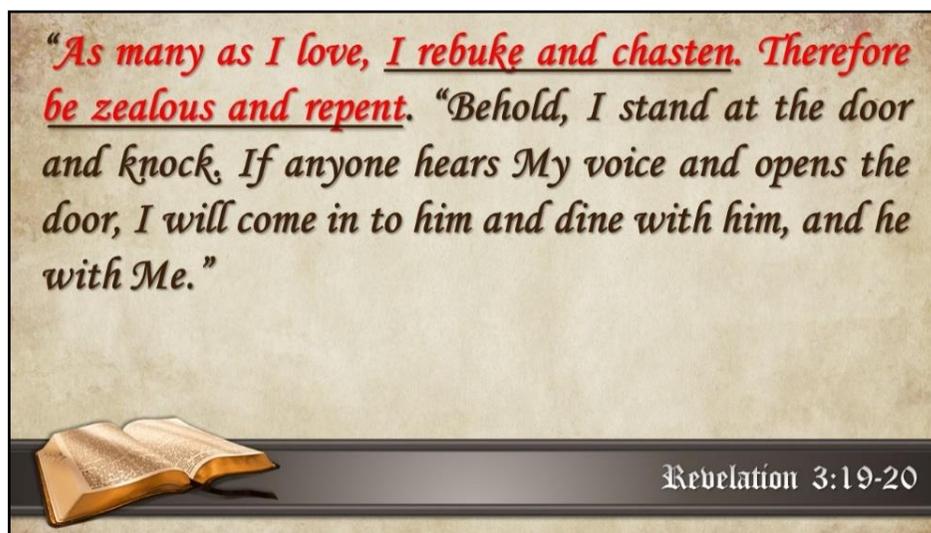


Figure 88

Someone can *accept* the saving help of a fireman, if their house is burning to the ground, without *submitting* to the will and commands of the fireman. But no one can *accept* the saving help of JESUS CHRIST without *repenting* of their sin and *submitting* to His Lordship in their life. So, this popular little passage shows us how we must use the literal passages of the Bible to interpret the non-literal passages: because **“no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation”**!^b

^a Revelation 3:19

^b 2 Peter 1:20

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”
Matthew 7:21-23



Figure 89

Truly, these ten principles of Biblical interpretation that the MESSIAH and His Disciples relied on will help us *correctly* understand the Holy Word of GOD, from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation!

Chapter Six: The MESSIAH's Big Picture

Have you ever watched a movie or read a book without understanding the over-arching storyline or even who the main characters were? It makes it very hard to understand and interpret the various scenes, interactions, and events, right? Well, that confusing experience can help us recognize exactly why we need *more* than just a list of 3 standards and 7 principles of Biblical interpretation to properly understand and interpret the Bible!



Figure 90

While MESSIAH Theology's ten rules of interpretation allow us to handle each passage of Holy Scripture as the MESSIAH and His Apostles would handle them (and avoid some common pitfalls of the last two thousand years of Biblical interpretation); sadly, those ten rules don't give us the big picture we desperately need to fit each verse together!

Please imagine that you are assembling a large puzzle with many pieces.

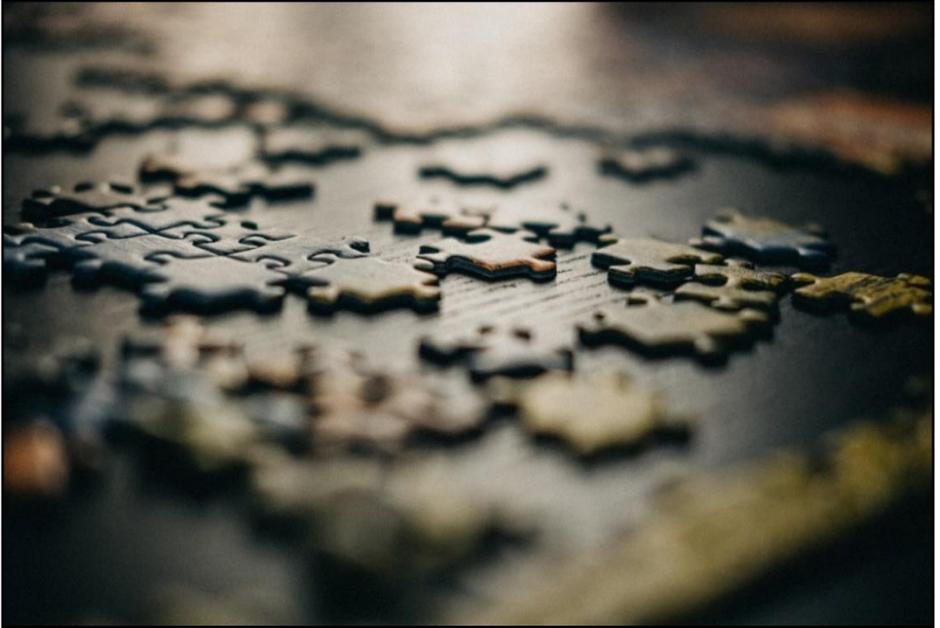


Figure 91 (Photo by Gabriel Crismariu on Unsplash)

The first skills you must develop are *technical* because you must learn how to recognize and mentally label the colors on each piece. Then you have to learn how to recognize and mentally label the images that the precisely printed colors form. And as you develop those skills, you must also learn how to recognize the very specific shape of the pieces, including those pieces with flat edges that make up the border of the puzzle.

But even if you master all of these *technical* skills and techniques that allow you to correctly interpret each separate puzzle piece, you will still most likely fail to correctly assemble the puzzle unless you possess one final thing. And that final, critical ingredient needed to correctly assemble all of the various pieces of a puzzle is *the box top of the puzzle* that illustrates the picture the individual pieces should display when the puzzle is complete!

So, just as every quality puzzle manufacturer imprints a picture of the completed puzzle on the box so people can correctly assemble the final product, MESSIAH Theology teaches that GOD Himself imprinted a picture on the Bible that helps us solve every puzzle of interpretation! And without this “*big picture*” framework, theologians

tend to resort to the equivalent of substituting and modifying the various pieces of the puzzle to fit all of the pieces together!

Truly, just as an experienced puzzle master frequently consults the box lid to determine which colors and patterns can be found in certain specific areas of the puzzle, those who wish to correctly interpret the Bible must learn to see the “big picture” framework that the MESSIAH intentionally painted in His Word. And we can call this two-step process: “little picture interpretation” and “big picture interpretation”.

About these two methods: you may have heard of “*exegetical*” preaching which teaches through the Bible one verse at a time, one phrase at a time, and one word at a time. Well, this careful method of interpretation is critical to seeing the *little* picture. But we also must study the Bible *topically* (as JESUS demonstrated to the Pharisees and the Sadducees), to allow the Bible to teach us how to understand each word, phrase, sentence, concept, paragraph, book, and section within the *big* picture!

Now, let us consider yet another puzzle metaphor. We can imagine a bi-directional method of Biblical interpretation by considering how we do crossword puzzles!

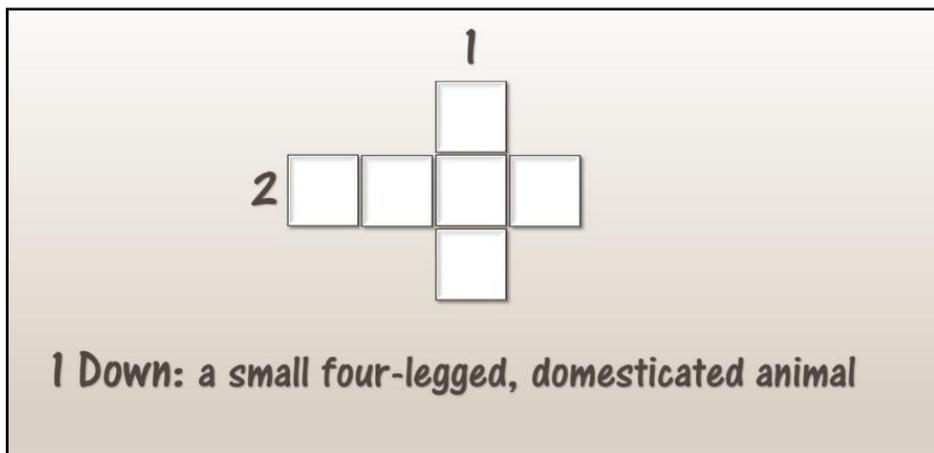


Figure 92

Imagine trying to fill in a crossword puzzle that said: ‘one down’ was “a small four-legged, domesticated animal”. And imagine that ‘one down’ had three spaces. If you were trying to think of a three-letter word that represented “a small four-legged, domesticated animal”,

you might think of “cat” or “dog”. But how do you know which answer is right? You have to consult the *horizontal* “crossword” that intersects those three spaces, right?

Well, what if your puzzle said that the four horizontal spaces of ‘one across’ *should be*: “a leaping amphibian”. That would mean ‘one down’ was a “dog”, and ‘one across’ was a “frog”. And if someone insisted that “‘one down’ was still ‘cat’”, you would have to use the intersecting answer of ‘one across’ to prove they were mistaken, correct?

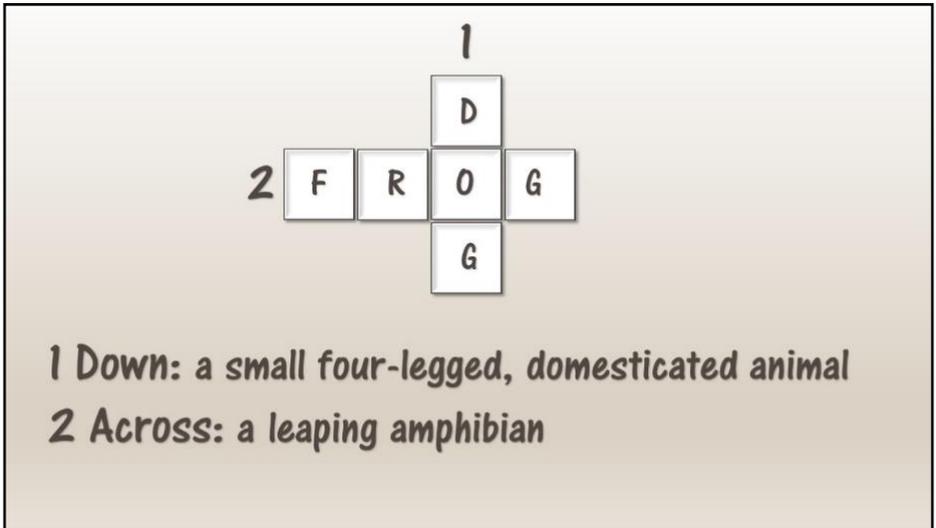


Figure 93

Well, that is exactly what we saw JESUS doing in our last study! When the Sadducees said the equivalent of “one down is ‘cat’”, JESUS used a topical survey of the Scriptures to prove the theological equivalent of “one across is ‘frog’, therefore one down is ‘dog’”. And this is why we must account for *every* applicable word of the Bible when we are interpreting a passage, just as rule number 7 stated!

We must understand how crossword puzzles are *accurately* solved, so we can each test every interpretation of Scripture we hear. You see, *every interpretation of Scripture should harmonize with every other verse of the Holy Bible!* And, those interpretations that seem to directly conflict with other passages of GOD’s Word without citing a detailed and plain passage where that change in interpretation

was specifically established, *cannot* be true.

So, if someone presents a “big picture” framework of the Bible, and tells you it represents the metaphorical “puzzle box lid”, please test that framework against every single verse of the Holy Bible to see if it contradicts the progressive revelation of the Word of GOD!

Meanwhile, we pray that you will only accept that one “big picture” framework that matches the teachings, writings, and practices of the MESSIAH and His Apostles and Disciples; because *they* are the only *infallible* rule of Biblical interpretation!

Now, before we see “the big picture” that *MESSIAH Theology* is advocating for based on the ten rules of interpretation we learned about previously; we should first understand a few *other* key perspectives that have shaped church history and even the church’s perception of the Bible as a whole.

Despite the undeniable fact that JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples consistently demonstrated a very literal interpretation method, from as early as the second or third century A.D., key leaders in the church began to turn towards an *allegorical* or “non-literal” interpretation of Scripture. And that *allegorical* interpretation method (which eventually led to the formation of the Roman Catholic Church) later fueled the theological thinking of the leaders of the Protestant Reformation.

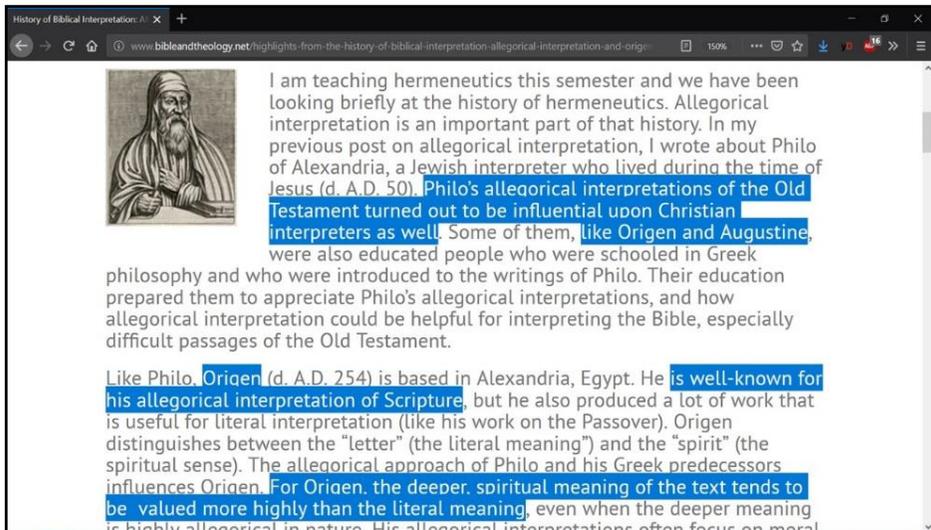


Figure 94

The Church's historically documented comfort with an admittedly "non-literal" interpretation method ultimately led to the vast majority of the Church towards the belief that "covenants" were the "big picture" framework of "the puzzle box lid".

Thus, while those theologians very accurately noticed GOD made several different *covenants* with several different people, they then connected those covenants in some very allegorical ways that Scripture does not *explicitly or implicationally* support.

Nevertheless, our Brothers and Sisters who view the "big picture" as best understood by the successive *covenants* of the Bible, would subscribe to what is typically called: "Covenant Theology".

Our brethren within *Covenant Theology* historically organize the various covenants that we can all readily recognize within Scripture under three main conceptual covenants that Scripture never directly speaks of. They speak of: a "Covenant of Redemption" that is referring to the concept of GOD the Father, Son, and HOLY SPIRIT agreeing in eternity past to create (and select) a redeemed people from that Creation. They speak of a "Covenant of Works" that is referring to the situation Adam and Eve were placed into in the garden. And they speak of a "Covenant of Grace", which they teach encompassed two very distinct "Testaments". And this very popular perspective is why you have been taught to divide the Bible into the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament". However, I should mention here that the word "Testament" is an English synonym of the term: "Covenant".

Thus, the concept of an "Old Testament" spanning from Genesis to Malachi, and a New Covenant spanning from Matthew to Revelation began with the very influential Covenant Theology view. And the general relationship between those two Testaments is pictured by covenant theologians as: "shadows" that were replaced with substance; or conceptual allegories that pointed to some deeper New Covenant meaning.

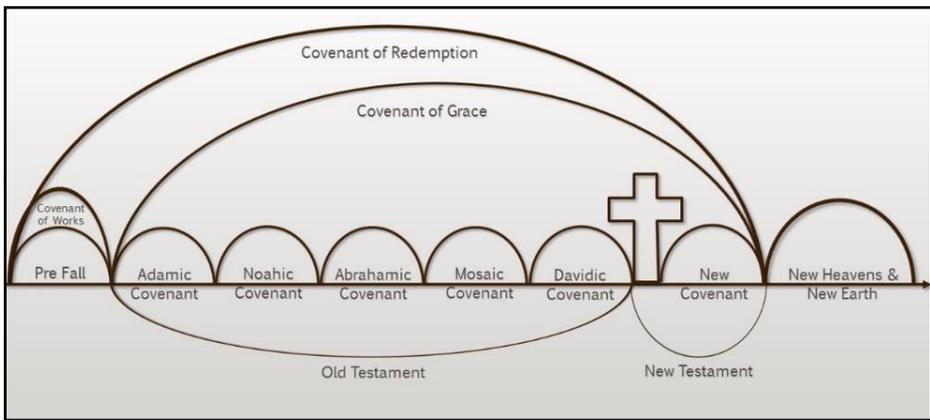


Figure 95

Within Covenant Theology, circumcision is seen as allegorically connected to water baptism. So, Covenantalist Christians typically believe that circumcision was directly replaced by baptism. Therefore, because circumcision was performed on *infants* in the First Covenant, baptism is most commonly performed on *infants* within Covenant Theology.

Also, within Covenant Theology, the election of the nation of Israel was seen as an allegory of how *individuals* are elected to eternal salvation solely by an act of Divine will. So, the historic Covenant Theology view has been: national Israel was replaced by “the spiritual Israel” known as “the Church”; and the five points of Calvinism developed alongside that view.

Doctrine:	Calvinism	Arminianism
Man's Depravity	Total – Every descendant of Adam is totally and completely depraved to such an extent that they are unable to respond to the call of GOD	Universal – Every descendant of Adam is separated from GOD because of their sin, but GOD enables sinners to respond to His call and they must choose to accept His free gift in faith
Election	Unconditional – GOD elects some individuals to salvation without any regard to any foreknown quality or activity possessed by those individuals	Conditional – GOD elects some individuals to salvation because He can see how they will respond to the Gospel through perfect foreknowledge
Atonement	Limited – JESUS only died for the sins of the elect, He did not die for the sins of the non-elect	Unlimited – JESUS died for the sins of the whole world, even the un-elect, but His death is only applied to the sins of those who receive His free gift by faith
Grace	Irresistible – The grace of GOD that unconditionally elects certain individuals to salvation is irresistible, and those GOD elects cannot resist His sovereign will	Resistible – The grace of GOD that calls people to salvation is resistible, and those GOD calls can stubbornly resist His sovereign will for them
Salvation	Perseverance – Those who have been elected irresistibly to salvation cannot fail to inherit it, regardless of the condition of their conduct or faith	Conditional – Those who have answered the resistible call to salvation can later choose to turn away from following JESUS until the moment that they reach eternity

Figure 96

Additionally, within Covenant Theology (also known as “Reformed Theology”), the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment is seen as an allegory for the rest we find in the MESSIAH. So, the seventh-day Sabbath was incorrectly replaced by what early Covenant Theology writers called the “eighth” day of rest. (24)

Thus, based on this type of allegorical thinking, Sunday worship became the predominant day for the cessation of work. (*Please see MESSIAH Theology Volume II: The Sabbath^a to learn more about the Sabbath, and MESSIAH Theology Volume III: Biblical Continuity^b to learn more about Biblical Continuity and what specific commandments were set aside in Scripture*)

^a bit.ly/messiahtheology2

^b bit.ly/messiahtheology3

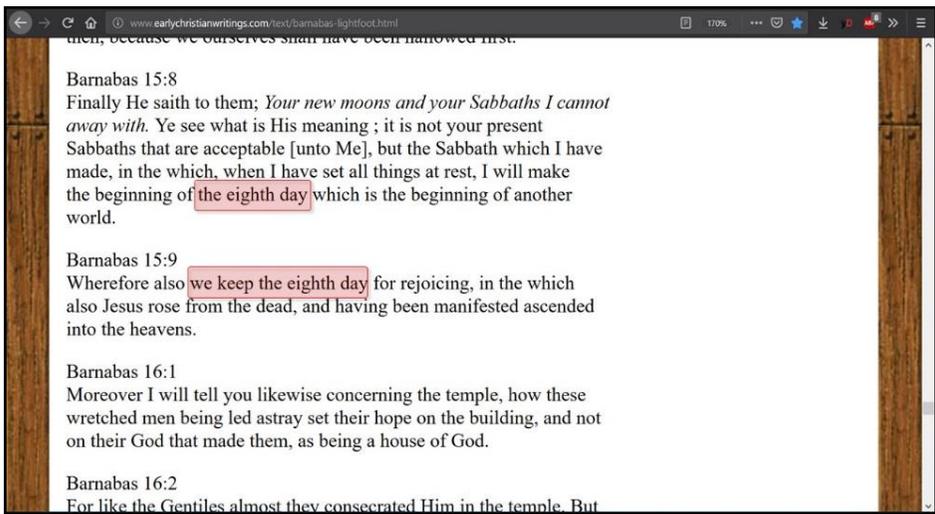


Figure 97

But noticeably absent from these allegorical interpretations of Covenant Theology are the Feasts of the LORD, which are extensively discussed in both the First 39 and the Final 27 Books of the Holy Bible.

Instead, the demonstrably unscriptural replacements of Easter and Christmas eventually became the norm after church leaders began wrongly thinking “the Church replaced Israel” and “The Christian replaced the Jew”. (*Please see MESSIAH Theology Volume IV: The Biblical Feasts^a to learn how Easter and Christmas were late, unbiblical, adaptations of pre-existing pagan traditions*) (25)

^a bit.ly/messiahtheology4

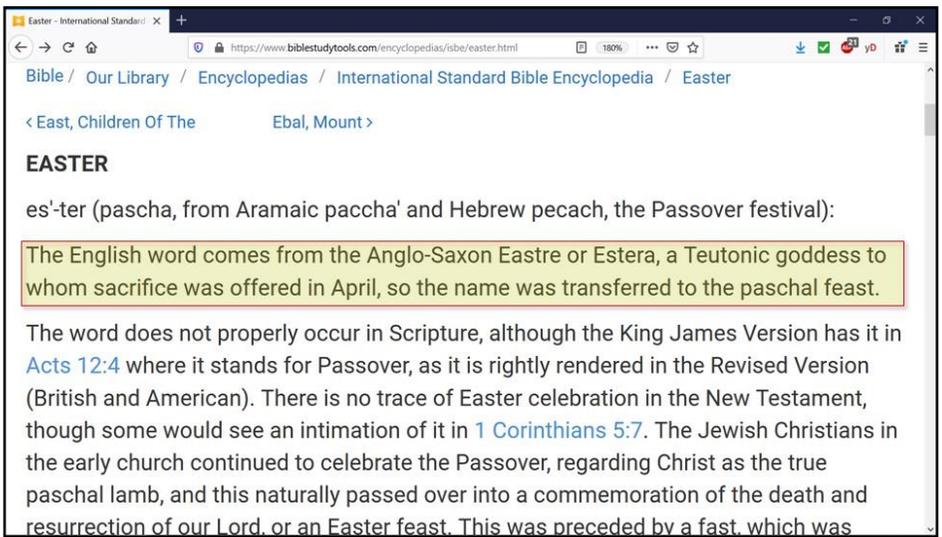


Figure 98

And, based on that faulty premise that the Church replaced Israel, openly anti-Semitic thinking laced the preserved writings of some of the most influential Covenant Theologians, from the times of Constantine and after.

Thus, Covenant Theology's history is very clear that *anti-Semitic reasons* were given as to why they felt the seventh-day Sabbath and the Feasts of the LORD were to be ignored. (26)

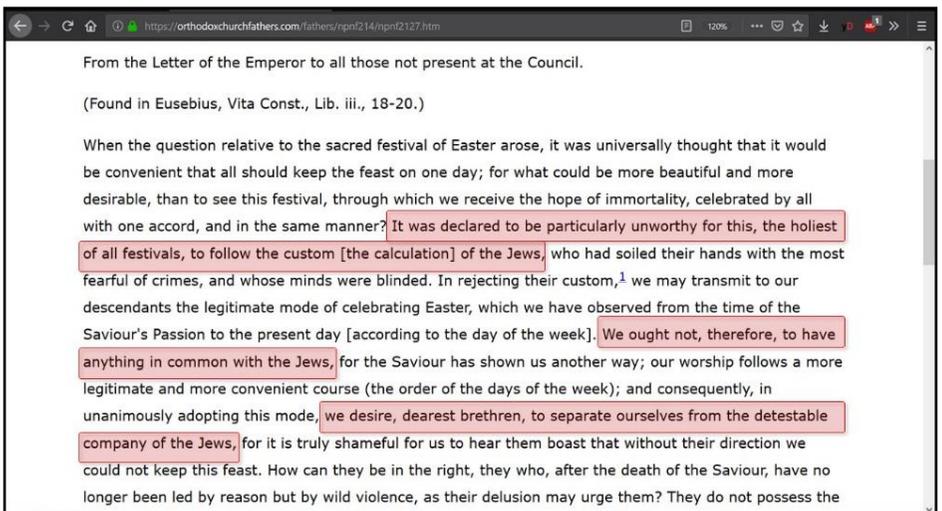


Figure 99

Therefore, MESSIAH Theology believes the first error of Covenant Theology was an overly allegorical interpretation method that led

many early church leaders to perceive the Holy Scriptures in ways that the MESSIAH and His Apostles and Disciples would have never supported. (27)

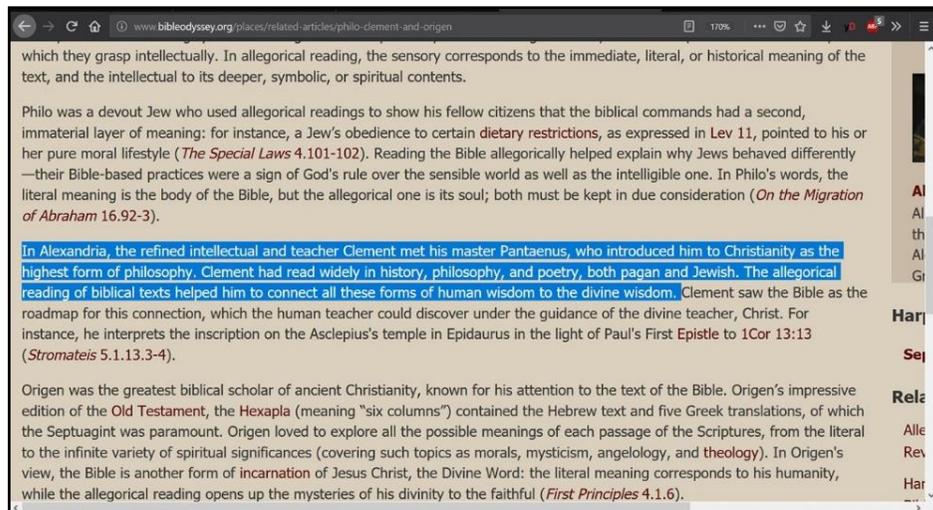


Figure 100

Also, MESSIAH Theology believes that the second error of early Covenant Theology was: the assumption that the Church was a new and distinctly "non-Jewish" (or even "anti-Jewish") institution. And that error ultimately led many church leaders to openly express their incorrect belief that GOD had rejected the Jew, and transitioned to a new chosen people.

So, MESSIAH Theology would call the "anti-Semitism" of Covenant Theology their third (and most shameful) error. (28)

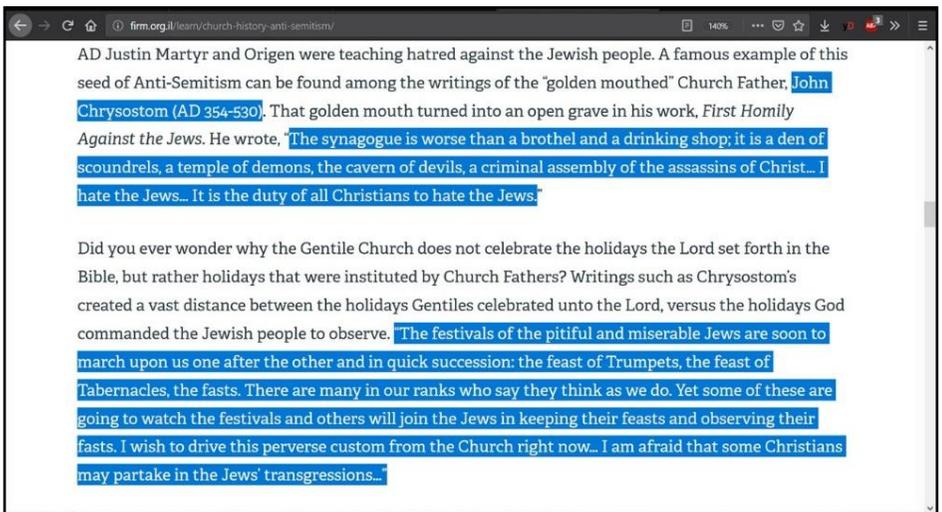


Figure 101

This third error eventually caused much of the church to abandon the Sabbath, the Feasts of the LORD, and even many of the plain teachings of our MESSIAH and His Apostles about the Church and its relationship to Israel. And, as we will prove later, this is how Covenant Theology threw out the "puzzle box lid" in the third century. (29)

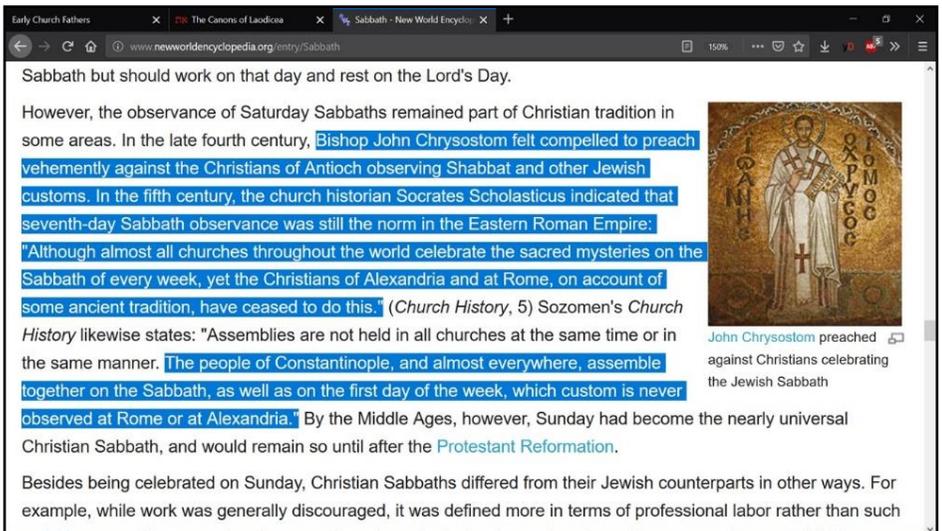


Figure 102

Then, many years after Covenant Theology took root, within that environment of dangerously allegorical, and often anti-Semitic traditions of Biblical interpretation, a new movement began in the

1830s. But, unlike its more powerful predecessor, this movement which is known as “Dispensationalism” stressed a much more literal (or: anti-allegorical) approach to Biblical Interpretation. In some ways, this movement tended to interpret the Holy Scriptures with methods that are very reminiscent of the interpretational standards the MESSIAH and His Apostles and Disciples demonstrated.

Meanwhile, our Brothers and Sisters in the Dispensational movement began to teach that “dispensations” were the “big picture” of the puzzle box lid. So, those who view the “big picture” as best understood by their perception of several distinct “dispensations” within the Bible, would subscribe to what is typically called: “Dispensational Theology”.

But sadly, much like how Covenant Theology relies on splitting the Bible into two distinct sections, Dispensationalism relies on dividing up the Bible in even more disjointed ways. Yes, all of the Books between Genesis and Malachi are still mislabeled “the Old Testament” by the dispensationalist, even while the inspired authors of the Final 27 Books of the Bible call those same writings “*Holy Scripture*”. Therefore, the “divided” way Dispensationalism handles the Books of the Bible is soundly repudiated in the way JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples handled those Books.

Also, within dispensationalism, the vast majority of the Law and the Prophets are labeled “*for the Jews*”, and “*not binding on the Christian*”, even while the MESSIAH and His followers used those First 39 Books to prove their teachings, resist the errors and temptations of satan, and guide their doctrine, faith, and practices.

Plus, in some extreme cases, certain forms of dispensationalism even say that the teachings of JESUS were “*for the Jews*” and “*not written to the Christian*”!!!

History is clear, while Covenant Theology relied on allegorical interpretation to explain the relationship between the Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant, Dispensationalism relied on “dividing” the Bible up into very distinct and very disjointed “dispensations”.

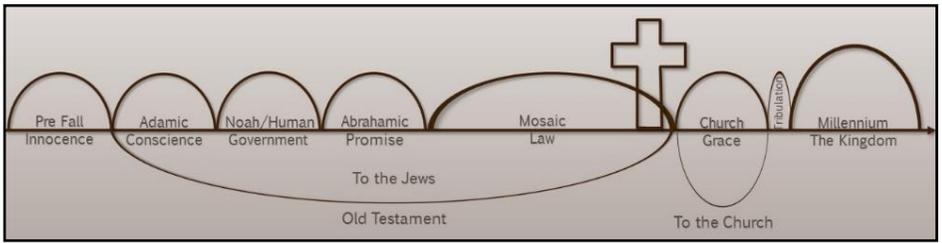


Figure 103

But the divisions of Dispensationalism have been disputed internally since this theological approach was first developed. And the number, the nature, and the timing of the various perceived dispensations have been a point of contention between our Brothers and Sisters in the Dispensational movement to this very day. (3)

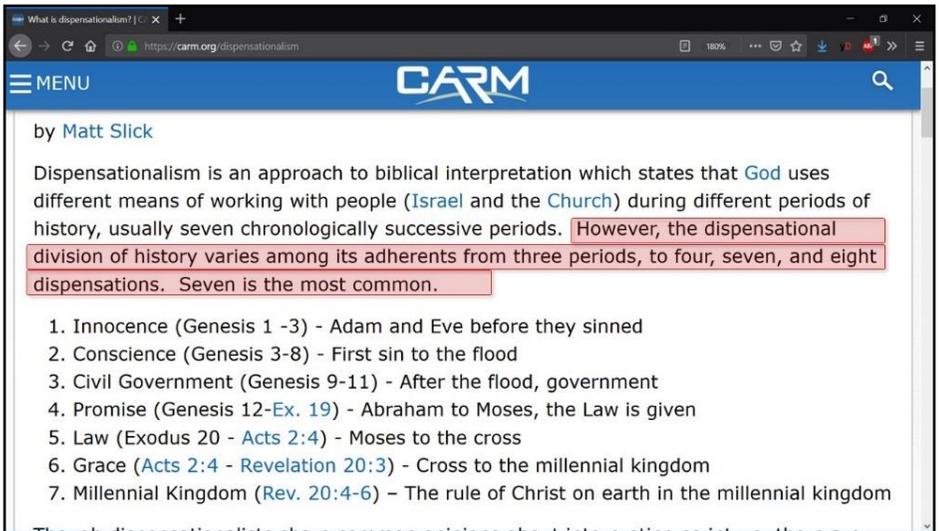


Figure 104

However, one thing all dispensationalists generally agree upon is: *“within Scripture, there are several successive, yet separate ‘dispensations’, made with different people who could be categorized into what they consider to be two separate people groups: Israel and the Church”*. But, unlike those from a Covenant Theology mindset, the Dispensationalist does not believe that GOD has abandoned or replaced Israel. (30)

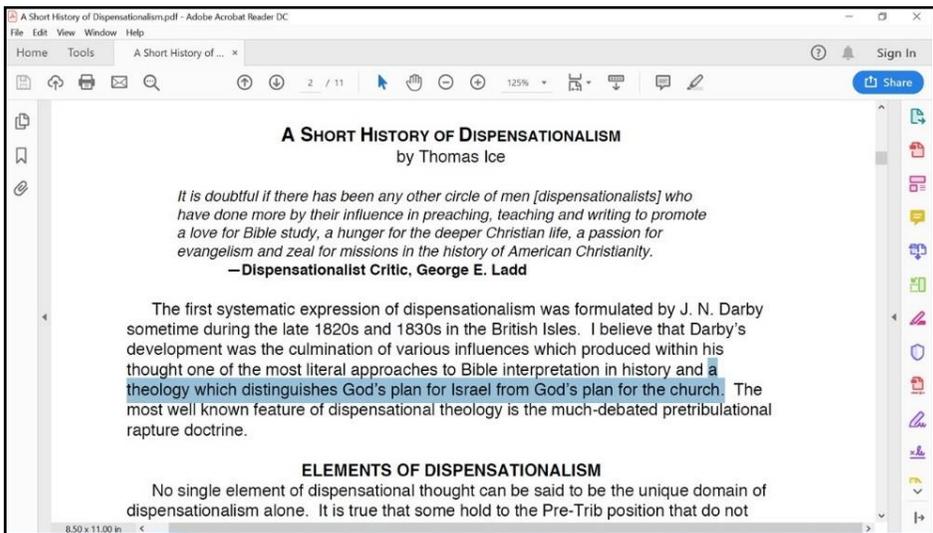


Figure 105

Or, said in another way: The Dispensationalist does not believe that Israel was an allegorical foreshadowing of the Church. Instead, the Dispensationalist teaches that GOD has put His plan for Israel “*on hold*” for a time, while He “*saves the Church in this present dispensation*”. And Dispensationalism is where the terms “*the Church Age*” and “*the Age of Grace*” come from.

So, our Covenant Theology brethren might claim that Israel was an allegorical foreshadowing of the Church, or that the Church was a direct replacement of Israel. Thus, they see GOD’s work with the literal, genetic descendants of Jacob as complete because they believe that the Church is now the full recipient of the favor, covenants, and promises of GOD. (31)

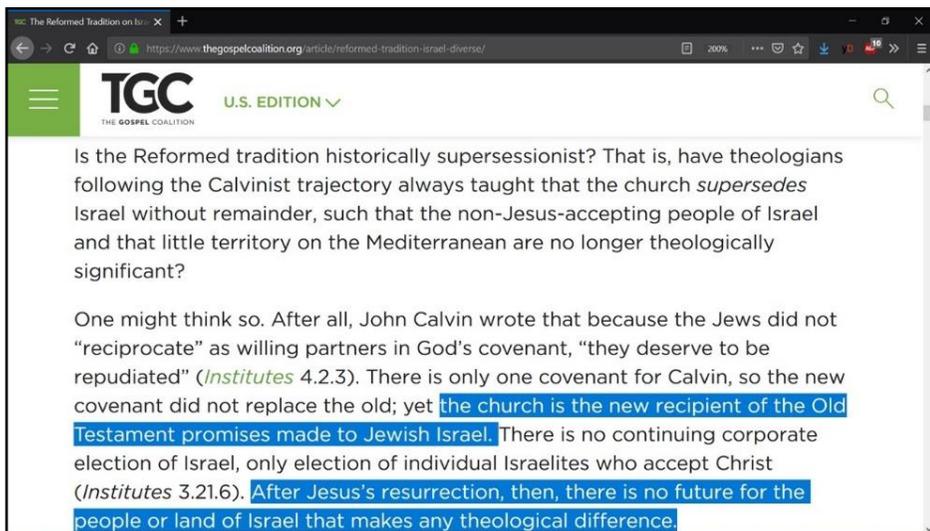


Figure 106

Whereas our Dispensationalist brethren would claim that the Church is *separate* and *distinct* from Israel. Plus, they teach that the Church will be “raptured” or “caught up” *before* the Tribulation described in Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation.

Then, *after the rapture of the church*, the Dispensationalist believes Israel will face a seven-year-long period of great trouble when GOD returns to complete His work with the descendants of Jacob. (32) And all of these distinctions flow out from the fundamental methods of Biblical interpretation each group has adopted.

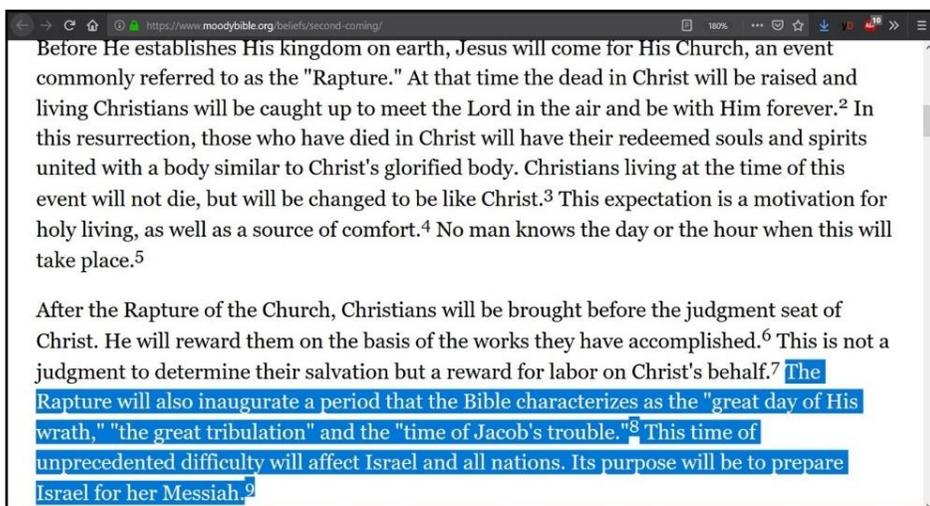


Figure 107

Like MESSIAH Theology, Covenant Theology seeks to see the Scriptures as connected and continuous. But, by not taking certain passages (such as Romans 11 or Ephesians 2) in a literal way, we believe that they perceive the Church in ways JESUS and His Apostles never taught. Also, this twist in their understanding of the Church ultimately caused them to abandon the Sabbath and the Feast Days that JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples celebrated without interruption.

Covenant Theology	Romans 11	Ephesians 2
<p>In Calvin's View: "The church is the new recipient of the Old Testament promises made to Jewish Israel."</p> <p><i>Gerald R. McDermott is Anglican chair of divinity at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama</i></p>	<p>For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? Romans 11:24</p>	<p>Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh...at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ...For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, Ephesians 2:11-19</p>

Figure 108

Meanwhile, like MESSIAH Theology, Dispensational Theology seeks to see Scripture in the most literal way possible. But, by perceiving the Bible in a very segmented and disjointed fashion, they also perceive the Church in ways JESUS and His Apostles never taught. So, this twist in their understanding of the Church perpetuated the historical (but unbiblical) abandonment of the Sabbath and Feast Days that JESUS celebrated and intentionally fulfilled.

Dispensational Theology	Romans 11	Ephesians 2
<p>“Dispensationalists believe that God has a distinctive plan for ethnic and national Israel that includes their spiritual restoration and conversion, as well as a specific geographic destiny. On the other hand, the church began on the day of Pentecost and will end with the rapture.”</p> <p><i>Thomas D. Ice Liberty University, tdice@liberty.edu, A Short History of Dispensationalism – page 1</i></p>	<p>For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? Romans 11:24</p>	<p>Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh...at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ...For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, Ephesians 2:11-19</p>

Figure 109

As we will learn in this chapter, those holy Feast Days that were first given in Exodus as eternal celebrations for the people of GOD, not only commemorated the key events of *their* salvation from slavery in Egypt, they also commemorate the exact times the MESSIAH died, was buried, rose from the grave, and sent the HOLY SPIRIT!

Yes, the fact is: the parallels between the Exodus and the earthly ministry of the MESSIAH are “the puzzle box lid” GOD designed!

The Biblical Feast Days serve as the framework of the Exodus in the First Covenant and the framework of the Gospel in the New Covenant because they were meant to be the big picture of our Theology! Therefore, because the Feast Days reveal the big picture of the Biblical puzzle, GOD commanded us to celebrate those feasts every year!

Like a repeated melody in a skillfully crafted song, The HOLY SPIRIT worked His Feast Days into every area of the Scriptures because they allow us to see how the First Covenant and the New Covenant are forever connected! *(Please see MESSIAH Theology Volume IV: The Biblical Feasts^a for more information on this*

^a bit.ly/messiahtheology4

subject)



Figure 110

But, before we learn more about the “big picture” that the MESSIAH and His Apostles and Disciples relied on to properly interpret Scripture, we must review one more *very recent* theological development.

Within the last few decades, several smaller theological movements have culminated into a theological approach to Biblical interpretation that has adopted the name “*The Hebrew Roots*” movement. Our Brothers and Sisters in this still-burgeoning form of theology would say that they believe: “a Hebraic perspective” is the key to seeing the “big picture” of the puzzle box lid.

So, that “Hebraic perspective” actually serves as the method of Biblical interpretation this movement emphasizes, in contrast to the “allegorical method” of Covenant Theology, and the “literal-grammatical”, but disjointed method of Dispensational Theology.

Also, this hermeneutical approach has led the “Hebrew Roots” movement towards an enthusiastic embrace of the Hebrew language, Hebrew culture, and even the Hebrew names of GOD.

Thus, because “the Torah” (or the five books of Moses that JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples knew as “the Law” (See: Strong’s # G3551)) has always held a higher status in Judaism than the rest of the Holy Scriptures, the Torah is considered to be the “puzzle box lid” of the Bible.

For these reasons, many of the most popular teachers in this movement often speak of “*coming to Torah*”, “*living in Torah*”, or

“*following Torah*”. And the word “Torah” often seems to replace the MESSIAH, as if all JESUS came to do was to bring us back to the first five books of the Bible.

So, our Brothers and Sisters in CHRIST who view the “big picture” as being predominantly about “Hebraic thinking and the Torah” might be accurately labeled with the terms: “Hebraic Theology”, “Torah Theology”, or their original preferred name: “Hebrew Roots”.

Now, with all we have learned so far about textual criticism and the Bible of the MESSIAH and His Apostles, we should mention here: because Hebraic language and tradition play such a large role in the Hebrew Roots movement, the Masoretic Text and the Aramaic Peshitta are preferred. In fact, they are preferred even though these chronologically later texts blatantly disagree with even the earliest recorded quotations of the MESSIAH and His Apostles and Disciples over three hundred times.

These tendencies to *adamantly* prefer the Hebrew language also led *some* people in this movement to make unfounded and misguided statements against the Greek Septuagint translation of the First 39 Books of the Bible, as well as the Greek textual transmission of the Final 27 Books. Yes, Greek is often looked down upon in the movement, and this “anti-Greek” philosophy stands in direct contrast with the way GOD chose to preserve the Holy Scriptures!

Also, *some* teachers of “Hebraic” or “Torah” theology wrongly dispute the well-established and easily verifiable ancient textual basis of passages like Mark 7:19. While others challenge the divine inspiration of the Apostle Paul even though Peter openly indicated that Paul’s writings were to be considered part of the Holy Scriptures!^a

Sadly, many “Hebrew Roots” teachers *lead* followers of the MESSIAH to harshly judge others on issues of language, food, circumcision, and other doubtful topics; while brazenly ignoring the plain Biblical warnings against such things! And by ignoring many easy-to-understand passages found in the Final 27 writings, they

^a 2 Peter 3:16

sow division and discord in the body of the MESSIAH!

So, while MESSIAH Theology may advocate practicing *some* of the same things that our Brethren in the “Hebrew Roots” or “Torah Theology” movement practice, MESSIAH Theology *strongly* disagrees with those in the movement that seek to compel followers of the MESSIAH to speak a particular language, ignore or twist certain plain passages of the Holy Bible, or judge others over foods and drinks not mentioned in the Jerusalem Letter of Acts 15.

The Entire Jerusalem Church Decided:	And Years Later They Re-affirmed:
<p>They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”– to whom we gave no such commandment– it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.</p> <p>Acts 15:23-29</p>	<p>And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law;” but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. “What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. “Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. “Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. “But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.” Acts 21:20-25</p>

Figure 111

Now, with these statements and clarifications out of the way, we can say that MESSIAH Theology agrees with our Brothers and Sisters in the Hebrew Roots movement who believe that we should still celebrate the Feasts of the LORD and keep His weekly Sabbath.

The fact is: MESSIAH Theology agrees with observing all that is written in the Law and the Prophets *unless* the Final 27 Books of the Bible plainly and indisputably set some particular commandment aside.

(Please see MESSIAH Theology Volume II: The Sabbath^a to learn more about the Sabbath, and MESSIAH Theology Volume III: Biblical Continuity^b to learn more about Biblical Continuity and what

^a bit.ly/messiahtheology2

^b bit.ly/messiahtheology3

specific commandments were clearly set aside in Scripture)

1 Corinthians 7:18-19	Galatians 2:3-5	Galatians 5:2-4	Titus 1:10-11
Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.	Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And <i>this occurred</i> because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.	Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.	For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

Figure 112

In agreement with the Writings of the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD, MESSIAH Theology plainly states that most of the commandments related to “**foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances**” were “**imposed until the time of reformation**”^a, when the MESSIAH instituted a New Covenant of purification by faith, instead of purification through the fleshly works of the Law.

And MESSIAH Theology agrees with the Apostle Paul who plainly stated that the MESSIANIC reformation introduced “**a Stumbling Stone**” and “**a Rock of Offense**” to all those who turn to the foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances of the First Covenant for ***either* Justification or Sanctification.**

Those items were the context of Paul’s most misunderstood teachings, like **Brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.**^b and **Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?**^c

Now, with *these* important distinctions made, and a brief history of Christian theology established, we have set the stage for why we must each carefully analyze and develop our own personal approach to Biblical interpretation. Therefore, we have properly prepared ourselves to discuss “the big picture” of the metaphorical

^a Hebrews 9:10

^b Galatians 5:11

^c Galatians 3:3

“box lid” that JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples used to comprehensively understand the Holy Scriptures, from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation. And the first step we must take to see that picture is to recognize the overarching plot of the Holy Scriptures!

MESSIAH Theology teaches that the Bible’s plot can be summarized by saying: *GOD deeply desires to have an eternal, loving, familial relationship with all of Adam and Eve’s descendants.* And before we dig into that statement more deeply, let us ask you if you have ever wondered why GOD created us in the first place?

Why would a perfect GOD, Who has eternally existed as Father, Son, and HOLY SPIRIT, choose to create? He did not need us to complete His existence! And, because He will never die, He did not need us to carry on His great Name! So, *why does a perfect GOD (who always was, who always is, and who always will be) create?*

Well, the answer to that question can be found in yet another question, which is: *“why would a perfectly happy husband and wife choose to have a child?”* The answer to that much simpler question will help us understand why GOD chose to create. And when we understand *why* GOD chose to create, we can understand the big picture more accurately!

So, please imagine with me: a husband named Sam and his wife named Sue. And let’s imagine that they are a perfectly happy married couple. Just the two of them live in a perfect place with everything they could ever need or desire. They have love, they have peace, they have joy, they have food, they have clothing, they have shelter, and they have all of the things necessary to feel completely satisfied in their perfect world. Plus, in this example, they even have eternal life.

So, why might Sam and Sue choose to have children, especially if they knew ahead of time that some of their children would cause them great pain by freely choosing to run away from home?

MESSIAH Theology would teach that the answer is: Sam and Sue decided that sharing their love, and peace, and joy, and abundance with their *faithful* children would be even better than keeping it to themselves. So, they were willing to put up with the temporary pain

they knew they would face from their *unfaithful* children, just to experience the eternal joy that they could share with those *faithful* children who did not choose to run away.

With that analogy in mind friends, we must remember: GOD knew every choice Adam and his descendants would ever freely make before He created them! He knew the pain many of those “children” would cause Him and the rest of His creation. But He also knew that *true love always involves the freedom to choose not to love*. So, an eternity of sharing His love with those who truly valued it was worth the *temporal* pain caused by the many others who rejected His loving ways.

Now, with those concepts understood, we can see that every aspect of the world GOD created was made to help us better understand how we are to relate to our Creator in this life as well as in eternity.

GOD designed the relationship parents have with their children to help us understand how we should spiritually relate to GOD the “Father”. He designed the relationship husbands have with their wives to help us understand how we should spiritually relate to the eternally existing “only begotten Son” of GOD. And He designed the relationship breath has with life to help us understand how we should spiritually relate to GOD the HOLY SPIRIT. Truly all of those relationships existed before Adam and Eve sinned in the garden because Adam is listed in Scripture as “**a son of GOD**”.^a

But Adam was unfaithful to His Father, and mankind’s relationship with GOD suffered a tremendous blow when our first parents sinned.

So that brings us to the overarching problem in the story of Adam and his descendants. That problem is: sin destroys man’s relationship with GOD. First, sin leads to *immediate* spiritual death (which is separation from GOD), and then sin *eventually* leads to physical death because GOD is the irreplaceable source of eternal life.

However, just as mankind’s story has a plot, a problem, and a

^a Luke 3:38

massive conflict to resolve, the story has a Hero! And the Hero created the only viable solution to the terrible problem of sin.

GOD had the perfect time in mind to introduce His mighty Hero. And He set the stage and foreshadowed the good news of His arrival over and over again so His faithful children who loved His Word would recognize their Hero, and appropriately follow Him when He stepped onto the stage of human history.

In this way, GOD patiently demonstrated His unfathomable love towards mankind; first through repetitive foreshadowing, and then by actually sending His own Son. And GOD's "**only begotten Son**", JESUS CHRIST willingly laid down His life, just to make a Way for sin to be forgiven, so a loving relationship with His creation could be fully restored.

Before the parting of the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the people of GOD, sin was never fully dealt with; and a separation stood between the Creator and His beloved creation. But when the HERO of the story demonstrated the highest form of love the world will ever know, He made a New and Living Way into the presence of GOD through the shedding of His precious blood! And He became the ultimate sacrifice, the ultimate High Priest, the ultimate fulfillment of every verse of the Bible, and the only way to the Father.

No longer did man need to approach GOD through an earthly tabernacle, with earthly regulations of purity, an earthly priesthood, or earthly sacrifices! Instead, GOD's true worshippers were to draw near to Him through faith in His glorious Son. And, by the grace of the MESSIAH, man could be justified so completely that he could have a spiritual relationship with his Creator!

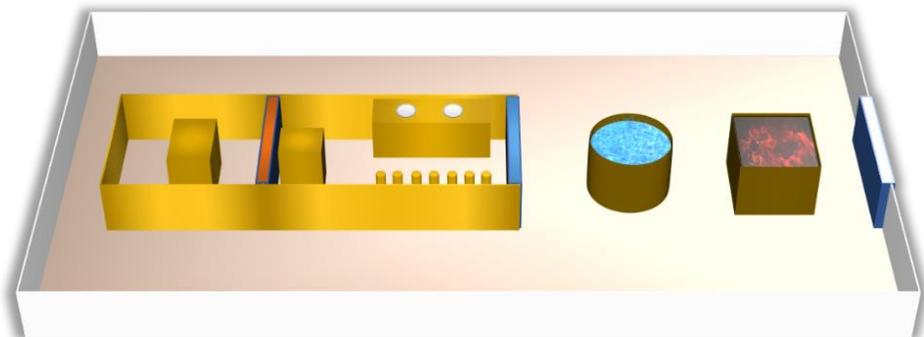


Figure 113

And this good news was foreshadowed in the tabernacle pattern shown to Moses on Mount Sinai just as it was foreshadowed perfectly in the Feast Days of the LORD that were also instituted in Exodus.

Thus, with this background understood, we are ready to continue discussing the “big picture” the MESSIAH and His Apostles and Disciples relied on to properly assemble the puzzle pieces of Scripture. And that picture was *the Exodus and the Feasts of the LORD that commemorate the journey of Israel’s descendants*.

Year after year, GOD’s people were to celebrate GOD’s holy Feast Days. The historical lessons they taught were intended to *ingrain* into the culture of Israel the Gospel (or “good news”) of the MESSIAH. But satan often attacked those commemorations and celebrations, and very often, GOD’s people abandoned His holy Feast Days.

Meanwhile, the lessons of those feasts apply equally to both the Old and the New Covenants! The Israelites were once slaves of a cruel Pharaoh in a foreign land. Likewise, we were all once subjects of a cruel adversary who enslaved us to the passing pleasures of sin.



Figure 114

The Israelites were graciously spared when judgment fell on Egypt (and ultimately set free from their bondage) by applying the blood of a Passover lamb to the door of their home in faith. Likewise, we were spared from sin's condemnation and set free from its dark slavery by applying the blood of the Lamb of GOD, shed at Passover, to the door of our hearts by faith.



Figure 115

The Israelites left the world of Egypt behind, traveled seven days eating Unleavened Bread, and passed through the waters of the Red Sea on the seventh day of that feast. Likewise, we must put away the leaven of malice and wickedness and die to our old lives of sin, just as we promised we would in the waters of baptism, which represented us being buried with our Savior.



Figure 116

They pressed onward through the wilderness toward the promise of a harvest and the dedicated firstfruits of a land that flowed with milk and honey. Likewise, we press onward through the wilderness of this life towards a promised resurrection harvest and new glorified bodies like the body “The Firstfruits of the Resurrection” received when He conquered death and hades!



Figure 117

They heard the voice of GOD when He descended to the mountain in fire at Pentecost and declared to them His Ten Commandments. Likewise, we have heard the voice of GOD Who descended once again in fire on the Day of Pentecost to write His law on our hearts and minds!



Figure 118

They remembered how they witnessed GOD descending in all of His glory to Sinai at the sound of a great trumpet. Likewise, we look forward to the sounding of the last trumpet when we shall see our triumphant MESSIAH descending in the clouds in all of His glory, to gather His saints to Him!



Figure 119

They remembered how GOD desired to be “at one” with them, and how He made a way by cleansing His dwelling place of all sin on the Day of Atonement. Likewise, we look forward to the day when JESUS will prepare to be “at one” with His church, by cleansing the earth of all wickedness, to prepare the planet for His Holy presence!



Figure 120

Plus, they remembered how they lived in tents on their way to the promised land, while GOD tabernacled among them in His portable temple. Likewise, we remember each year “we are still in the wilderness on our journey to the promised land”, and we rejoice in the fact that we will one day Tabernacle with our LORD forever and ever!



Figure 121

These feasts, and their First Covenant and New Covenant fulfillments in JESUS CHRIST are the true “big picture” of the Gospel!

They are repeated over and over, in every area of Scripture that comes after the Exodus. And, because they perfectly frame the true Gospel of the MESSIAH, *they* “rightly divide” the Word of Truth!



Figure 122

The Exodus and Israel's journey to the promised land is the consistently repeated motif of the Holy Scriptures! So when many leaders of the Church threw those Feast Days, they threw away the "puzzle box top" and compromised their ability to properly understand the Word of GOD from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation.

Chapter Seven: The MESSIAH's Exodus

The Greek word most commonly translated into English as “church” appears in the Final 27 Books of the Bible 112 times; and it is pronounced: “ek-klay-see'-ah”. But this Greek word is made up of two smaller Greek words - “ek” which means: “out of”, and “kal-eh'-o”, which means “to call”. So, the Greek word we translate into English as the word “church” literally means: “an assembly of called out people”.

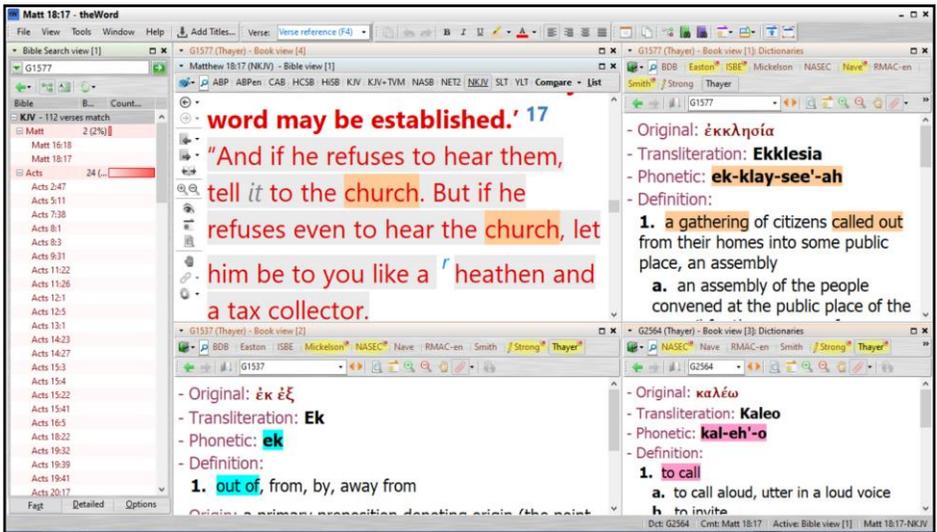


Figure 123

But what does the MESSIAH say we were *called out* of? Well, John's Gospel account records that JESUS said: **“If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”^a** (*Emphasis Added*)

So, JESUS called us out of the world, and His Apostles and Disciples make that point very clear in the Final 27 Books of the Bible. But when the Bible speaks of us being “called out of the world” we must understand it is not saying the word “world” as it is commonly used today.

^a John 15:19

In modern English, the term “world” can mean the earth, the globe, or the planet, but when you see this term with a negative connotation in the Scriptures, it is referring to the population of earth that is still in rebellion against the laws of the Creator.

And because of that fact, Scripture commands us to come out from among the world, after asking: **What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them.” “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.” “Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters”, says the LORD Almighty.”^a**

So, GOD has called the church out from the unbelieving, disobedient population of the world, and that is why the Greek word we translate as “church” technically means “the called-out ones”. And, because the individual members of the church are called out from sin and rebellion against GOD’s laws, those individuals are also called “saints”.

Now, the Greek word we translate into English as “saint” is “hag'-ee-os”. Plus, when this term is applied to people, it means “set apart ones”. So, Vine's Expository Dictionary of ‘New Testament’ Words explains about the Greek word we get the English word “Saint” from: “[hag'-ee-os] fundamentally signifies “separated” (among the Greeks, dedicated to the gods), and hence, in Scripture in its moral and spiritual significance, separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God”. (33)

The Church is *called out* of the world, and the individual saints within the church are *set apart* from the world. And that is why the Greek word we translate as “church” begins with the Greek prefix “ek” which means “out of”.

Truly, GOD has called His church “out of” the world; and He has set His saints apart from the world, as holy and different from them. But this little two-letter prefix “ek”, can also be found much earlier in

^a 2 Corinthians 6:15-18

Scripture! You see, the same Greek prefix “ek” that is found in the Greek word for “church”, can be found in the name of the second book of the Bible, which is “Exodus”.

The fact is, the names: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy are all English Transliterations of the Greek names of those Books as they are found in the Septuagint. And the word “Exodus” comes from combining the Greek prefix “ek” which means “out of” and the Greek word “hod-os” which means “way or road”.

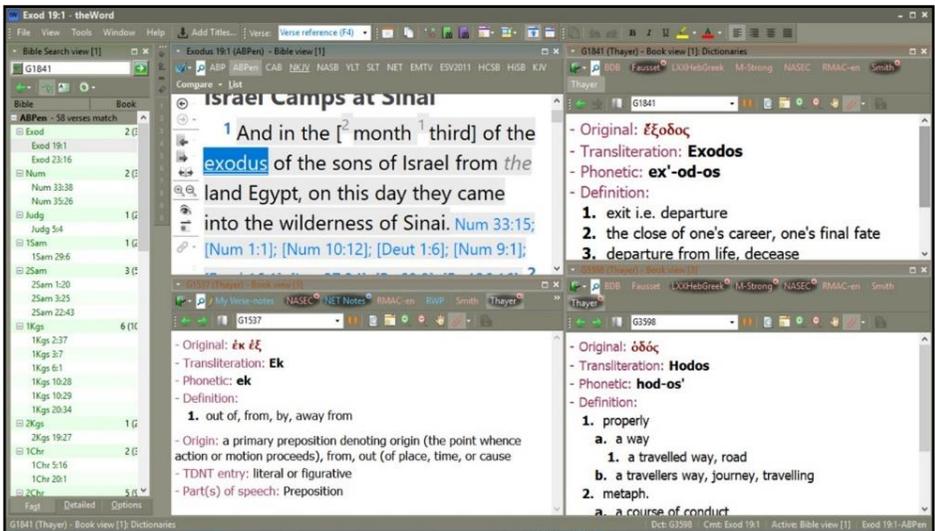


Figure 124

So, knowing: the Septuagint was the Bible of JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples, the Greek word “Exodus” was used in the Septuagint to label the second book of Moses, and the Greek word “Exodus” means “the way out”, can you guess when JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples thought the Church began? Or better yet, can you guess why the Apostles and Disciples of the MESSIAH considered themselves members of “the Way”?

The same Greek word found within the term “Exodus” is used at least 13 times in the Final 27 Books of the Bible^a in a very specific context. And in most of those places, translators even capitalize the word “Way” to indicate the word “hod-os” was specifically referring

^a The Way - John 14:6, Acts 9:2, Acts 16:17 (of salvation), Acts 18:25 (of the LORD), Acts 18:26 (of GOD), Acts 19:9, Acts 19:23, Acts 22:4, Acts 24:14, Acts 24:22, 2 Peter 2:2 (of truth), 2 Peter 2:15, and 2 Peter 2:21 (of righteousness)

to “the path” or “way” of the MESSIAH.

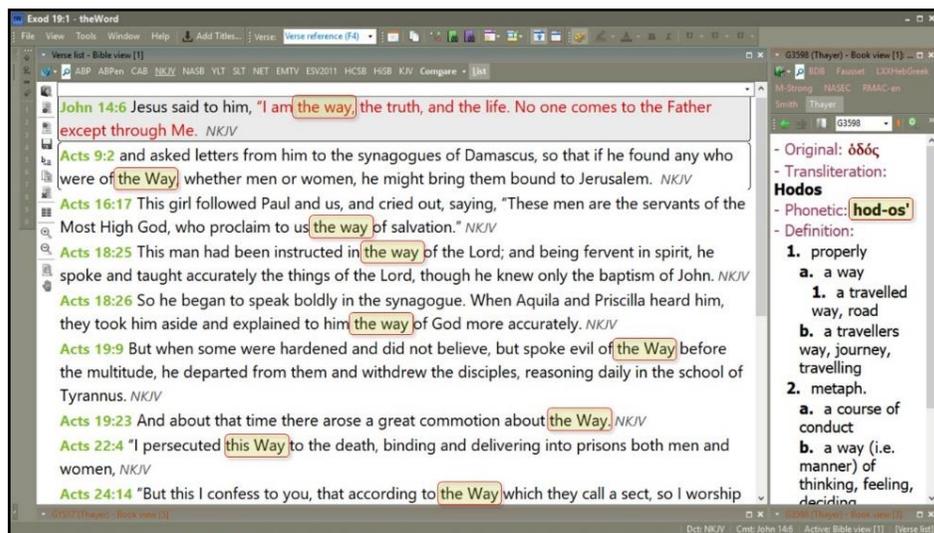


Figure 125

For example, the Greek root word “hod-os” of Ex-hodus is translated as “**the Way**” when Luke wrote: **Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.^a (Emphasis Added)**

And later after his conversion, Paul used the same word to describe the faith of those who followed JESUS the MESSIAH, when he said: **“But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets.”^b (Emphasis Added)**

But in the Septuagint that JESUS and Paul knew as the holy Scriptures the same Greek words we translate as “**the Way**” in the above passages can be found in the book named after the Way!

In Exodus (in the Septuagint) it is written: **God circled the people in the way - the one into the wilderness, to the red sea. And, in**

^a Acts 9:1-2

^b Acts 24:14

the fifth generation, the sons of Israel ascended from out of the land of Egypt.^a (*Emphasis Added*)

And the Septuagint also uses the same words found in the Final 27 Books, when recording: **And behold, I send my messenger before your face, that he may guard you in the way, that he may bring you into the land which I prepared for you.^b (*Emphasis Added*)**

So, to JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples, the Greek words we translate into English as “The Way” were directly connected back to the book we know as “Exodus”. *They* understood the Way of the First Covenant as the journey “out of slavery in Egypt”, into the freedom to choose in the wilderness, towards rest, and an inheritance in the Promised Land. And the term “the Way” was not the only term they carried over into the Final 27 Books so intentionally!

In the context of the journey of the children of Israel in the Way to the promised land, the Septuagint records that Moses said: **Take heed to yourself, and keep your heart diligently: forget not any of the things, which your eyes have seen, and let them not depart from your heart all the days of your life; and you shall teach your sons and your sons' sons, even the things that happened in the day in which you stood before the Lord our God in Horeb in the day of the assembly; for the Lord said to me, hold an assembly to Me, and let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days which they live upon the earth, and they shall teach their sons.^c (*Emphasis Added*)**

Brothers and Sisters, the Greek word we translate as “Church” (that means: “a called-out assembly of people”) was first used in the Bible JESUS and His Apostles knew to refer to the children of Israel gathering at Mount Sinai to meet with GOD!

They were called *out* of Egypt. And they were called to follow GOD in *the Way* as they journeyed to the Promised Land of Canaan. And without the slightest shadow of a doubt, I can confidently say that

^a Exodus 13:18

^b Exodus 23:20

^c Deuteronomy 4:9-10

the book of Exodus was the backdrop the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD used to accurately picture the Gospel, the Church, and the life of a saint in the MESSIAH!

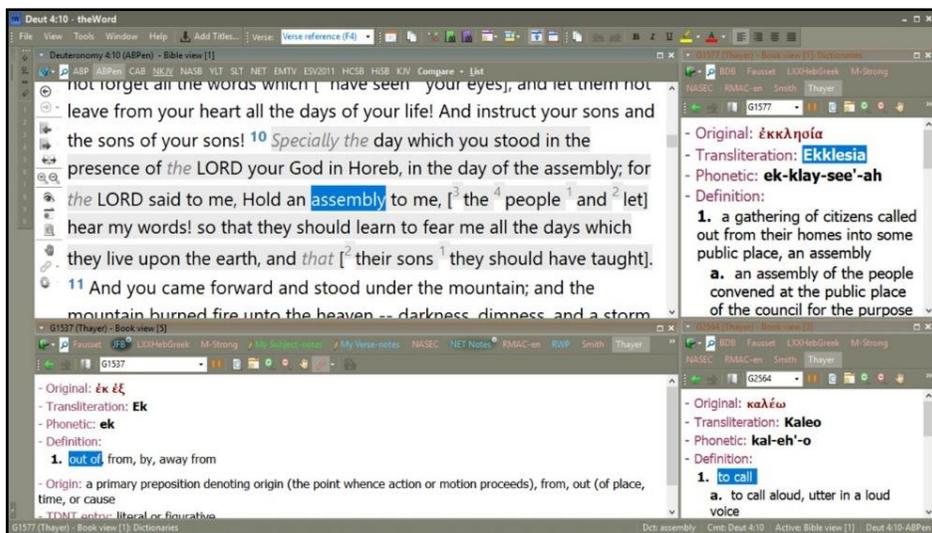


Figure 126

This is why Paul wrote: **Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.**

And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.^a

Twice in that passage, Paul used a word that translators have chosen to render as “example” in English, but the Greek word Paul used was: “tū'-pos”. And from this Greek word we get our English word “type”.

So, Paul wrote in Holy Scripture that the events of the Exodus were a type, or a figure, or a pattern that we should not be ignorant of, in our walk with the MESSIAH.

Paul clearly explained that the baptism of Israel “into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” was a *type* of our baptism into the MESSIAH. He explained that the manna and the water that Israel drank in the wilderness was a *type* of the bread and the cup of CHRIST that we partake in each Passover. And he explained that: *even after* GOD saved the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, and even after they were baptized into the sea, and even after they ate and drank of the bread and the cup of CHRIST in a spiritual sense, they still died in the wilderness and failed to enter the promised land.

And Paul said that their experiences were written for our admonition, as a *type* or a pattern for us to consider when we think about our journey in CHRIST. Plus, then Paul concluded his teaching with the very serious warning: **“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”**.

Likewise, Paul began this warning by saying: **Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.^b**

Based on these words, there can be no doubt: Paul applied the pattern of the Exodus and the words we read earlier to himself and his own walk with the MESSIAH! And Paul the Apostle believed that

^a 1 Corinthians 10:1-12

^b 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

he had to bring his flesh into subjection to GOD or he might become disqualified and fail to reach the promised land of the New Covenant.

Thus, this same thinking is reflected in Hebrews, where it is written: **Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore, I was angry with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.’ So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”**

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?

So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.^a

Here, the writer of Hebrews is speaking of the Israelites who came out of Egypt with Moses, when he says: **“the gospel was preached to us as well as it was to them”**. Many have speculated about what the gospel they heard truly was. But we don’t have to speculate when we understand how the MESSIAH and His Apostles and Disciples perceived the typological connections

^a Hebrews 3:7-4:2

between the Exodus and the New Covenant.

The Exodus out of Egypt began at Passover, and GOD told Moses: **“This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. “Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.’”^a**

‘Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ‘Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.’^b

‘And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. ‘Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.’^c

‘And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover. ‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.’^d

‘Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ‘So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.’^e

So, GOD designated the month of Passover to be the first month of the Biblical year, and Passover was to be the first annual holy Feast

^a Exodus 12:2-3

^b Exodus 12:5-6

^c Exodus 12:7-8

^d Exodus 12:11-12

^e Exodus 12:13-14

to the LORD. And on the night of Passover, GOD's people are commanded to remember how they were set free from slavery and led out of Egypt in "**the way**" GOD had prepared for them.

But their freedom came at a cost. And the blood of an innocent, spotless Passover lamb had to be shed for GOD's just judgment to pass over them.

Also, just as the children of Israel were once slaves in Egypt, we were once slaves in the world of the unredeemed. And that is why JESUS said: "**Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**"^a

Similarly, this picture was used by Paul when he wrote: **What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.**^b

Plus, Passover was clearly on Paul's mind when he wrote: **Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.**^c and **God set forth [JESUS] as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.**^d

^a John 8:34-36

^b Romans 6:15-19

^c 1 Corinthians 5:7

^d Romans 3:24-25

But, the connection between the cross of our Savior and Passover is stronger than just these references, because Scripture is very clear that JESUS was crucified on the day of Passover preparations, at the very same time GOD had instructed the people to kill the Passover lamb.

John puts the words of Pilate (the governor of Judea at the time of our LORD's execution) in context, by writing: **Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!"**^a

There is no debate or lack of clarity within Scripture; JESUS did not die on a day the Bible ever called "good Friday", He died on the 14th day of the first month when the Passover lambs must be killed, according to Exodus!

And, by the way, the phrase "the preparation day" in the Gospels is not referring to Friday preparations for the weekly Sabbath! The Bible makes it clear that this frequently misunderstood term is precisely referring to the 14th day of the first month when the preparations for the Passover meal were to be completed.^b

Just as GOD opened "the way out" of slavery in Egypt, in the first Covenant; He opened "the way out" (or in Greek "The Exodus") of slavery in the world in the New Covenant!

Thus, each year when we swallow the unleavened bread and cup of Passover, we remember how the Lamb of GOD set us free through His precious blood, so we could escape the just judgment our sins deserved.

In this way, we can see how the Gospel that was preached to the Israelites began with the shedding of the blood of an innocent Lamb at a very specific time on a very specific day. Yes, just as the first Passover lamb was killed on the 14th day of the first month in the First Covenant; in the New Covenant, the Passover Lamb was killed on the 14th day of the first month!

However, GOD did not redeem Israel by the blood of the lamb just

^a John 19:14-15a

^b Luke 23:54, John 19:14, John 19:31, John 19:42

so the people could remain slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt! Likewise, JESUS did not shed His blood so we could remain slaves of sin and satan in this rebellious world!

No, the *day* the Passover was killed was the last day of preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and this feast was all about leaving the leaven of sin behind.

So, GOD said: **“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ‘On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you.’”**

“So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. ‘In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ‘For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. ‘You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’ ”^a

And during those seven days, the people of Israel journeyed away from Egypt until they reached the Red Sea on the last day of this Feast. Therefore, just as Paul explained that we die to sin when we are baptized into the MESSIAH, Israel should have died to Egypt when they passed through the waters GOD parted before them.

So, each year at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we are reminded that the Gospel always includes repentance: **Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and**

^a Exodus 12:15-20

truth.^a

Our LORD and Savior JESUS CHRIST was buried just as the *high Sabbath* that is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was approaching. So, because baptism represents us dying to sin with JESUS, this Feast reminds us of the commitment we made to die to sin in baptism.

But, directly connected to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a third holy Feast Day, known as “Firstfruits”. And about this day, The LORD said: **“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. ‘He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.’”^b**

It is *very rare* for a slave to own land, but because they were no longer slaves, within the command for this holy celebration GOD promised Israel *land* and a *harvest*. Thus, this feast points forward to a time when the people of GOD would inherit the blessings GOD had promised them.

But GOD has promised us blessings in the New Covenant too, such as eternal life in a new, glorified body! And as we present the firstfruits of all that GOD has given us back to Him each year, we remember that we are journeying towards that eternal inheritance, preserved for us in heaven. And JESUS, the Firstfruits of the Resurrection, is our glorious assurance that our eternal inheritance awaits us!

These first three holy celebrations are all part of the “Feast of Unleavened Bread”; and each year they are given to us to remind us of the price of our freedom, the purpose of our freedom, and the hope of our freedom. But GOD knew that His people would never be truly free until they had a perfect Law of Liberty to guide them away from sin’s slavery in every decision.

So, fifty days after Firstfruits GOD instituted another holy Feast Day, most commonly known as Pentecost. And on the very first

^a 1 Corinthians 5:8

^b Leviticus 23:9-11

Pentecost, GOD descended to Mount Sinai to declare His Ten Commandments; the words of the Covenant that were housed in the famous Ark of the Covenant.

And He reminds us to commemorate this day, by saying: **“And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. ‘Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.’”^a “And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.”^b**

Of course, while this day commemorated GOD issuing His Ten Commandments in the First Covenant, it now commemorates His HOLY SPIRIT writing those commandments on our hearts and minds in the New Covenant!

So, just as the Israelites followed the pillar of fire and cloud in the wilderness, we are to walk after the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT in the wilderness of this world: **that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**^c

Truly, the Final 27 Books of the Bible reveal that there is a permanent, inseparable connection between the first four feast days of GOD given in Exodus and the most important events of the New Covenant. And the MESSIAH fulfilled the Gospel declared by those first four feast days perfectly, down to the exact day and hour.

But He did not fulfill them only to later abolish them any more than a body might abolish the shadow it casts. No, shadows and substance are *permanently* connected in the real world we live in, just as they are *permanently* connected in the Bible^d. And if we throw out the shadows of the MESSIAH, we will end up with a different, unbiblical false messiah that contradicts the Holy Bible

^a Leviticus 23:15-16

^b Leviticus 23:21

^c Romans 8:4

^d Colossians 2:17

GOD has given us!

Therefore, because prophets like Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah most certainly wrote that GOD's days will exist after the MESSIAH returns, we can be sure the MESSIAH approves of His own shadow!

In fact, He will return at the sounding of the last trumpet, and we are willing to theorize that glorious event will occur on the Day of Trumpets. (*Please see MESSIAH Theology Volume IV: The Biblical Feasts^a to learn how the Prophets foretold the Feasts will be celebrated when JESUS returns*)

Also, JESUS is coming to be "at one" with His bride, but He will have to cleanse the earth and purify it, just as the high priest had to cleanse the Tabernacle on the Day of Atonement. And the high priest did that so the glory of GOD could dwell in the camp of Israel! Therefore, we are willing to theorize that JESUS will cleanse the earth of all lawlessness in preparation for the Day of Atonement when the marriage of the Lamb will take place.

But the purpose of the Tabernacle, the First Covenant, and the New Covenant is made clear in the final Feast given to us by the LORD. Because the final Feast is known as "the Feast of Tabernacles", and that word "tabernacle" simply means "dwelling place"!

You see, JESUS, the HOLY SPIRIT, and the FATHER all desire to "tabernacle" or "dwell" with us in a world with no more sin, no more death, no more lies, and no more pain! And the final feast of the LORD reminds us that: just like the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness on their way to the promised land, we are just passing through the wilderness of this life, on our way to better promises obtained through a better covenant.

^a bit.ly/messiahtheology4



Figure 127

But the only way to properly understand that “better covenant” is to remember the context *The LORD* gave us to remember it by, and that context is the Exodus of the Children of Israel! Truly, only in that context, can we understand the Word of GOD accurately, from the very first Hebrew word in Genesis to the very last Greek word in Revelation!

Chapter Eight: The MESSIAH's Church

Now that we understand how “the Exodus”, “the Gospel”, “the Feasts”, “the Church”, “the Saints”, and “the Way” are all permanently connected in the Bible, and we have read dozens of verses from the Final 27 Books of the Holy Bible that prove the MESSIAH's Apostles and Disciples connected those *concepts* in their theology, we are ready to focus in on the MESSIAH's understanding of *the Church*.

As we proved beyond a reasonable doubt in the chapter entitled “*The MESSIAH's First 39*”, JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples most definitely relied on the Ancient Greek Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures known as the Septuagint. And for at least 150 years before the Final 27 Books were written, the same Greek words we translate as “Church”, “Saint”, “Gospel”, and “Way” were used in the Septuagint's Greek translation of the First 39 Books of the Holy Bible.

Biblical Word	Biblical Concept
The Exodus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the Greek words “ek” and “hodos” meaning “out” and “way”. Used in the MESSIAH's Bible to refer to the way the children of Israel were led out of Egypt by. Directly referenced as a “type” or “pattern” we must not be ignorant of in 1 Corinthians 10, Hebrews 3-4, and verse 5 of Jude.
The Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the midst of comparing the Exodus to our salvation in the MESSIAH, Hebrews chapter 4 explains the Gospel was preached to the Israelites as it was preached to us. (Used in the MESSIAH's Bible in 2nd Samuel) The Feasts were the Gospel of the Exodus, and they are also the Gospel of the New Covenant.
The Feasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the feasts, the Israelites heard the Gospel of: Redemption by the blood of the Passover lamb, Repentance, Resurrection, the Law's of GOD written in stone, GOD descending at the sound of a trumpet, GOD cleansing His Sanctuary so He could be “at one” with them, and GOD tabernacleing with them in His portable temple. These same feasts declare the day the MESSIAH died, was buried, rose again, sent the HOLY SPIRIT, will return at the sound of a trumpet, will cleanse the earth so He can be “at one” with His church, and will Tabernacle with His church forever and ever!
The Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the Greek words “ek” and “kaleo” meaning “out” and “called”. First used in the MESSIAH's Bible in Deuteronomy Mentioned by the MESSIAH in Matthew 18, as already established. Mentioned by the MESSIAH's follower Stephen as being in the wilderness with Moses. Used to describe the individuals “called out” by GOD from Egypt just as it was used to describe the individuals “called out” by GOD from the world.
The Saints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual members of the Church. Used in the MESSIAH's Bible to describe the faithful Israelites who inherited the promises just as it was used to describe His faithful followers who will inherit the promises. Also used in Scripture to describe the “Brothers and Sisters” or “Children” of the MESSIAH, because the saints are part of His eternal family.
The Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the Greek word “hodos” meaning “way”, “road”, or “path”. A frequent title used to describe the collective body of the MESSIAH in the Final 27 Books. Members of the Way considered themselves to have “come out from among” the rebellious world, just as the Israelites had “come out of Egypt” (Used in the MESSIAH's Bible in the word EK-hodos or Exodus). The members of the Way considered themselves to be partakers of the covenants and promises of Israel, and equally members of the same Church, who kept the same Feasts, and individually were known as Saints.

Figure 128

So, as we have already learned, the Greek word most commonly translated into English as “**church**” appears in the Final 27 Books of the Bible 112 times; but it also appears in the First 39 Books of the Bible found in the Ancient Septuagint 74 times! However, many of our beloved brothers and sisters in dispensational churches have

been taught to believe that the church began sometime around Acts chapter 2!

Now, before we turn to the ancient Septuagint that JESUS and His followers knew as their Holy Scriptures to learn more about how they understood “the Church”, let’s look at the Final 27 Books of the Bible for clues that prove *the Church did not begin in Acts chapter 2*.

The first clue can be seen in Matthew chapter 18, where JESUS said: **“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ “And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”^a** (*Emphasis Added*)

The Apostles did not ask JESUS what He meant when He said: **“tell it to the church”**, and this proves they were already very familiar with that term! So, in the MESSIAH’s theology (and in the Apostle’s theology) the Church (or “ek-klay-see'-ah”) existed in Matthew chapter 18!

But someone may claim that “*JESUS was simply referring to His newly formed group of followers*”, and “*perhaps the Church began when people began following JESUS*”. So, we should look for another reference from the Final 27 Writings to indisputably eliminate that theory.

We find that reference in Acts chapter 7, where Luke records Stephen saying: **“Moses...said to the children of Israel, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’ This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts, they turned back to**

^a Matthew 18:15-17

Egypt.”^a (*Emphasis Added*)

Stephen just used the word “ek-klay-see'-ah” that we typically translate as “church” as he said the Greek equivalent of “The Church was in the wilderness with Moses” at Mount Sinai. As we have recently learned, the Greek word we translate as Church is made up of two smaller Greek words: “ek” which means: “out of”, and “kal-eh'-o”, which means “to call”. So, the Greek word we translate into English as the word “church” literally means: “an assembly of called out people”.

In the New Covenant, the Church is called out of slavery to sin and satan who rules over the entire rebellious population of this world. Likewise, in the First Covenant, the Church was called out of slavery to Pharaoh and the ancient population of Egypt he ruled. So, Stephen makes it clear that the context of the word we translate “church” changed from the First Covenant to the New Covenant, but the Church most certainly existed in the time of Moses!

Meanwhile, modern translators have changed the way they translate Acts 7:37-39 because of their faulty theology!

Stephen definitely used the word “ek-klay-see'-ah” in verse 38. And we will see that particular Greek word should not be translated as “congregation”! Instead, it should be translated into English as “Church”, just as it is 106 times in the New King James translation.^b But, theological mistakes have led to an inconsistent way of handling the Greek word that means “a called-out assembly of people.”

Truly, the only place in the Final 27 Books of the Bible the Greek word “ek-klay-see'-ah” could justifiably *not* be translated as “church” is found in Acts chapter 19. There, the context reveals that the “called out assembly” was a group of pagan silversmiths.

The passage makes it clear that an assembly of people had been “called out”, just as the word indicates, but in this case, the “called out assembly of people” was called out by an idolatrous silversmith

^a Acts 7:37-39

^b Not translated as “Church” in: Acts 7:38, Acts 19:32*, Acts 19:33*, Acts 19:39*, Acts 19:41*, and Hebrews 2:12 (* = obviously not the “church” of GOD)

named Demetrius to oppose the followers of the MESSIAH.

But, despite that one notable exception, in every other place in the Final 27 Books of the Bible that the word “ek-klay-see'-ah” is used, it is most certainly referring to “the Church of JESUS CHRIST”.

Technically the word “church” can refer to “individual assemblies of people who were called out of the world to follow the MESSIAH in the Way” or “the single collective assembly of people from all time that were called out of the world into covenant with GOD”! So, scholars will often speak of the “local church” and the “universal Church”, but the same Greek word is used in both cases.

Meanwhile, the Book of Hebrews perfectly quotes the Greek Septuagint, when it explains: **For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.” And again: “I will put My trust in Him.” And again: “Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.”^a** (*Emphasis Added*)

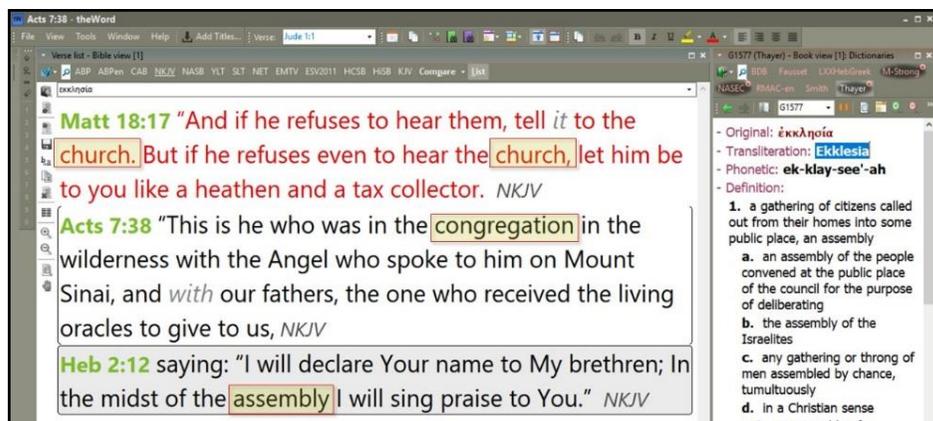


Figure 129

Just as we saw in Acts 7:38, because many translators think that the church began in Acts, they mistranslate the word “ek-klay-see'-ah” in this quote of the Psalms into English as “assembly” instead of “church”. But, please consider: is the MESSIAH standing amidst some random assembly? Would the MESSIAH call anyone but the

^a Hebrews 2:11-13

members of His *church* His “brethren”, or His “children”? Is the MESSIAH sanctifying more than one “*assembly*”, or did He lay down His life to sanctify His *Church*?

Obviously, the contextual use of Psalm 22 here in the book of Hebrews reveals that the term “ek-klay-see'-ah” in this passage should be translated as “Church”. Likewise, the word “ek-klay-see'-ah” in Acts 7:38 should also be translated as “church”!

The truth is that Stephen most definitely believed that *the church* was with Moses in the wilderness! All of the followers of JESUS believed that about the church, and that is why they were not confused when JESUS gave them instructions for Church discipline in Matthew 18!

However, these three verses are just the proverbial “*tip of the iceberg*”, when it comes to sinking the very popular teaching that “*the church began in Acts*”.

We must also consult the Septuagint and certain topically relevant passages of the Final 27 Books of the Bible to fully understand how the MESSIAH and His Apostles and Disciples would use the Greek word “ek-klay-see'-ah”. Yes, we must consider such things to correctly understand the English word “church” today.

But before we dive into how the Greek word for “Church” is used in the Septuagint, there is still one more word we must learn about, and it is the Greek word most commonly transliterated as “synagogue”.

Because modern Jews have continued to use this word to refer to their places of meeting, it is often perceived as a very “Hebrew” word. However, it is an English transliteration of the Greek word: soon-ag-o-gay'.

This Greek word appears in the First 39 Books of the Septuagint 182 times, plus it appears in the Final 27 Books of the Bible 57 times. In the First 39 books of the Bible the word “synagogue” most commonly referred to a “congregation” or “assembly” of people; but by the First Century, when the Final 27 Books were written, the word “synagogue” had come to mean “the building where the church met”.

Sadly, faulty theology has similarly affected how translators handle this word! The fact is, a correct and consistent translation of James chapter 2 should read: **For if there should come into your synagogue a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?^a**

James most certainly indicated that the followers of JESUS met in synagogues! So, Biblically speaking, the Church has always been “a gathering of called out people” and, in the first century, the synagogue was where *the Church* met!

That is why Paul ...**went to the high priest and asked for letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.**^b Without controversy, the followers of our LORD met in buildings they called “synagogues” until at least chapter 19 of the book of Acts.

But in Acts 19, it is recorded about Paul: **He went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.**^c

History records similar situations, where those who rejected JESUS drove His followers away from the synagogues. Thus, eventually, the division between the followers of JESUS and those who rejected their MESSIAH and the Final 27 Books of the Bible became more distinct. But throughout *most* of the First Century, the

^a James 2:2-4

^b Acts 9:1b-2

^c Acts 19:8-10

Bible is clear that the Jews and the Greeks who feared GOD and revered the Holy Scriptures *all* met in synagogues. But eventually, Jewish persecution drove the members of the Way to separate.

About the separation that began in Acts chapter 19, it progressed to such a point that (near the end of the first century) our MESSIAH said: **“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”^a**

And He later added: **“Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.”^b**

Did you notice how translators used the word “synagogue” here but not in the book of James? Well, they do this for the same reason they translate the name “ee-ak'-o-bos” (that we would typically translate as “Jacob”) into the very unsupported name “James”. These two translation choices reveal that there has been an intentional attempt to “anglicize” the Bible over the years. And frankly, that effort is just as wrong as trying to add Hebrew names where Hellenized names were used in the ancient manuscripts.

The truth is: there is absolutely no Scriptural reason at all that the buildings we gather in should not be called “synagogues”. That is exactly what JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples would call the buildings we meet in! They would not call those buildings a “church”. Yet, just as the majority of the saints now incorrectly think that the “church” is a building, the word “synagogue” experienced a very similar change in meaning.

In the MESSIAH’S Bible that we call the Septuagint, the first time the word “synagogue” was used was Genesis chapter 1. There GOD assembled the waters together into one “gathering”, and “gathering” was the original meaning of the word “synagogue”.

Later, the first time the word “synagogue” was used in the book of Exodus was when GOD said: **Speak to all the gathering of the sons of Israel saying, on the tenth of this month let each take**

^a Revelation 2:9

^b Revelation 3:9

a sheep according to the houses of the families! A sheep according to a house.^a

And from Passover onward, throughout the First 39 Books, when our English translations speak of a “congregation” or a “gathering”, the Septuagint typically uses the Greek word “soon-ag-o-gay”. But when the same word is used in the Final 27 Books, it most commonly refers to “a gathering place”, where those who followed the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob met to study the Scriptures.

The word “church” however, should not be changed in this way, because the Greek word “ek-klay-see'-ah” it is based on does not just refer to an “assembly”, “gathering”, or a “congregation”! Instead, as we have already established, it very specifically refers to a gathering or congregation that was “called” together “out” of some larger group. And buildings are not “called out” like GOD’s saints are!

So, you see, when translators translate the word “ek-klay-see'-ah” into words like assembly, congregation, or gathering, in a sense, they are pretending the Greek word “soon-ag-o-gay” was used. But the Bible typically uses the word “ek-klay-see'-ah” (which we translate as “Church”) in a much more careful manner because it very precisely refers to a smaller group being *called out* from a larger group.

Now we understand why JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples would call the buildings Christians meet in a “synagogue”. Also, we understand why the Greek word we translate into English as “Church” cannot refer to a building or some nondescript gathering or congregation of people. Therefore, we are ready to see how JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples would define “the Church of GOD”.

The very first time the word we translate as “church” was used in the Bible the MESSIAH and His Apostles and Disciples relied on, is Deuteronomy chapter 4. There Moses said: **Take heed to yourself, and guard your life exceedingly! You should not forget all the words which your eyes have seen, and let them not leave from your heart all the days of your life! And instruct**

^a Exodus 12:3 ABP

your sons and the sons of your sons! Especially regarding the day which you stood in the presence of the LORD your God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly. For the LORD said to me, hold an assembly to me, and let the people hear my words, so that they should learn to fear me all the days which they live upon the earth, and that they should teach their sons.
(Emphasis Added)

And you came forward and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto heaven -- darkness, dimness, and a storm. And the LORD spoke to you from the mountain in the midst of the fire. A voice of utterances you heard, and a representation you did not behold -- but only a voice. And he announced to you his covenant, which he gave charge to you to observe -- the ten discourses; and he wrote them upon two tablets of stone.^a

The MESSIAH and His followers most certainly recognized the same Greek word they used to describe “the Church” in the Final 27 Books of the Bible was used to describe “the Church” in the First 39!

They knew that, in the Septuagint, Moses first used that same Greek word to describe the day the children of Israel gathered at Mount Sinai to hear The LORD speak! And the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD intentionally used the same word that *their* ancient translation of the Holy Scriptures relied on to describe the day the Commandments of the Covenant were spoken to the people by GOD!

So, Who called the children of Israel together out of Egypt? The LORD of course! And why did He call them out of Egypt? So they could meet with Him at Mount Sinai and receive His Covenant!

Thus, just before announcing the Ten Commandments of His Covenant, GOD said to Moses: **“Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and announce to the sons of Israel, you have seen as much as I have done to them -- to the Egyptians. And I carried you as upon the wings of eagles, and led you to myself. And now - if in hearing, you should hear my voice, and guard**

^a Deuteronomy 4:9-13

my covenant - you will be to me a prized people from all the nations. For all the earth is mine.^a

And speaking about **when** they heard the covenant, Moses said: **“The LORD gave to me the two tablets of stone, being written by the finger of God. And upon them he had written all the words, the ones which the LORD spoke to you in the mountain, from amidst the fire, in the day of assembly. And it came to pass through forty days and through forty nights, the LORD gave to me the two tablets of stone -- tablets of the covenant.”^b**
(Emphasis Added)

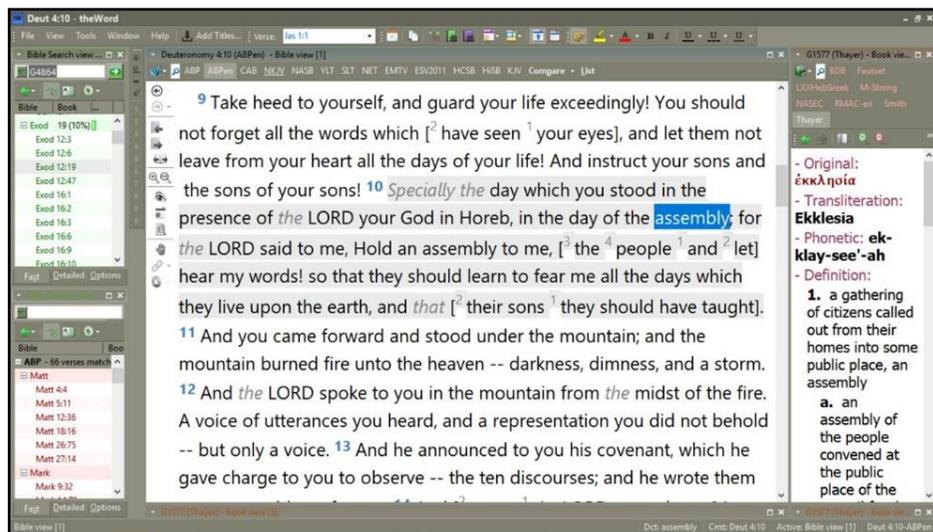


Figure 130

You see, over and over again “the receiving of the Covenant at Mount Sinai at Pentecost” and the Greek word “ek-klay-see'-ah” are intertwined; and the commandments of the Covenant are mentioned when the coming of the New Covenant was announced too!

Through the Prophet Jeremiah, The LORD said: **Behold, days come, says the LORD, when I shall ordain to the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah, a new covenant. Not according to the covenant which I ordained with their fathers,**

^a Exodus 19:3-5

^b Deuteronomy 9:10-11

in the day in which I took hold of their hand to lead them from out of the land of Egypt; for they did not adhere to my covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is my covenant which I shall ordain with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD; I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be my people.^a (*Emphasis Added*)

Please notice, **who** did GOD say He would ordain His New Covenant with? Was it some group that began at Acts chapter 2? Was it some new nation or group of nations? No, it was with *the House of Israel*, meaning the descendants of Jacob! And the laws of the covenant that were written on the two tablets of stone are mentioned here in this prophetic declaration of the New Covenant, just as they were when the First Covenant was established!

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote: **Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.^b**

And He went on to say: **Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.^c**

The word “Gentile” simply refers to all of the nations of the earth that did not descend from Jacob who was later given the name “Israel” by GOD. But, just as GOD has always chosen certain individuals to serve as Apostles or Prophets, He decided to choose

^a Jeremiah 31:31-33

^b Ephesians 2:11-13

^c Ephesians 2:19-22

a nation to serve as a prophetic voice to all of the other nations of Earth. And, because the descendants of Jacob were that nation, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel was like never hearing the words of the Bible GOD called them to record!

Moses, a descendant of Jacob, wrote the first five books of the Holy Bible. Joshua, a descendant of Jacob, wrote the next book. And all 66 books were written by descendants of Jacob, with the possible exceptions of Job and the writings of Luke. But Luke was definitely a devout follower of the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he most certainly was not a stranger to the covenants and promises of Israel!

Truly, a descendant of Jacob at that time was born into a culture where the Bible was believed, taught, and studied. But a Gentile was born into a culture where the Bible was disbelieved, disregarded, and ignored. In this way, people born into Gentile households were: **“aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise”**, so they were **“without hope and without God in the world”**.

But through faith in JESUS the MESSIAH, we are **“no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of GOD”**! And, in CHRIST, we become part of the commonwealth of Israel, partakers in the covenants of promise, and we have hope and a relationship with GOD, as those “called out” of this world!

In his letter to the Romans, Paul explains this wonderful reality in a different way. There he wrote: **And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.**

You will say then, **“Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.”** Well said. **Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you**

continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?^a

Brothers and Sisters, the “cultivated olive tree” Paul is describing here metaphorically represents the Church of GOD! The children of Israel are born into the cultivated olive tree, but Gentiles are born into the diverse, pagan spiritual traditions represented by the wild olive tree.

Thus, when a descendant of Jacob rejects the MESSIAH and His covenant (just as Moses warned in Deuteronomy) they are broken off from “the cultivated olive tree” that represents “the true Church” or “Israel of GOD”. But if they later receive their MESSIAH and His covenant, they are grafted back into the cultivated olive tree.

Meanwhile, when a Gentile repents and turns to the MESSIAH and His covenant, they are grafted into the cultivated olive tree, that represents *the Church*, and they become partakers in the covenants and promises GOD made to Jacob’s descendants!

But Paul warns that they must not boast against the natural branches that were broken off in unbelief! Or (in non-metaphorical language), Paul warned: Gentile believers in the MESSIAH must not boast against the descendants of Israel and claim that they *replaced* them, or claim that GOD has rejected the House of Israel!

In reality, Paul begins this chapter by writing: **I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.**^b And he went on to explain that a remnant of Israel received their MESSIAH and the New Covenant in His blood, and they were represented by the natural branches of the olive tree that were not broken off in unbelief. So, we Gentiles must understand, the Gospel was sent

^a Romans 11:17-24

^b Romans 11:1

first to the Jew (or Israelite)^a, and *then* it was sent to the Gentiles.

The descendants of Jacob are GOD's chosen people, selected to receive and record His Holy Word like the many prophets GOD raised up from within that holy nation. So, with this in mind, Paul wrote: **What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.**^b

So, the covenant the Bible calls "the First Covenant" was given to the descendants of Jacob, and the covenant the Bible calls "the New Covenant" was given to the descendants of Jacob! And when we believe in JESUS, and receive His Covenant, we believe in a descendant of Jacob, plus we are grafted into the covenants and promises of Israel!

The Scriptures are clear that the Church is the cultivated olive tree made up of every individual who has ever lived who answered the call of GOD to come out from the world and enter into covenant with Him! This is why the MESSIAH said: **"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."**^c

Brothers and Sisters, the Church is the family of the MESSIAH! It is the called-out assembly of individuals made up of all of those who have heard the Word of GOD and chosen to obey what it says. It was first mentioned in Deuteronomy in the context of the Exodus when Israel received the words of the Covenant at Mount Sinai. But men like Joseph, Abraham, Noah, and Abel were also grafted into the Church by receiving the Word GOD spoke to them in faith and obeying it.

And because the Church heard, obeyed, and ultimately recorded the Word of GOD throughout History, it is **"the household of GOD"** and **"the pillar and ground of the truth."**^d This is what Scripture teaches about the Greek word we translate into English as

^a These terms were used synonymously by Paul. See: Romans 3:1-2, Romans 11:1, 2 Corinthians 11:22, Romans 1:16, Romans 2:9-10, Romans 2:17, Romans 2:28-29, Romans 3:9, Romans 3:29, Romans 9:24, Romans 10:12, 1 Corinthians 1:22-24, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11, etc.

^b Romans 3:1-2

^c Luke 8:21

^d 1 Timothy 3:15

“Church”. But we can never properly understand the Church until we search the Scriptures from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation!

Chapter Nine: The MESSIAH's Saints

The Oxford dictionary defines the word “binary” with the phrase: “relating to, composed of, or involving two things” (34), and the two-letter Latin prefix “bi” means “two”. So, if we face a fork in the road that has two choices (left or right) that would be a “binary” choice.

But in a very similar way, the two-letter Greek prefix “di” means “two” (35), and we use this prefix in words like “dilemma”; which originally referred to “a choice between two possibilities”. (36) Also, according to the original definition of dilemma, a binary choice and a dilemma would be the same thing. But over time, because choosing between two very similar things can be a difficult choice, the word dilemma took on the meaning “a difficult choice.”

Meanwhile, we need to understand the meaning of the word binary, and the concept of choosing between two things, because: *when it comes to morality*, the Bible is full of binary statements, dilemmas, and most especially: dichotomies. And, according to Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary, the word “dichotomy” means: “a division into two especially mutually exclusive or contradictory groups or entities” (37)

Now, a perfect example of why every disciple of the MESSIAH must understand the concept behind the word “dichotomy” is found in the first epistle of the Apostle John. There he wrote: **In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.**^a

And later, John explained: **By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.**^b

Plus, the beloved Apostle also warned: **Little children, let no one**

^a 1 John 3:10

^b 1 John 5:2-3

deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.^a

Through these verses, we see two mutually exclusive, and contradictory families with two very different patriarchs. There is a *family of sin* made up of those who do not practice righteousness. And John explains that these individuals are spiritually the children of satan. And there is a *family of righteousness*, made up of people who love one another and practice righteousness by keeping the commandments of GOD. And John is clear that those who love one another and keep GOD's commandments are known as the children of GOD!

Like 'white and black' or 'up and down', the Bible teaches that 'right and wrong' are diametrically opposed. And, according to the website "Grammarist.com": "the phrase diametrically opposed means 'to be completely and directly in opposition to something'." (38) In fact, the phrase "diametrically opposed" is referring to the two opposing hemispheres that appear on either side of a diameter line drawn across a circle.

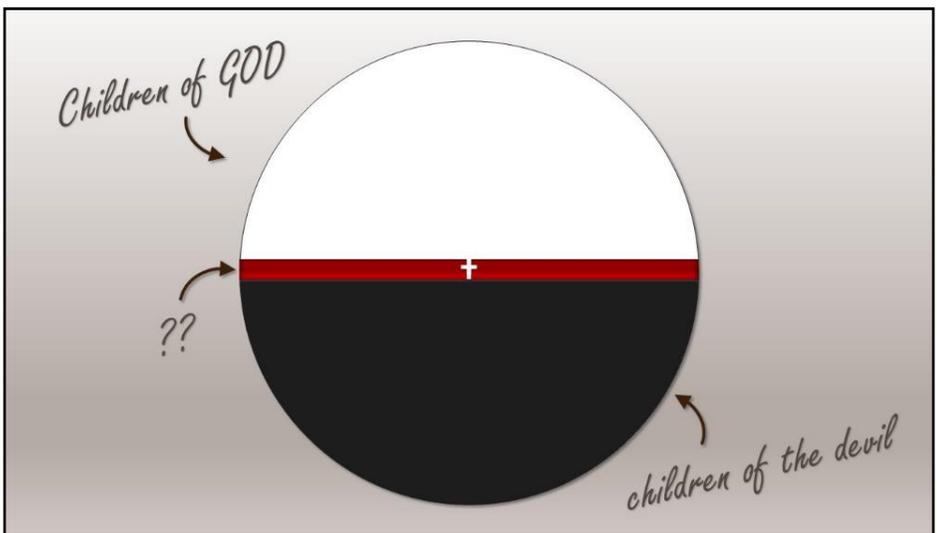


Figure 131

^a 1 John 3:7-8

The circle (In Figure 131) represents every human being who will ever live (from Adam until death is abolished forever); while the white represents the children of GOD, and the black represents the children of the devil. But what does the dividing line represent? Brothers and Sisters, there seems to be quite a bit of confusion regarding the answer to that question in the Church at large today!

Is the dividing line belief? Do we have to *believe* certain facts about JESUS to be part of the children of GOD? Well, John *did* write about JESUS: **He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:**^a

Did you notice that John said JESUS gave those who believe in His name **“the right to become children of GOD”**? So, we don’t automatically become children of GOD just by believing in the name of JESUS according to John! Instead, we receive *the right* to become His children.

The Greek word translated here as “right” is: “ex-oo-see’-ah”, and it means the “power of choice”. And with that definition in mind, let’s think back to what we have learned so far about how following JESUS in the Way was understood by His Apostles and Disciples in the context of the Exodus.

When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, did they have “the power of choice” to leave Egypt and meet with GOD at Mount Sinai? Definitely not! That is why they were called “slaves”, and it is also why GOD summarized their situation as “bondage”.

But, when they chose to believe in the deliverer GOD sent to them named Moses and obey the instructions GOD gave Moses to speak to them, through the events that occurred at Passover GOD gave them the power to choose to follow Moses out of Egypt. If it were not for the blood of the Passover lamb and their confidence in Moses, they would have remained in bondage in Egypt forever. But through the blood and their faith, they were set free and given the freedom to choose to leave the bondage of slavery behind.

Then, they journeyed out of Egypt until, on the seventh day of their

^a John 1:11-12

exodus, GOD parted the mighty waters of the Red Sea and the children of Israel passed through the depths of the sea on dry land. Thus, just as Passover represented them being set free from sin's slavery and condemnation through the blood of the Lamb, the Feast of Unleavened Bread represented them choosing to turn away from the leaven of sin and symbolically die to its slavery, as they were baptized into the sea.

However, it is very important that we accurately answer the following question if we are to understand the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST correctly! When did GOD indicate that the children of Israel could become *His* children? At which feast did GOD announce that possibility? Did the children of Israel become the children of GOD at the Feast of Passover? Did they perhaps become His children during the Feast of Unleavened bread after the Red Sea closed behind them?

No, it was in preparation for the very first Pentecost that GOD said: **“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.”**^a (*Emphasis Added*) Then, at Pentecost, GOD descended to Mount Sinai and declared the covenant; the Ten Commandments that He later wrote on two tablets of stone.

GOD Himself called those tablets: “The Covenant” and “The Testimony”, and He commanded Moses to build a Tabernacle and an Ark to carry His Ten Commandments in. This is why the Ark is called “the Ark of the Testimony” or “the Ark of the Covenant”, and the Tabernacle was called “the Tabernacle of the Testimony”; because the two stone tablets of the Testimony were housed in it.

In the holiest room of the holiest structure in all of the camp of Israel, the Ten Commandments were kept in the Ark of the Covenant; not a reminder of the blood of the Passover lamb or a reminder of their baptism in the Red Sea. And there, above those two stone tablets of the covenant, GOD met with Moses to instruct him through the veil about right and wrong and good and evil.

The Ten Commandments that GOD called “His Covenant” were the

^a Exodus 19:5

focal point of Israel's relationship with Almighty GOD! Yet, into the holy of Holies, where the Ten Commandments were kept, only the high priest could enter once a year, after extensive preparations on the Day of Atonement. Truly, in the first Covenant, a veil separated GOD's people from His commandments; and they were written on two holy tablets of *stone*, tucked away in a sacred Ark, in the holiest place in all of Israel!

In contrast, when speaking about *the New Covenant*, GOD said: **“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”^a**

Once again, in this important announcement, GOD's covenant is connected to His Law, and His people are those who have received His Covenant and agreed to keep it!

Plus, just as the people received the covenant on the day of Pentecost in the First Covenant, in the New Covenant the day of Pentecost marked the fulfillment of this prophecy by the sending of the HOLY SPIRIT.

So, at the first Pentecost within the New Covenant, after preaching that JESUS was their promised MESSIAH who rose from the dead, Peter announced: **“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”^b**

First, the people Peter was speaking to had to believe all that Peter said about JESUS. Then they had to repent and turn away from

^a Jeremiah 31:31-33

^b Acts 2:38-39

their sin. Also, Peter commanded them to demonstrate their faith and repentance by being baptized in the name of JESUS their MESSIAH. And as a result of those three choices, GOD promised that they would receive the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Then, the SPIRIT fulfilled the promise of the New Covenant written in Jeremiah, which was: **“I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people!”**

In the New Covenant, the SPIRIT of GOD no longer dwells in a portable temple called the Tabernacle! Plus, in the New Covenant, the Law of GOD is no longer written on two tablets of *stone* stored in a holy Ark behind a veil of separation! Instead, in the New Covenant, GOD’s people became His temple, and their *hearts* and *minds* became the tablets of His Covenant!

But none of that could have ever occurred if it were not for the precious blood of our eternal Passover Lamb, JESUS CHRIST! And, by putting away the leaven of sin in repentance and being baptized in His name, through His precious blood we are cleansed from the filth of our past lives of sin and prepared to receive the HOLY SPIRIT as living temples of GOD!

However, just as GOD eventually rejected His Tabernacle at Shiloh, He later rejected His Temple in Jerusalem when His people defiled those holy temples! So, the fact is the Bible records GOD rejecting all of the temples man has ever made for Him once people defiled those temples through their disobedience to His covenant. And this reality points to the following principle, which is: a person becoming a living temple of the HOLY SPIRIT does not guarantee that GOD will not eventually reject an individual who defiles His temple.

Therefore, Paul wrote: **Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.**^a

And in Hebrews, it is written: **For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and**

^a 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.^a

As hard as this might be to believe, just being filled with the HOLY SPIRIT who was sent at Pentecost does not guarantee that we will ultimately be classified as Children of GOD or righteous! Because the dividing line between “black and white”, or “the children of GOD and the children of the devil” is not *believing* or even being filled with the HOLY SPIRIT!

No, after the Israelites in the wilderness received the Covenant at Mount Sinai and placed it in the Ark of the Covenant, the HOLY SPIRIT manifested Himself as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night over the holy of Holies. Then, when the Spirit moved, the children of Israel moved with Him, *following* behind the Ark of the Covenant.

Likewise, it is not just those who have the covenant that are the children of GOD! Nor is it simply those who currently have the HOLY SPIRIT! Instead, the children of GOD are those who are *led* by the HOLY SPIRIT! So, this is why Paul taught: **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.^b** (*Emphasis Added*)

Plus, just before this, Paul explained: **There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.^c**

^a Hebrews 6:4-6

^b Romans 8:14

^c Romans 8:1-4

Likewise, Paul went on to say: **For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**^a

And from this, he concluded: **Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**^b

So, when we repent and believe in JESUS as our LORD and Savior and get baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and HOLY SPIRIT, we are filled with the SPIRIT of GOD! Then, He writes His law on our hearts and minds. And from that day forward, we must daily choose between following the Spirit in righteousness or following the flesh in unrighteousness.

Paul very specifically points out that “***the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in those who walk after the Spirit***” instead of the lusts of the flesh! And because of this, if we live according to the flesh we will die, but if we follow the Spirit and put to death the lusts of the flesh we will live! Therefore, to GOD, our *actions* (or the synonymous Biblical words: works, deeds, or fruit) are what prove if we are walking after the flesh or walking after the SPIRIT!

And this is why the MESSIAH said: “**Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear [the Son’s] voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.**”^c JESUS made the black and white nature of morality very clear here as He revealed: there are only two choices! Through the Spirit, we can choose to do good, or through the flesh, we can choose to do evil. And the choice we make decides our eternal destiny.

^a Romans 8:5-8

^b Romans 8:12-13

^c John 5:28-29

In another place, Paul describes this dilemma in a slightly different way, saying: **GOD... “will render to each one according to his deeds”**: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **For there is no partiality with God.**^a

Again, there are only two choices: doing good by obeying the Truth or doing evil by disobeying the Truth. Likewise, there are only two outcomes: eternal life with glory, honor, and peace; or eternal anguish with indignation, wrath, and tribulation.

But we must recognize there are *only* two sides. For example, there are *only* two sides described by Paul in each comparison, when he wrote: **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”**^b

In this powerful series of binary statements, Paul makes the dilemma every descendant of Adam faces abundantly clear. And Paul reveals the dichotomy that exists between righteousness and lawlessness, light and darkness, the MESSIAH and satan, believers and unbelievers, and the temple of GOD and idols.

So, every descendant of Adam must choose to come out from the darkness and into the light of the MESSIAH, or face the

^a Romans 2:5b-11

^b 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

condemnation of Hell that awaits all who reject the standards of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yes, the standards of the Kingdom of Heaven revealed in the tablets of the Covenant are the dividing line GOD uses to separate 'darkness from light' and 'lawlessness from righteousness'! That is why Paul said: the opposite of righteousness is "**lawlessness**".

Plus, this is why John wrote: **Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever keeps on sinning has neither seen Him nor known Him.**^a

We can see that John was saying that sin and lawlessness are the same. Plus, this means that sin and righteousness are opposites. So, a person cannot be sinning and righteous at the same time, and that is why John wrote: **If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.**^b

And John also made it clear that a person cannot be sinning and righteous at the same time when he wrote: **Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.**^c

Brothers and Sisters, every time you see a warning about not letting anyone deceive you in the Bible, it means that the HOLY SPIRIT knew they would eventually try! And millions of people are being taught these days that they can be righteous while they are actively sinning.

^a 1 John 3:4-6, The final time the Greek word for "sin" was used in this passage, John wrote it in a very specific way, and we call the way he wrote the Greek word for sin "a present active participle" because it indicates an action that is actively going on in the present and continuing on into the future. So, more accurate translators will put an "ing" on the end of the word "sin", and then the passage would say: "Whoever **keeps on sinning** has neither seen Him or known Him." This is not an addition to what John wrote, it is just the simplest way in English we can express the present active participle John used in his inspired letter.

^b 1 John 2:29

^c 1 John 3:7-8a

They are being told, they have the MESSIAH's *imputed* righteousness even while they choose to live in sin and lawlessness! But sadly, this will eventually lead them to eternal condemnation in the fires of Hell!

So, GOD had our brother John directly warn us against *that* deception. And we must understand: those who practice righteousness are righteous just as the MESSIAH who saved us is righteous! But those who keep on sinning and living in lawlessness are children of the devil, and they are still his willing slaves!

As the MESSIAH has said: **“Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”^a**

But contrary to popular opinion, JESUS did not die to set us free from GOD's Commandments! No, JESUS died to set us free from the condemnation and slavery that always accompanies sin. And please understand, sin is simply the breaking of GOD's righteous law!

So, our MESSIAH taught: **“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”^b**

Why is adultery wrong? Because GOD said: You shall not commit adultery in the 7th commandment! But the MESSIAH made it clear that the sin of adultery can be committed in the heart, and the eye and the hand would be directly involved in *that* sin.

So, JESUS warned that it would be more profitable for us to cut off our hand or pluck out our eye if it caused us to sin than to continue

^a John 8:34-36

^b Matthew 5:27-30

sinning and end up in hell! And this passage confirms that sin is the breaking of GOD's law, and the wages of sin is death, so we must repent and quit sinning before judgment day!

Also, JESUS taught that we should be that serious about every type of sin, when He said: **“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched– “where ‘Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.’ “And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched– “where ‘Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.’ “And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire– “where ‘Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.’”^a**

Brothers and Sisters, there is only one type of teacher out there who will tell you: *“it is acceptable and common for a Christian to keep on sinning, so you don't have to be alarmed if your life is filled with sin”*; and that type of teacher is a false teacher! Truly, our MESSIAH taught no such thing!

Plus, His Apostles did *not* teach that we could continue in sin either! Paul wrote: **God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**^b Please notice the clear past-tense way Paul used the word “sinners”! He said **“while we were still sinners”**, and that indicates that true disciples of JESUS CHRIST are no longer categorized as **“still sinners”**!

That is why Peter asked: **Now “If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”**^c False teachers will claim that we are no longer sinners because *“JESUS fulfilled and abolished the law”*, and where there is no law there is no sin.

But if a false teacher tries to tell you that, you can take them to

^a Mark 9:43-48

^b Romans 5:8

^c 1 Peter 4:18

Paul's first letter to Timothy, where he wrote: **The law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners...**^a

The purpose of the Law is to show sinners that they are separated from GOD by their sin. However, just as the mirror cannot cleanse a man after showing him that his face is covered in dirt, the Law cannot cleanse the sinner from their sin; it can only reveal the problem of sin.

Only JESUS can take away our sins and cleanse us so that we can receive the HOLY SPIRIT! But we must not set aside the holy Law of GOD that reveals what sin is, any more than we should set aside mirrors when we are washing our face, brushing our hair, or shaving!

GOD's Law defines the boundary between righteousness and sin, but the cross of JESUS CHRIST is the only bridge back to a state of righteousness when we stumble into the dangerous darkness of sin.

Therefore, a Christian will *occasionally* stumble into the disobedience against GOD that the Bible calls sin, but they will quickly repent and turn back to GOD's covenant to walk in the Way JESUS taught us to walk. And, because a true Disciple of JESUS departs from all iniquity and follows the SPIRIT in righteousness, they are no longer called: "sinners".

^a 1 Timothy 1:9

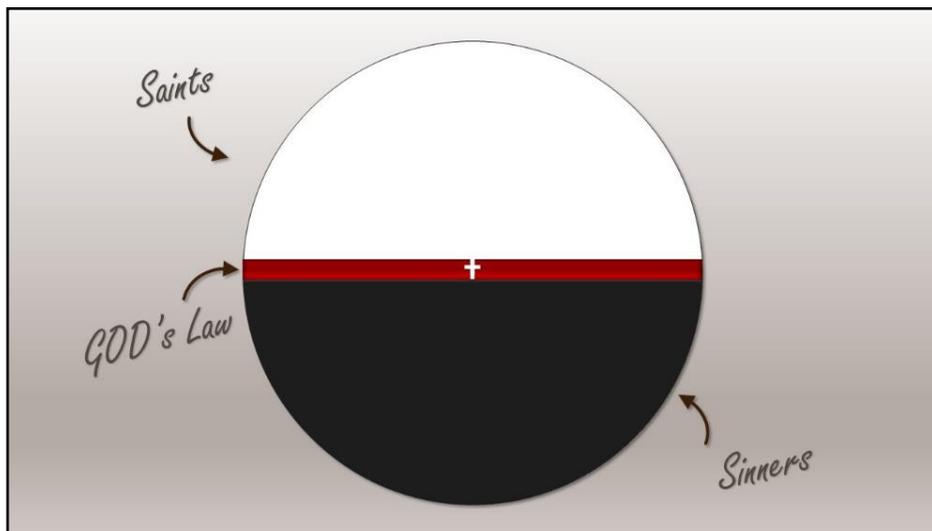


Figure 132

So, Brothers and Sisters, what is the opposite of a sinner? In the moral dichotomy the Bible presents, the opposite of a sinner is a saint! And guess how many epistles of the Final 27 Books were written specifically to sinners? Well, if you guessed zero, you are correct!

For example, in his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote: **To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**^a

But friends, bad theology and false teaching added two words to Paul's introduction here. You see, the words "*to be*" in italics are not found in any Greek manuscript, so Paul did not say "**called *to be* saints**"! He said, "**called saints**"! And as we learned already: *saints* are the holy people of GOD who have come out from the sinners of the world, to keep Covenant with the LORD!

And the following letters written by the LORD's Apostles are specifically addressed to "saints": Romans, 1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Plus, while not directly calling the recipients of the letter "saints", in the following letters, it is very clear that every true Disciple of the MESSIAH in the church was considered to be a saint: 1st

^a Romans 1:7

Thessalonians, 2nd Thessalonians, 1st Timothy, Philemon, Hebrews, Jude, and Revelation.

Reference:	Key quotations proving all true disciples are saints:
Mat 27:52	many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep, were raised
Acts 9:13	"...how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem
Acts 9:32	he also came down to the saints who dwell in Lydda
Rom 1:7	To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints
1 Cor 1:2	...to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints
1 Cor 5:1	...having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints
2 Cor 1:1	To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in Achaia
Eph 1:1	...to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus
Eph 1:15	...I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints
Phi 1:1	...to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons
Phi 4:21-22	Greet every saint in Christ Jesus... All the saints greet you...
Col 1:2	To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse...
1 Thess 3:13	...the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints
2 Thess 1:10	when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints ...
1 Tim 5:10	...if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work
Phm 1:5	hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints ...
Heb 6:10	...love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints , and do minister
Jude 1:3	...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints
Rev 13:7	It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them...
Rev 14:12	Here is the patience of the saints ; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus
Rev 20:9	They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city.

Figure 133

So, 13 of the epistles of the Final 27 Books, and the Book of Acts make it clear that every obedient disciple of the MESSIAH (who walks after the SPIRIT in righteousness according to the law of GOD written on their hearts and minds) is a saint in the eyes of GOD!

But on the other hand, Scripture warns: **If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?**^a

So, Brothers and Sisters, the truth is: those who hear GOD's word and obey it are the saints who dwell in the light, but those who live in sin and rebellion against GOD's word are the sinners who dwell

^a Hebrews 10:26-29

in the dark. And this is the consistent message presented in the Holy Scriptures, from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation!

Chapter Ten: The MESSIAH our Salvation

In the last chapter of the last book of the Holy Bible, our LORD and Savior identified Himself, and pronounced His holy name that means “Salvation”. And, in the ancient Greek letter transcribed by the Apostle John that we call Revelation (39), our MESSIAH closed by saying: **“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”^a**

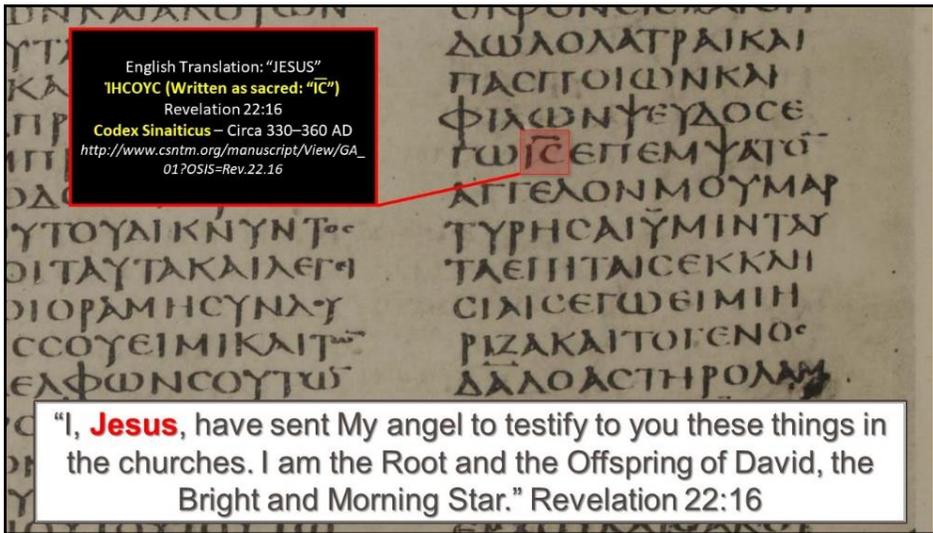


Figure 134

“JESUS” is the English pronunciation of the Greek name “E-a-suce”, and this holy name appears in the Final 27 Books of the Bible 926 times, as the name of our glorious King. But, in the Ancient Septuagint translation of the First 39 Books of the Bible, the same Greek name: “e-a-suce” also appears 230 times.

^a Revelation 22:16

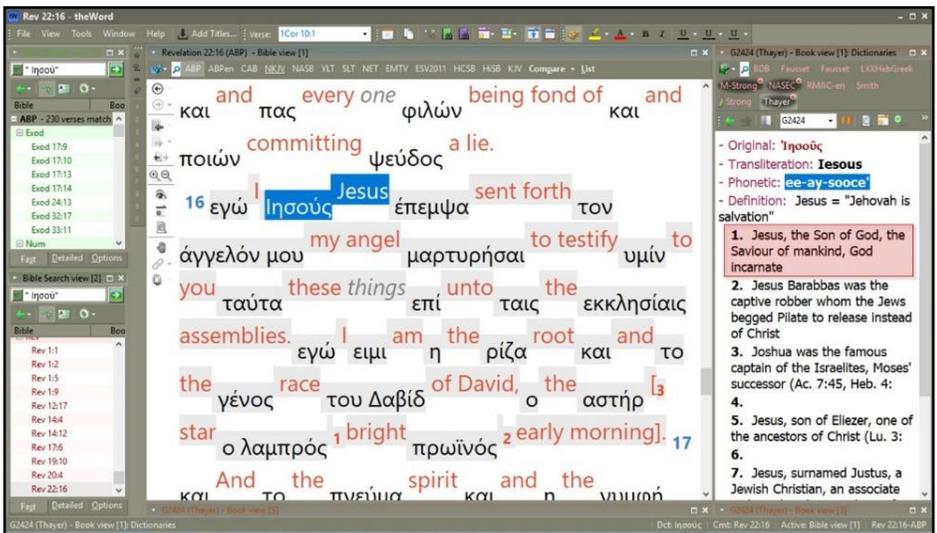


Figure 135

However, unlike the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD, we typically don't think of the name "JESUS" occurring between Exodus and Malachi. And we think differently than the Apostles and Disciples who wrote the Final 27 Books of the Bible because *they* were very well acquainted with the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures that frequently used the name "e-a-suce". Meanwhile, we are used to English translations of the Hebrew Scriptures that typically render the same name "Joshua".

You see, the Hebrew name that we pronounce as "Joshua" in English is: "Yeh-ho-shoo'-ah". And this name means: "YaHWeH saves" or "YaHWeH is salvation". But, primarily after the period of the Babylonian captivity, the Hebrew name "Yeh-ho-shoo'-ah" was shortened to "Yeh-shoo'-ah" which means "He saves" or simply "salvation".

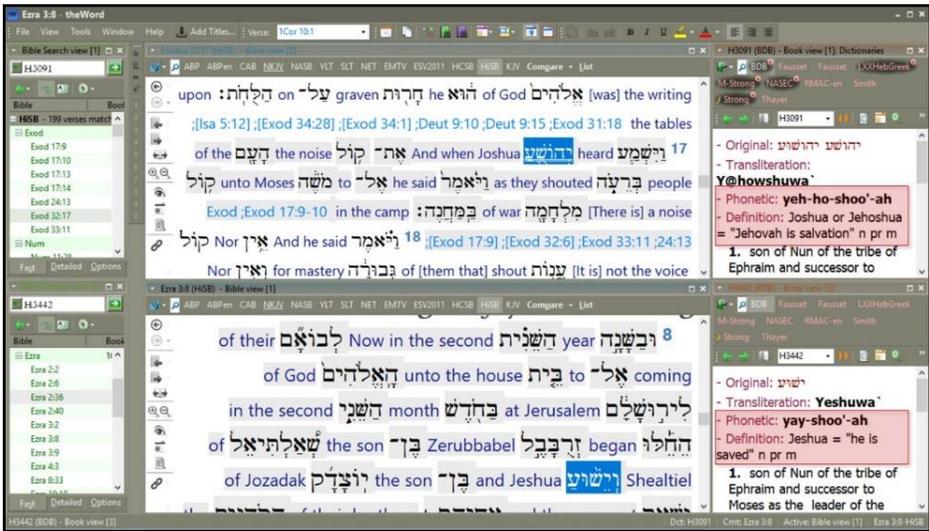


Figure 136

So, a Hebrew-speaking person would call both JESUS and Joshua: “Yeh-ho-shoo'-ah” or “Yeh-shoo'-ah”. While a first-century Greek-speaking person would call both JESUS and Joshua: “E-a-suce”. And the names “Yeh-ho-shoo'-ah” and “Yeh-shoo'-ah” were both translated into the Greek name “E-a-suce” in the ancient Septuagint that JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples relied on; just as the LORD’s name and Joshua’s name were both written as “E-a-suce” in the Final 27 Books of the Bible.

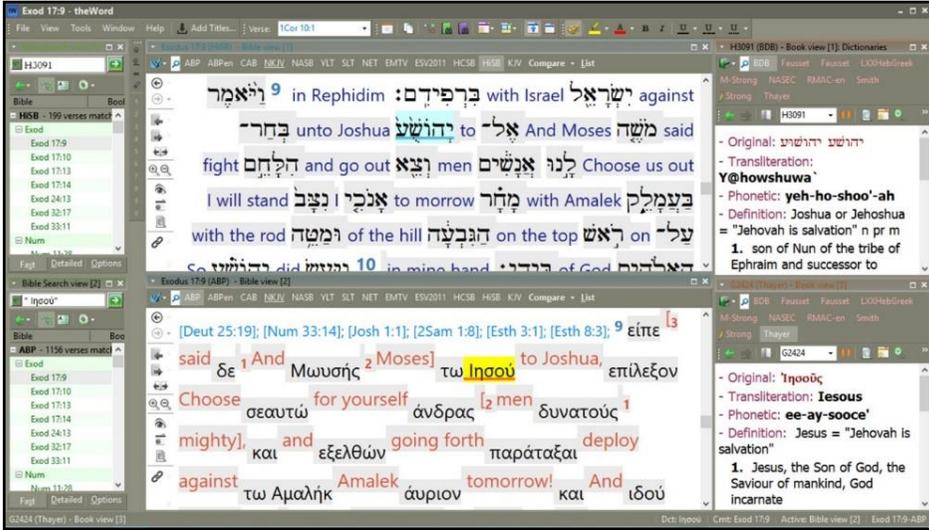


Figure 137

Because all of these names refer to “**salvation**”, when an angel told Joseph about the birth of the MESSIAH, he said: “**Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.**”^a (*Emphasis Added*)

Now, before we discuss the word “save” and how important it is to all of us who follow the MESSIAH (Who was named after that wonderful word), we need to learn about the prepositional phrase that follows it. But if you are like us, many years have passed since we attended school, and you might not remember what a preposition or a prepositional phrase is, right?

Well, according to dailygrammar.com: “*A preposition is a word that begins a prepositional phrase and shows the relationship between its object and another word in the sentence.*” (40) So, in our case, the word “from” is the preposition, and it begins the prepositional phrase “*from their sins*”. And the reason we must pay close attention to this prepositional phrase is: when we talk about the verb “save” or the noun “salvation” we must be very careful to note what exactly people are being saved from!

A fireman can save a person *from* a burning house. A lifeguard can save a person *from* drowning. A cook can save a person *from* going hungry. Or a doctor can save a person *from* a medical problem. And we just listed four very different things people can be saved *from*! So, while the word “salvation” is very important, we must understand exactly what we have been saved *from*!

When a fireman saves a person *from* a burning house, do they stay in the house after they have been saved from it? When a lifeguard saves a person *from* drowning, do they remain in the water they were saved from drowning in? When a cook saves a person *from* hunger, does the person remain in the state of “hungry”? Or, when a doctor saves a person *from* a medical problem does the person have the problem they were saved from any longer?

You see, when we are saved “from” something, we are delivered or set free “from” that thing! And JESUS did not come to save His

^a Matthew 1:20-21

people “in” their sins, He came to save us “from” our sins! So, this means He delivers us “from” sin’s condemnation, influence, and even the slavery that always accompanies sin! And this is why those the Son sets free are free indeed!

But, while we keep the prepositional phrases of salvation in mind, we must also consider the various tenses of the verb “save”. You see, the Bible not only specifically indicates what the LORD saves us “from”, but it also uses the word “save” in three different ways!

For example, in the passage we read a moment ago because the word “save” is preceded by the word “will”, we understand that it is talking about something that *will* happen *in the future*.

And we can see this same future tense is used by our MESSIAH when He said: **“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.”**^a (*Emphasis Added*) Here, the word “will” modifies the verb “save” and indicates that the “saving” will happen in the future. And, in this verse, only those who “endure to the end” will be saved in the future, according to JESUS.

But, just as the words “will” and “shall” indicate the future tense of the word “save”; the words “are being” can also reveal a special temporal tense of the word “save”. For example, Paul wrote: **For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**^b (*Emphasis Added*)

Here the phrase “*are being saved*” reveals a process that began at a point in the past, but continues in the present until sometime in the future. And, even though this temporal tense of the word “save” involves the past and the future; because it uniquely refers to “saving” happening in the present, it is called *the present tense*.

But Paul also used a third tense of the word “save” when he wrote: **But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in**

^a Matthew 10:22

^b 1 Corinthians 1:18

the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.^a (*Emphasis Added*)

Did you notice how the word “save” in this passage has an “ed” at the end? Also, did you notice that the words “will”, “shall”, and “being” were missing? These are all clues that tell us this is the *past tense* form of the word “save”!

So, we have seen the word “save” used in the *future* tense, the *present* tense, and in the *past* tense. And we should be able to recognize the tense of the word “save” at this point from the things we have learned so far. Therefore, we are now ready for a quick test of what we have learned.

Was the word “save” used in the *past* tense, the *future* tense, or the *present* tense when Paul wrote: **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**^b (*Emphasis Added*)

If you said future tense, you are correct! And the bonus question is: what is the prepositional phrase associated with the word “save” in this passage?

If you said: “*from wrath*” you are correct! So, just as our earlier passage mentioned that JESUS came to save His people *from* their sins, this passage explains that JESUS saves us *from* wrath also!

But, based on the tense of the verb “save”, has JESUS saved us from wrath *in the past*, is He saving us from wrath *in the present*, or will he save us from wrath *in the future*?

If you said: “in the future” you are correct! Because the verb “save”

^a Ephesians 2:4-10

^b Romans 5:8-9

was written in the future tense. So, you can see there is more to the word “save” than many people think! And we must carefully consider what Scripture explains we are being saved *from*, and *when* that salvation occurs in time!

Now that we understand how to spot the verb tenses of the word save as well as the prepositional phrases that tell us what we are being saved from; we need to learn about the *conditional phrases* that apply to salvation. And we will begin by noting: you can most commonly spot a conditional phrase by the word “*if*”.

For example: “*If* you don’t obey the laws that govern traffic, you will eventually experience an accident or a ticket.”

The word “if” in that sentence indicates that there is a *condition* that will eventually cause you to experience something. But “if” you don’t meet that condition, you lessen or eliminate the probability of you experiencing that result. So, please consider how important the word “if” is in the following passage.

Paul wrote: **Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are being saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.^a (*Emphasis Added*)**

Paul was declaring “*again*” the Gospel that he had already preached in the past to the church in Corinth. And he mentions that when he preached it to them in the past, they received it at that time. Plus, because they received it, they *were standing* in it even as Paul wrote to them. But then, after Paul used the present tense of the word saved, which speaks of *ongoing continuous salvation*, he later followed it with a conditional statement.

So, he acknowledged that they received the gospel in the past. He acknowledged that they were standing in the gospel in the present. And he acknowledged that they were *being saved* by the gospel in the present. But then Paul added a conditional phrase that indicated their “*being saved*” *required* them to hold fast to the word that He preached to them! Plus, the Apostle made it clear that *if* they did

^a 1 Corinthians 15:1-2

not hold fast to the gospel, they would have “**believed in vain**”.

The truth is that our LORD’s Apostles and Disciples did not teach that salvation was an event that happened exclusively in their past! Instead, they taught that salvation was a road or a “Way”. And, because they considered salvation through JESUS to be like a path, a road, or a *Way*, they called themselves members of “*the Way*”!

For example, Paul said: “**But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.**”^a

Over and over the followers of JESUS identified themselves as members of *the Way*. And, because a person must continue on a road if they wish to reach their destination, they taught that disciples of JESUS must *continue* in the *Way*.

In regards to this, Luke records: **Then news of [a great number of new believers] came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.**^b (*Emphasis Added*)

And Luke mentions a very similar message being preached, when he wrote: **And when [Paul and Barnabas] had preached the gospel to [the city of Derbe] and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”**^c (*Emphasis Added*)

Plus, we have a recorded example of Paul teaching saints this type of message in his letter to the Colossians. In that epistle, he explained: **And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and**

^a Acts 24:14

^b Acts 11:22-23

^c Acts 14:21-22

blameless, and above reproach in His sight– if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard^a. (Emphasis Added)

Once again, we see Paul telling this group of disciples to “continue” in the faith. And he made it clear that their *continuing* was necessary *if* JESUS was to present them holy, blameless, and above reproach in His sight. But Paul did not *only* write these things to churches. He also wrote them to his son in the faith, Timothy.

To his beloved protégée, Paul wrote: **Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.**^b (Emphasis Added)

Apparently, continuing in the faith, continuing with the LORD, and continuing in the doctrine are all synonymous. And JESUS, Paul, and Barnabas made it clear that “continuing” or “enduring” until the end was most certainly a requirement of salvation.

Literally, Paul made it clear that salvation was a destination that we reach in the future *if* we stay on the Way of salvation. And I say this because Paul wrote: **Now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.**^c (Emphasis Added) And: **Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.**^d (Emphasis Added)

The “helmet of salvation” is more specifically “the helmet of the *hope* of salvation”! And Paul wrote about hope: **“Hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”**^e So, Paul makes it clear we have *the hope* of salvation, and Paul taught how the word “hope” makes it clear that we don’t yet have salvation! Instead, we eagerly *wait to obtain*

^a Colossians 1:21-23

^b 1 Timothy 4:16

^c Romans 13:11

^d 1 Thessalonians 5:8-10

^e Romans 8:24-25

salvation through our LORD JESUS CHRIST with perseverance.

But as we wait, Paul exhorts us to action by saying: **Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**^a (*Emphasis Added*)

The Greek word Paul used, that translators have rendered “work out” in English, is made up of two Greek words. The first word “kat-ah” means “down from” or “towards”, and the second word: er-gad'-zom-a- hee means “to work”. So, in all actuality, the Greek word Paul used would be better translated as “**work towards**”. But why would we “*work towards*” that which we already have!

To answer that question, let's see what our beloved brother Peter wrote! He explained: **You... are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**^b Brothers and Sisters, like JESUS, Paul and Peter believed that we had to “**endure to the end to be saved**”!

And Peter wrote about the “goal” or “end” of our faith, saying: **Though now you do not see [JESUS], yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.**^c (*Emphasis Added*)

So, salvation is the final destination on this Way or Road of Salvation we are on in our MESSIAH; just as the Promised Land was the final destination on the Way or Road of the Exodus! And here in Peter's letter, we see the most important prepositional phrase within Scripture in regards to salvation; and that phrase is: “**of your souls**”.

By the blood of JESUS, we *have been saved* from sin's slavery. We have been set free and filled with the HOLY SPIRIT so we can now choose to obey GOD. And, as we walk after the Spirit and crucify the lusts and desires of the flesh, we *are being saved* from sin's condemnation. This path ‘away from sin towards salvation’, eventually leads to the eternal salvation of our souls!

^a Philippians 2:12

^b 1 Peter 1:4-5

^c 1 Peter 1:8-9

But these three stages of salvation have three very distinct names in our English translations of the Holy Scriptures: “justification”, “sanctification”, and “glorification”.

We are justified (or declared righteous and forgiven) by faith in JESUS CHRIST. We are sanctified (or set apart as holy) by walking after the HOLY SPIRIT in obedience to the covenant. And we will be glorified (or resurrected forever in a perfect body that no longer desires to sin) when JESUS returns to gather His saints to Himself!

So, justification should be compared to when the Israelites were set free from slavery in Egypt. Sanctification should be compared to the testing and trials the Israelites faced that strengthened some of them and eliminated many others. And glorification should be compared to how those who kept the faith through the testing crossed the Jordan with Joshua and inherited the promises of GOD!

And with those comparisons in mind, do you think the following passage is speaking of justification, sanctification, or glorification when it mentions our being “saved” or “delivered”?

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.^a

In the passage, Paul used the verb “deliver” in the past tense, by combining it with the word “has”, and the ending “ed”. And when you see the word “saved” or the word “delivered” in passages that indicate the past tense, you can typically assume they are speaking of “justification”.

Just as GOD sent Moses to deliver His people from the power (or authority) of Pharaoh, JESUS came to deliver His people from the power of darkness! And that initial deliverance achieved through the blood of the Passover Lamb is “*justification*” because the blood of the Lamb allowed GOD to pass over our previously committed sins, and declare us “*just*” or “*righteous*”.

But do you think that the verb “save” is being used in this next passage in the context of justification, sanctification, or glorification? And, to answer the question correctly, please try to

^a Colossians 1:13-14

notice the tense of the verb “save” and compare it to the journey of the Israelites in the wilderness.

Our beloved brother Paul wrote: **For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.**^a (*Emphasis Added*)

What was the tense of the verb “save”? If you said “present tense” you are correct! And we know this because Paul added the words “are being” to the word “saved”, which definitely indicates an action that is occurring in the present!

So, if you were an Israelite following GOD from Egypt to the Promised Land but you had not yet crossed the Jordan to inherit the promises, would you use present tense verbs to describe your 40 years of preparation, purification, and testing in the wilderness? Of course! So, in the same way, the present tense of the verb “save” always corresponds to the process of sanctification.

So, while justification was all about GOD forgiving our sins and declaring us righteous through the blood of the Passover Lamb, sanctification is all about us becoming holy and set apart in heart, mind, soul, and spirit by obediently following JESUS through the trials and tribulations of this life.

Plus, because sanctification is the hardest part of our journey, GOD gives us leaders like Moses and Joshua, Peter and Paul, or Timothy and Titus, to *oversee* our journey and guide us in the Way!

Jude was one of those men GOD ordained to oversee His precious flock. And Jude perfectly expressed the heartfelt intentions, thoughts, and deepest concerns every pastor should have for the MESSIAH’s flock in his letter written somewhere between A.D. 60 and 80.

Jude wanted to write a joy-filled, exultant, uplifting letter that overflowed with good things about the salvation we are all pursuing in JESUS our MESSIAH; but because of the false teaching of his time, his letter had to be more about correcting error and warning

^a 2 Corinthians 2:15-16

people to hold fast to the truth of GOD's Word.

And with this in mind, we see our brother Jude wrote: **Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.^a**

Brothers and Sisters, we wanted to write a message to you today that exalted our glorious MESSIAH with great swelling words of poetic truth! We wanted to glorify His holy name, and declare the many-faceted wonders of this great salvation He has purchased for us with His precious blood!

But because certain ungodly men have crept into the Church, and turned the grace of our GOD into unbridled lawlessness, we are forced to remind GOD's people: that "after saving" the people out of the land of Egypt, later ***GOD Himself*** destroyed those who did not faithfully keep His covenant!

Friends, what Jude is saying here is that a person can be justified by the blood of JESUS CHRIST, and *saved* in the past tense; but refuse to faithfully follow the HOLY SPIRIT in obedience to the covenant! And sadly, that person will not inherit the promises of glorification! Or in other words, "Once Saved Always Saved" or "Eternal Security" is a lie from the twisted mind of satan!

That is why Paul warned: **Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.**

^a Jude 1:3-5

But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”

Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.^a

Scripture warns that false teachers and ungodly men have turned the grace of our LORD into unbridled lawlessness! But friends, they did it by twisting the picture the Church has of our salvation in the MESSIAH! That is why Paul speaks of the Exodus here, Hebrews discusses it in chapters 3 and 4, and Jude mentioned it in *his* short letter!

Meanwhile, deceived teachers mislead others by teaching that once we “say a prayer” or “walk an aisle” we are guaranteed eternal salvation! But that is the same as saying that once an Israelite left Egypt they were guaranteed entry into the Promised Land! And the only way that those false teachers can get away with twisting our understanding of salvation is by ignoring these passages that clearly compare our journey with JESUS to the journey of the Israelites with Moses!

People often say: “hindsight is 20-20”; and friends, that is why GOD did not just give us the Final 27 Books of the Holy Bible! He gave us the First 39 inspired, infallible, authoritative Books to teach us how to understand the Final 27!

And more importantly, the Apostle Paul taught that GOD gave us the Exodus as a type or pattern for us to consult when we consider our great salvation! Therefore, let him who thinks he stands, take

^a 1 Corinthians 10:1-12

heed lest he fall!

Imagine that your eternal destiny was to be determined by your completing a marathon. The time it took to finish the course would not matter, but you did need to endure to the end of the race with the help of your trainer, to inherit eternal life.

But then imagine that satan convinced you that everyone who entered the race at the starting line would be automatically counted as completing the race. Would you still “run the race set before you” if you believed that lie?

Godly men like Jude and Paul want us all to understand, we must run the race to the finish line! GOD is faithful! The SPIRIT will lead us and empower us to run if we willingly follow Him! And JESUS paid our entrance fee, so (by His grace) we could leave the slavery of sin behind us and follow Him in the Way! But if false teaching convinces us that there is no race, only a starting line, how will we ever make it to the finish line?

If the holy Apostles and Disciples of our LORD (who wrote the Bible, and declared all we will ever know on this side of eternity about salvation) were here, all of them would say: **we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and perseverance inherit the promises.^a**

And because they *all* thought that way about *their* own salvation, it was only at the very end of Paul’s life that he wrote: **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.^b (*Emphasis Added*)**

And this brings us to the final and most anticipated stage of our wonderful salvation in and through JESUS our MESSIAH, and that is glorification!

^a Hebrews 6:11-12

^b 2 Timothy 4:7-8

While justification was how we were declared “just” or “righteous” through the blood of JESUS, and sanctification is how we are being “sanctified”, “set apart”, or “made holy” by faithfully following the HOLY SPIRIT in obedience to the Word of GOD; glorification will occur when we are transformed to forever be just like our glorious Savior JESUS!

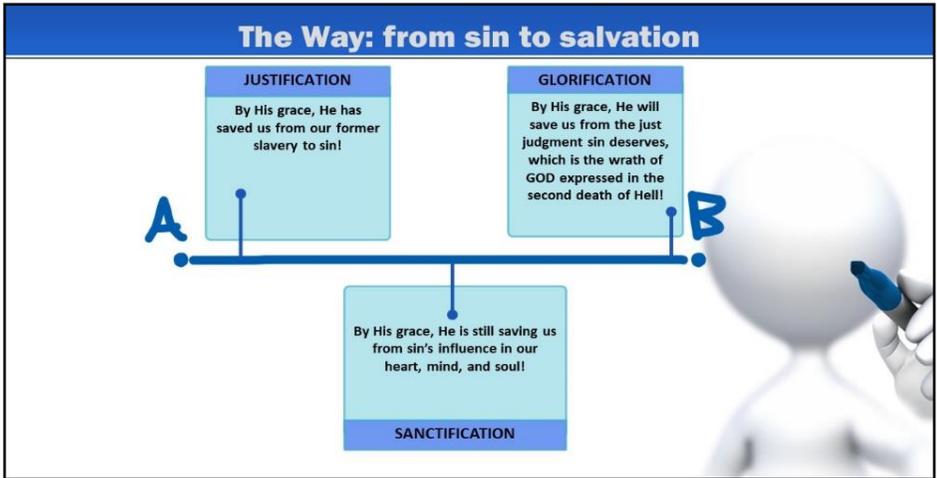


Figure 138

Truly: **Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.^a**

So, the truth about the MESSIAH our Salvation is: by His grace, He has saved us from our former slavery to sin! By His grace, He is still saving us from sin's influence in our heart, mind, and soul! And: by His grace, He will save us from the just judgment sin deserves, which is the wrath of GOD expressed in the second death of Hell!

But we can never understand our salvation in and through JESUS CHRIST until we listen to all that the Scripture has to say about salvation, from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation!

^a Philippians 3:20-21

Chapter Eleven: The MESSIAH and the Gospel

What is the best news you have ever heard? Husbands: was it the answer “yes” when you asked your wife to marry you? Wives: was it when he finally asked you to marry him? Parents: was it when the doctor told you that you had a healthy baby boy or girl? Was your “best news” heard on the day that you found out that your loved one was coming home from a war overseas?

Life is full of new information, and some of that news is bad news and some of that news is good news. But typically, we judge how important news is to us, based on our desires, needs, culture, and perspectives about life.

In American culture, things like marriage proposals, financial windfalls, getting accepted to a well-respected university, or landing the ideal job are often what people consider to be wonderful news. But in a Biblical culture like the Judaism of the first century, there was one piece of news that superseded all others. And that good news was all about their long-awaited MESSIAH!

Throughout history, every descendant of Jacob (who was obediently raised according to the Bible) was taught that GOD was going to send a Deliverer to rescue His people. They knew He would save them and usher in a golden age of peace and righteousness. And this Deliverer that we know as “the MESSIAH” was foreshadowed by every great leader the Bible lists in its holy pages.

The word “MESSIAH” comes from the Hebrew word: “maw-shee'-akh”, and this word simply means: “the anointed one”. But those who spoke the ancient language of Koine Greek would later translate that Hebrew word into Greek as “khris-tos'”, which we pronounce as “CHRIST” in English. So, the words: “maw-shee'-akh”, “MESSIAH”, “khris-tos'”, and “CHRIST” are all synonymous; and they all simply mean “the Anointed One”.

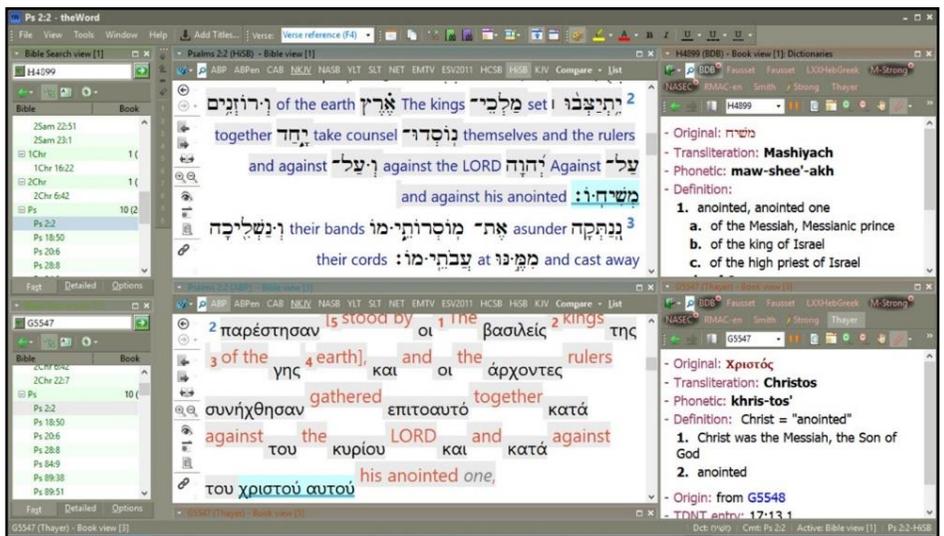


Figure 139

In Scripture, when GOD chose a king or appointed a priest, He would have their head anointed with oil at the time they were appointed, to signify that a particular person was now His chosen leader. Then, once they were installed in the position they were anointed to fill, all GOD's people knew they should follow GOD's anointed leaders obediently. But all of Israel's anointed leaders were prophetically pointing forward to the long-awaited, true MESSIAH, Who would bring restoration, truth, peace, and justice to the world.

About the coming MESSIAH, Moses informed the people: **“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear”^a.**

Then Moses explained how he knew this was going to happen, by saying: **“The Lord said to me, ‘...I will raise up to them a Prophet from among their brethren, like you; and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them as I shall command Him. And whoever shall not hearken to all the words that the Prophet shall speak in My name, I will take vengeance on him.’ ”^b**

^a Deuteronomy 18:15

^b Deuteronomy 18:17-19

Through this passage, the LORD promised to raise up a Prophet similar to Moses who would speak in the name of the LORD, to instruct the people in the will of GOD. So, the people were waiting for an anointed Prophet who spoke with the same authority that Moses was given.

But as they waited, they needed an intermediary priest who would atone for their sins and approach GOD on their behalf. So, the LORD gave them a high priest in the brother of Moses named Aaron. And He instructed: **‘He who is the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes; ‘nor shall he go near any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or his mother; ‘nor shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD.’^a**

So, for many years, GOD directly led the Israelites. As their King, He anointed “prophets” like Moses to declare His words; and these prophets were sometimes called “Judges”. Plus, GOD also anointed “high priests” that were directly descended from Aaron, to cleanse the people and intercede for them. But during the time of Samuel (the prophet and judge), the people rejected GOD as their King. Instead, they requested a human king, like the human kings that the other nations around them relied on.

After giving them the disobedient, human-fearing king they deserved (named Saul), Samuel warned: **“If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. “However, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers.”^b**

This passage makes it undeniably obvious that when GOD’s people obey His commandments, He will set a righteous leader over them and protect them from their enemies. But, when they rebel against

^a Leviticus 21:10-13a

^b 1 Samuel 12:14-15

His commandments, their leaders will also become corrupt, and their enemies will have victory over them.

This is why Psalm 125 states: **The scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous reach out their hands to iniquity. Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts. As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, The LORD shall lead them away with the workers of iniquity. Peace be upon Israel!**^a

So, the Bible is clear: true and lasting peace comes from turning away from iniquity towards GOD and His righteous ways! But because GOD wanted to foreshadow His Son's coming earthly kingdom, He graciously appointed a second King in Israel; a GOD-fearing king named David.

Meanwhile, before David was anointed, through His prophet Samuel, GOD told Israel's first king: **"You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you. For the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, but now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."**^b

Just like Saul, *if* mankind would have kept GOD's commandments and obeyed His Word, a Messianic deliverer would not have been necessary! But because we descendants of Adam so often foolishly rebel against the Word of the LORD and turn to the power of satan and sin, we have historically needed: *prophets* to call us to repentance and obedience to GOD, *priests* to intercede for us and atone for our sins before GOD, and ultimately a *King* to rule with the righteous rod of iron that is GOD's law; a scepter that cannot be bent or broken.

In history, David imperfectly foreshadowed that priestly, prophetic, King who would follow GOD's will perfectly. So, GOD made a

^a Psalms 125:3-5

^b 1 Samuel 13:13-14

covenant with David that the long-awaited MESSIAH would be born into his family. GOD told David, his Son would sit on the throne forever and ever! And for this reason, Israel knew that the MESSIAH would be a descendant of David, He would reestablish the house of David, and He would eventually sit on Israel's throne. But the prophets also spoke of the coming MESSIAH as a high priest who would offer up *Himself* to atone for the sins of His people.

For example, Isaiah said: **He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ...For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.**^a

David himself prophesied about the MESSIAH: **Dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots. But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me!**^b

So, the coming "Anointed One" (or MESSIAH, or CHRIST) was to suffer as an atonement for sin as their ultimate *High Priest*, He was to prophetically teach the people about GOD's Law like Moses, and He was also to sit as King (on the throne of His father David) to restore the kingdom to Israel. But there was no way these three very different portraits of the coming MESSIAH could be fulfilled at the same time. Somehow, they had to be fulfilled in a specific order.

Ignoring this fact, many people in Israel in the first century chose to exclusively look for a triumphant *King* to deliver them from the Romans. So, because they desired political deliverance more than anything else, the people were not looking for the MESSIAH to come as their ultimate *Prophet* and *Priest*.

^a Isaiah 53:5-8

^b Psalms 22:16-19

Sadly, they didn't see that Roman occupation was not the worst problem they were facing. They were oblivious to their slavery to sin^a, their need for a Prophet to lead them out of that deadly slavery^b, and their need for an eternal High Priest Who could open the way into the Holy of Holies through His own blood^c. Thus, many of Jacob's descendants did not recognize their MESSIAH, which led to the heir to David's throne facing crucifixion at the hands of Israel's religious leaders.

Yet all of this perfectly fulfilled the pattern the angel Gabriel prophesied about the MESSIAH, by saying: **“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.”**^d

The word translated as “week” in this passage is the Hebrew word: “shaw-boo'-ah”, and it literally means “a period of seven”. But “shaw-boo'-ah” does not necessarily mean a period of seven days; especially since, in this passage, it is referring to a period of seven years.

So, counting from the command to restore and build Jerusalem until the MESSIAH, Gabriel indicated that there would be 7 “periods of seven” and 62 “periods of seven”, totaling 69 periods of seven years, or 483 years.

And Dr. Floyd Nolan Jones uses several ancient sources and the Bible itself to confirm the long-celebrated conclusions of Bishop James Usher, in his book *“Chronology of the Old Testament”*. There he proved that the year of the decree to restore Jerusalem occurred in 454 BC, during the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes

^a John 8:34-59

^b Matthew 5:27-32

^c Hebrews 8:1-2

^d Daniel 9:25-26

Longimanus I.

So, if we move 483 years into the future from the time of that decree, we arrive at 30 A.D., the year that JESUS of Nazareth rode a donkey into Jerusalem, while the people shouted: **“Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of The LORD; Hosanna in the highest!”**.^a

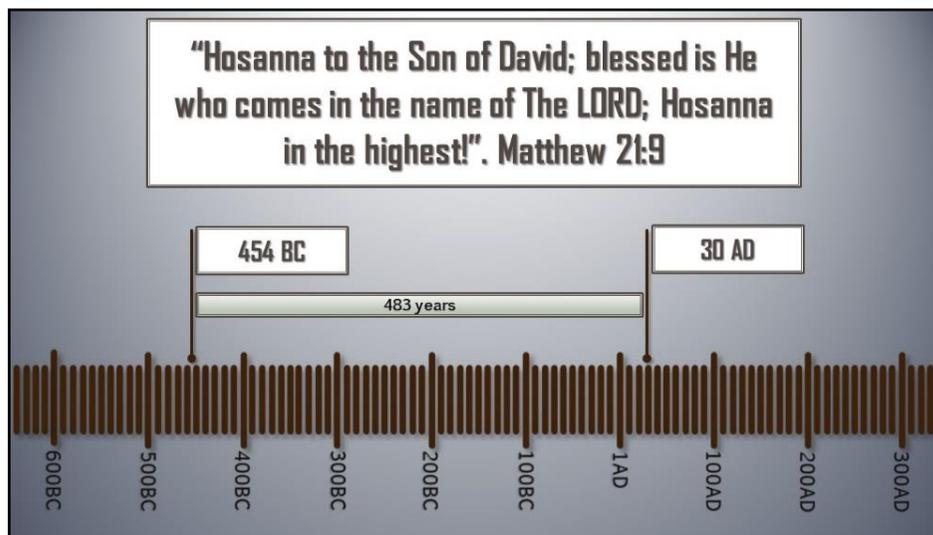


Figure 140

MESSIAH the Prince had come, just as it was foretold! And the Prophecy in Daniel included another very important detail! Gabriel said that the MESSIAH would be cut off, or killed; but not for Himself. And JESUS died on the Cross for our sins 483 years after Artaxerxes sent Nehemiah to lead the rebuilding of Jerusalem, to perfectly fulfill that prophecy!

Plus, exactly forty years after the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of JESUS, Titus destroyed the city and the sanctuary, just as Gabriel had prophesied to Daniel. So, if the MESSIAH had not come before 70 A.D., He never could have fulfilled this very specific prophecy!

But this is even more staggering when we consider that there were hundreds of other Messianic prophecies fulfilled by JESUS, like being born in Bethlehem, opening the eyes of the blind, being

^a Matthew 21:9

betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, having His hands and feet pierced, having people cast lots for His clothing, being buried in a rich man's tomb, and hundreds more! So, we can see why many people in Israel called JESUS "the CHRIST" or "MESSIAH"! The whole Bible was pointing to JESUS, in nearly every book!

Scholars have calculated that JESUS fulfilled at least 353 very specific prophecies that were all given hundreds of years before He arrived. And because He was the only one in history to ever fulfill all of those individual prophecies, let alone just 8 of them, His disciples in the first century recognized Him as the MESSIAH; the promised Prophet, Priest, and King of Israel!

About this, Matthew records: **"When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."**^a

And Matthew adds: **"Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ"**^b until after He accomplished His work in Jerusalem when He died for the sins of the world.

So, from the prophecies about the MESSIAH given beforehand in the Scriptures to the MESSIAH's arrival in the first century, to His death, burial, and resurrection that fulfilled so many of those very precise prophecies, the Final 27 Books of the Bible record the disciples of JESUS spreading the good news that the MESSIAH had come to save Israel (and even the Gentiles) from their sins!

But in our English Bibles, translators typically use a different word to refer to the ultimate good news that the MESSIAH has come to save us from our sins! And the word they have used for hundreds of years is the English word: "Gospel".

^a Matthew 16:13-17

^b Matthew 16:20

So, long before people associated the word “gospel” with a certain style of music, or “the gospel truth”, the word “gospel” was used in old English to translate the Latin word “e-van-gel-ium” as well as the Greek word: “yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on”. Meanwhile, all of these words literally mean: “good news”.

And, because of the many prophecies surrounding the coming of the MESSIAH in the First 39 Books and the fulfillment of many of those prophecies in the first century, the Gospel must always focus on the most anticipated “good news” in history: JESUS the CHRIST or MESSIAH! In fact, a gospel that is not focused on the good news of JESUS as our Deliverer, Redeemer, and King is a different, *and very dangerous gospel*, that we must passionately condemn.

About this, Paul wrote: **I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.**^a

The Greek word Paul used here twice (which is translated as “accursed”) is: “an-ath'-em-ah”. And Paul’s use of this word means that Scripture itself curses all those who would pervert the good news about salvation in and through JESUS the MESSIAH. So, because GOD’s Word curses those individuals, we must also mark and avoid them, to prevent their messages from spreading like cancer in GOD’s true Church!

But this leads to the natural question: “*What is the true Gospel according to the Bible?*”. And, as always, the answer is found in the writings of the Apostles and Disciples of JESUS CHRIST!

Paul wrote: **Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For**

^a Galatians 1:6-9

I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.^a

Even though we have heard some very confused false teachers contradict this easy-to-understand proclamation, we can say that Paul's words here incontrovertibly prove that the true gospel *must* focus on the MESSIAH's atoning for our sins through His death, along with His burial and His resurrection. And the good news should include the fact that there were many first Century witnesses of His death, burial, and resurrection; so those incredibly important prophetically announced events are undeniable.

We say that those events surrounding the death, burial, and resurrection of JESUS are undeniable because the first-hand, persecuted eye-witnesses to those events very commonly suffered and died without recanting a single word of their testimony! Not to mention that many secular, non-Christian historical sources, like Thallus, Josephus, Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Suetonius, Lucian of Samosata, Galen, Celsus, and parts of the Talmud testify to the same events.

Plus, just like Paul, Peter confirmed that JESUS is the focal point of the Gospel when he said: **“Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”^b** And Luke records exactly what “the Gospel” was, that Peter preached to the Gentiles that day.

He writes: **And Peter, opening his mouth, said: "In truth I**

^a 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

^b Acts 15:6-9

comprehend that God is not One to show partiality. But in every nation, he that fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. The word which God sent to the sons of Israel, preaching the good news of peace through Jesus Christ--He being Lord of all-- you know, the word coming to be throughout all of Judea, and beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John proclaimed, Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all those who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him.

And we are witnesses of all things which He did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they also killed by hanging on a tree. This Jesus God raised on the third day, and granted Him to become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses, who having been chosen beforehand by God, even to us, who ate together and drank together with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to proclaim to the people, and to testify solemnly that He is the One having been appointed by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.

To Him all the prophets bear witness, that through His name, everyone believing in Him shall receive forgiveness of sins." While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those hearing the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astounded, as many as had come with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speaking in tongues and magnifying God. Then Peter answered, Surely no one can forbid water, can he, that these should not be baptized who received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay for some days.^a

So, what message did Cornelius and his household believe to receive the HOLY SPIRIT? Peter told them about *the good news* (or Gospel) of peace through JESUS CHRIST, declaring that JESUS was crucified, buried, and resurrected on the third day; later to be seen by many witnesses. And that those who believe in Him

^a Acts 10:34-48 CAB

as LORD shall all receive forgiveness of sins.

And, in this particular gospel message, Peter also mentioned: **“God is not One to show partiality. But in every nation, he that fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him”**. And this reminds us of another instance where the Bible explains what the true Gospel includes.

You see in Revelation, John wrote: **Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”**^a

The everlasting Gospel must always include the fear of the LORD, and any gospel that leads people away from the fear of the LORD is a false gospel. Therefore, those who preach such a false gospel will be forever accursed!

Truly, the Gospel must include the fear of the LORD, and it must focus on JESUS as Redeemer, LORD, and Judge of all; but what about the prepositional phrases that so frequently accompany the word “Gospel” in our Bibles?

The Scriptures speak of: “the gospel of the kingdom”, “the gospel of JESUS CHRIST”, “the gospel of the grace of GOD”, “the gospel of GOD”, “the gospel of CHRIST”, “the gospel of peace”, “the gospel of the glory of CHRIST”, “the gospel of your salvation”, and “the gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST”. Well, those who tend to divide up, and segment the word of GOD are fond of claiming that these are all separate Gospels.

^a Revelation 14:6-7

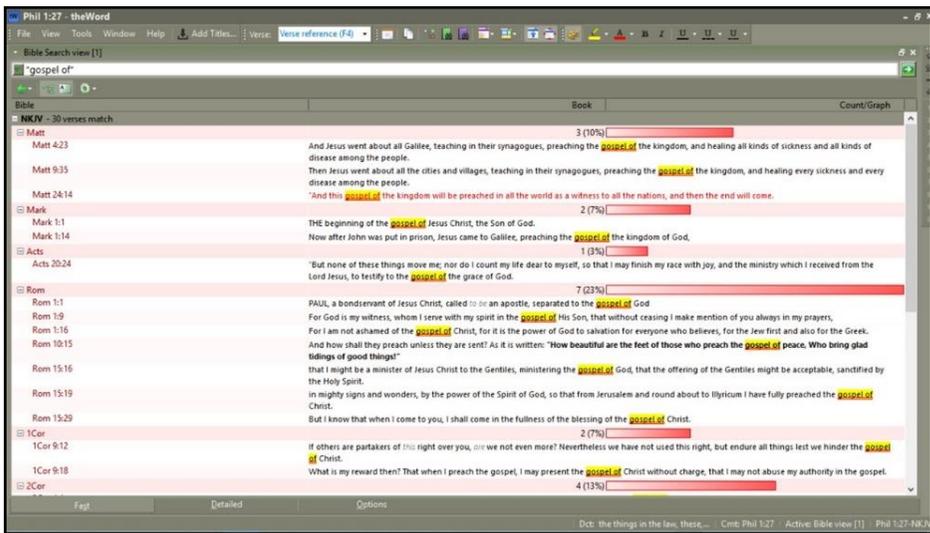


Figure 141

They point to Galatians chapter 2 verse 7, where Paul wrote: **“...they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised was to Peter^a; and they say: “See! Paul wrote that there were two Gospels!”**. But here are at least four major problems with that claim.

First, did you notice the words “the gospel” are written in italics here? That means that Paul did not use the words “*the*” or “*gospel*” twice. Only *once* did Paul write “the gospel” in this passage; and the word “the” is a definite article meaning Paul only had one “gospel” in mind!

So, when translators put two identical “*the gospel*” phrases in this passage, they deceptively indicate that Paul had two separate gospels in mind. But we saw already, Paul and Peter’s Gospels were identical!

So, what Paul *really* wrote in Galatians chapter 2 verse 7 was: **“...But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel (to the uncircumcised) just as Peter had been (to the circumcised)...”^b**. So, Paul was not saying that Peter preached a different gospel, he was only parenthetically speaking

^a Galatians 2:7

^b Galatians 2:7 (New American Standard Bible translation wording, punctuation modified for clarity)

of the audiences *the same gospel* was preached to!

Remember, Paul said: **But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.**^a (*Emphasis Added*)

Therefore, *if* Peter preached a different Gospel than Paul, then Paul cursed the Apostle Peter in the Bible!!!

No! Peter and Paul preached the *same* Gospel! And contrary to the false doctrine that many have been taught, Peter's gospel was just as much a gospel of grace as Paul's!

Yes, Peter said: **“We [Jews] or [circumcised men] believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as the [Gentiles] or [uncircumcised men]”**.^b

So, we have seen that Paul never indicated that there were two different gospels! He used a definite article to describe the singular gospel that both he and Peter preached. Plus, Paul cursed anyone who preached a different Gospel than the one he taught!

And here is one more reason we can be sure that there is only one true Gospel! Our MESSIAH said: **“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.”**^c And: **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”**^d

Please notice: JESUS did not say: Go and preach “the gospel of the kingdom”, or “the gospel of grace” to every creature! He simply said: **“go and preach the gospel”**, and **“whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's sake, will save it”**. He used the definite article “the”, like Paul did, and He assumed that there was

^a Galatians 1:8-9

^b Acts 15:11 (The bracketed words are supported by the context as insertable where pronouns are located)

^c Mark 8:35

^d Mark 16:15

only one gospel to ‘lose your life over’ or ‘preach’!

So, instead of dividing up the Bible into little sections that don’t add up into a single uniform picture, we should think to ourselves: “What have we learned about the MESSIAH’s Theology (that His Apostles and Disciples frequently repeated), that can fit all the different prepositional phrases and passages that mention the Gospel together into one big, harmonious picture?”

The answer is, the Exodus of the children of Israel and the Feasts of the LORD (that GOD gave to them (and us) to understand our Salvation in and through His Son by)!

And this conclusion is irrefutably confirmed, when (in Hebrews chapter 4) in the context of the Exodus, it is written: “**indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it**”.^a

To truly understand the Gospel, we must understand its connections to the Exodus! And this is why Paul speaks about the Exodus after saying: **Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea...**^b

Yes, in a very similar way, Jude speaks of the Exodus by saying: **I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.**^c

Scripture does not want us to be *unaware* of the Exodus! No, the HOLY SPIRIT wants to remind us of what GOD’s people all once knew and understood! And the fact of the matter is: no one can fully understand the true GOSPEL until they understand how it is forever connected to the Exodus of the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land!

We were once slaves of sin, but by GOD’s grace, He sent His Son JESUS CHRIST to die on the cross on the very day the *Passover*

^a See Hebrews 4:1-11

^b 1 Corinthians 10:1

^c Jude 1:5

lambs were killed.

Through His blood we have forgiveness of sins, so GOD can *pass* over the sins we previously committed and set us free from sin's dominion over us!

Then, after our MESSIAH died, He was buried in the earth just as the first day of *the Feast of Unleavened Bread* approached. And when we are baptized in repentance from our sins, we die to sin as we are buried with our MESSIAH!

So, the feast of Unleavened Bread reminds us to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness and live as unleavened bread in this world, full of sincerity and truth.

Then, on the day after the weekly Sabbath that follows the first day of Unleavened Bread, the *Firstfruits* of the Resurrection (JESUS our KING), rose from the grave, three days after He was buried!

And His resurrection declares: "if we die to sin with Him, we will live forever with Him" in a better "Promised Land" with no more death, no more sin, and no more pain!

Within these three Holy Days (known collectively as "the Spring Feast Days" or "the Feast of Unleavened Bread") our *justification* in the MESSIAH is perfectly explained! And the Gospel of Grace is the message of these eternal Spring Feast celebrations!

But next comes the central Feast Day on the LORD's annual calendar, and this very well-known celebration is called "*Pentecost*"!

Just as GOD gave Israel the Covenant at Mount Sinai at Pentecost in the First Covenant, He fulfilled the promise of the New Covenant at Pentecost when He sent the HOLY SPIRIT to write the Commandments of the Covenant on the hearts and minds of His people!

And the pivotal summer Feast of Pentecost (that pictures the process of *sanctification*) reminds us that we must continuously put to death the lusts of the flesh, as we follow the SPIRIT in *obedience* to the Covenant if we are to inherit the *promises* of the Covenant!

However, if we instead choose to walk after the flesh, and ignore

the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT and the Word of GOD, we will perish in the flames with the rest of the sinners who reject GOD's grace, mercy, and empowerment.

Then, after the long period between the early Summer and later Fall Feast Days, the return of the MESSIAH is announced by the first Fall holy Day, known as *the Day of Trumpets!* And one day soon, in the rapidly approaching future, JESUS will return at the sounding of the last trumpet, and we will be changed in the twinkling of an eye!

At that first resurrection, those who are CHRIST's at His coming will be prepared as a bride to be "at one" with her husband forever, while those above the age of accountable decisions who rejected Him as their Savior and LORD will be destroyed. And the Church will be "at one" with Her MESSIAH on the Feast Day known as *the Day of Atonement.*

Then, once the earth is cleansed, the final and most joyous feast arrives: *The Feast of Tabernacles!* And during this celebration, we remember that the MESSIAH will tabernacle forever and ever in His glorious kingdom, with His submissive, obedient Church!

So, the Feasts of the LORD are synonymous with the Gospel of the MESSIAH, the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of JESUS CHRIST, the gospel of the grace of GOD, the gospel of GOD, the gospel of CHRIST, the gospel of peace, the gospel of the glory of CHRIST, the gospel of your salvation, and the gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! And this is the consistent and complete gospel message declared in GOD's Word, from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation!

Chapter Twelve: The MESSIAH and Biblical Baptism

Over the years, we have been asked several times, why (in general) we do not hold “*altar calls*” after each service. And this chapter is a perfect opportunity to answer that question since we will specifically be talking about the Biblical practice “the altar call” is competing with!

The practice of inviting repentant sinners to come forward to the church altar (especially after preaching an evangelistic sermon) began in the 1800s. And many people credit the Presbyterian minister Charles Finney with the popularization of this relatively new practice.

Finney once explained that he believed the altar call was “necessary to bring sinners out from among the mass of the ungodly, to a public renunciation of their sinful ways.” He felt that raising a hand or standing up in the audience was not a bold enough commitment to JESUS CHRIST, so a more challenging and uncomfortable public profession of repentance should be encouraged.

While we can be sure that GOD has used altar calls to help many sinners come to repentance and life in JESUS CHRIST, we should note that GOD also used the sinful actions of Joseph’s jealous brothers, to bring Joseph to Egypt at just the right time in History.

And that comparison should help us see: the outcome of Joseph wisely administering Egypt through a very difficult famine did not justify the sinful actions of his brothers! This is because, in GOD’s Kingdom, the end *never* justifies the means! And this is a very, very important Biblical principle to remember!

For example: because of the sacrificial death of JESUS CHRIST, millions of people have been redeemed to GOD, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. But this most amazing end does not justify the wicked actions of Judas, who betrayed the LORD with a kiss! And our amazing redemption also does not justify the actions of the religious leaders who wrongfully conspired to murder our LORD!

The fact is: the positive consequences of a particular action never make it righteous or commendable. Instead, we must do the will of GOD in obedience, faith, and love; and leave the consequences in GOD's amazing hands!

So, while evangelistic tools like the altar call may be effective, that does not make them Biblical. And we are deeply committed to doing Biblical things in Biblical ways because we trust that our heavenly Father knows exactly how everything should be done, especially in His Church, and He has given us very clear instructions to follow in faith!

At this point, we have to mention that all of the goals of Charles Finney could have easily been accomplished with one *specific* Biblical practice that JESUS CHRIST actually *commanded* His followers to perform!

JESUS commanded: “**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”^a (*Emphasis Added*)**

You see, *baptism* is the way that we are called to express our spiritual union to the MESSIAH! And as we look in detail today at the beautiful and biblical act of baptism, we will see that it is baptism that very clearly shows we have repented of our sins and decided to obediently follow JESUS CHRIST, as our LORD!

As JESUS said: we are to be *making* “disciples”; which means “devoted students who faithfully follow their Savior and LORD”. We do this first, by *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the HOLY SPIRIT. Then, we must *teach* them to keep all the things that He has commanded!

Just as our Creator (who “*never grows weary*”) rested on the seventh day to give us an eternal example of the Sabbath, our Creator also demonstrated the practice of baptism for us all, when He began His earthly ministry!

^a Matthew 28:19-20

Matthew records this event by writing: **Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”^a**

Please notice, at the LORD’s baptism in the Jordan river, the Father, the Son, and the HOLY SPIRIT were *all* clearly present, and independently represented; and this points forward to the fact that JESUS said we should baptize in *the name* of the Father, the Son, and the HOLY SPIRIT!

Truly, baptism is the first universal, Biblically prescribed, outward act the follower of JESUS CHRIST performs; and it reveals that we are committing to follow in the MESSIAH’s holy footsteps, in obedience to the Father, by the power of the SPIRIT of GOD within us!

Also, it was only *after* JESUS was baptized that Scripture explains: **Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.^b** (*Emphasis Added*)

So, *after* the LORD’s baptism (*when the Holy Spirit descended to Him in bodily form, like a dove*) the SPIRIT not only led JESUS out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, He also filled JESUS with power that was not recorded in the four Gospels until this moment.

Now, about the clear Biblical connection between baptism and the HOLY SPIRIT, at Pentecost, Peter said: **“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the**

^a Matthew 3:13-17

^b Luke 4:14-15

remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”^a (Emphasis Added)

Peter named two specific things people are to do in response to the Gospel; they are to *repent* and *be baptized*. And Peter mentions that if we respond to the gospel in this way, we will receive the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT!

The Bible is clear that faith, repentance, the Gospel, baptism, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit are *very* closely related; so now we need to discuss the definition of the Gospel, to understand why it is so tightly connected with baptism, faith, repentance, and the HOLY SPIRIT in GOD’S Word. So, *first*: let’s look at the Gospel, in the context of Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost.

The Word “Gospel”, simply means “good news”. And Peter gave the Pentecost crowd of Jews and Proselytes the good news, by saying **“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know– “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; “whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”^b**

So, there are three foundational components to the good news in this passage:

- First: that JESUS is the MESSIAH, who was sent by the Father to save His people.
- Second: that the MESSIAH died to redeem us from our sins.
- And third: that the MESSIAH rose from the dead, and He is currently alive and completely victorious over the grave!

These foundational truths: the perfect life, the atoning death, and the victorious resurrection of our MESSIAH, are the unchanging core of the Gospel. But, along with them, many other connected truths flow from these three fundamental pillars.

^a Acts 2:38

^b Acts 2:22-24

In regards to the perfect life of the MESSIAH: we know that He lived a life that was completely submitted to the Father and His Law. And JESUS taught that His disciples must follow Him and His example, to truly be His disciples.

In regards to the atoning death of the MESSIAH: we know that the Scriptures reveal that “*all of us, like sheep, have gone astray*”, and we need the grace and the forgiveness of GOD to stand before Him. So, the Father has generously provided a sacrifice for our sins.

And, in regards to the victorious resurrection of the MESSIAH: we know that if we truly *follow* the MESSIAH and accept the pardon that He purchased for us, we will also be victorious over sin and death through Him, and we will even inherit eternal life in GOD’s Kingdom!

Plus, the Gospel *also* declares that the same *power of GOD* that raised JESUS from the dead will supply us with the strength to live in obedience to GOD whenever we surrender to Him! This is true because we will receive the same glorious HOLY SPIRIT that empowered and resurrected our Eternal King!

However, those who choose *not* to follow the MESSIAH in righteousness, even while rejecting the forgiveness for sins that He has offered through His cross, will not escape from the chains of sin and death. So, instead of a triumphant resurrection to victory, they will eventually face the just and impartial judgment of GOD, which will lead to the fiery condemnation of Hell.

Now, none of these wonderful truths about the Good News of the MESSIAH make any sense at all if we don’t understand GOD’s foundational principles that the whole world will be judged by. And the name of this critical starting point is “the Law”.

GOD’s Holy Law describes the difference between right and wrong, righteousness and wickedness, good and evil, truth and error, and light and darkness! And breaking GOD’s commandments is what we call *sin*. So, the Bible explains (from cover to cover) that sin is the reason that we have suffering and death in this world, and sin is the reason there is a Hell!

But JESUS came to show us how we can have victory over sin, as we follow Him in righteousness and truth! And He even came to die

for our sins, so we could be forgiven, cleansed, and empowered to live within the light of His Word!

So, we need to understand the unchanging truth of the Law of GOD, to understand *why* we were heading for hell without the MESSIAH. And we need to understand the Law of GOD to understand the boundary between good and evil and right and wrong!

Truly, once we decide that we believe JESUS *is* who the Bible says He is, we must choose to either: agree with our Savior that GOD's Law is good and true, or to disagree with Him, by rejecting the righteous commands of GOD's Law.

If we agree with JESUS that the Law of GOD is good and that we should obey it, then we also agree with Him that sin is wrong and we need to turn from it! And the act of turning from sin, to instead obey GOD, is what we call: *repentance*!

Then, when we decide to follow JESUS (who never committed even one little sin), we realize that we are agreeing to turn away from sin to do the opposite; which is to live in obedience towards GOD!

Now, we cannot turn from sin and become righteous and pure, without humbly depending on JESUS, because there is nothing we can do to earn the forgiveness of GOD for our past sins! It would be like a murderer trying to cover up his sin of murder by diligently feeding the poor. Obviously, he is still a murderer; and, according to the law, he is still guilty of murder, no matter how many meals he gives out.

But JESUS offers to clear our record and take the penalty for our sins upon Himself, *if* we agree to repent and follow Him, as His disciple. Because JESUS was completely innocent of all sin, when He willingly laid down His life for us, He made a way for His blood to satisfy the justice of GOD! So, when we turn from our sin to follow JESUS as our Savior, GOD can declare us righteous because of what JESUS, His eternal Son, has done!

But, when a person decides to commit to JESUS completely, the wonderful way that GOD has instructed them to declare that amazing decision is: by baptism! Yes, through the act of baptism, we are publicly committing to becoming obedient disciples of JESUS our MESSIAH, much like a husband and wife mark entering

the covenant of marriage together, with vows and a marriage ceremony.

But, just as no one would choose to marry someone that they did not trust and love, we should not be baptized until we are fully ready to obediently commit to JESUS CHRIST in faith, as His disciple!

About this, the book of Acts records: **Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to (The Ethiopian Eunuch). Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”^a** (*Emphasis Added*)

The Ethiopian Eunuch knew the Scriptures, but when Philip met him, he was trying to understand Isaiah’s prophecies about the MESSIAH! So, Philip explained to him the life, death, and resurrection of JESUS CHRIST in the context of the Law and the Prophets. And, when the Eunuch confessed that he believed Philip’s testimony about JESUS being the MESSIAH, it meant that he was ready to commit to becoming CHRIST’s disciple. And *that* meant he was ready to be baptized!

So, only *after* we understand and believe the good news about the MESSIAH (within the context of the Scriptures) can we be baptized. But, just as simply wearing a ring cannot make a person married; simply being baptized cannot make you a disciple of JESUS CHRIST! You must truly *choose* to become His obedient disciple first, and then baptism is how you outwardly express your sincere commitment to Him!

This is why we only see consenting believers (who have decided to die to sin to follow JESUS) being baptized in the Apostolic Scriptures!

For example, on Pentecost, after Peter explained the good news of the MESSIAH, Luke records: **Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand**

^a Acts 8:35-37

souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.^a (Emphasis Added)

And, as we saw before: baptism was the *beginning* of their journey in the Messiah, not the end of it! After baptism: **“they continued steadfastly in the teachings of the Apostles”** fellowship, prayer, and daily meals together.

In the Bible, we can see that once a person commits to becoming a disciple of JESUS through baptism, they become a part of all the things we associate with the Church, such as the *teaching* and the *fellowship*! And this is why Paul explains: **For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.^b (Emphasis Added)**

So, the body of CHRIST is made up of His willing disciples; people who have been baptized into fellowship with Him and with each other! And because we are all filled with the same glorious HOLY SPIRIT, we have unity and fellowship, regardless of whether we happened to be a Jew or a Greek, or a slave or a free person!

Later, Paul *also* explained that the body of the MESSIAH is what we call the “Church” (which simply means “the called-out assembly”) when he writes: **I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.^c (Emphasis Added)**

So, those who were baptized on Pentecost became part of the Church, the body of CHRIST! And even today, those who are baptized as disciples of JESUS are part of the same local church! But amazingly: all of the MESSIAH’s true disciples (from over the centuries) are part of the singular Body of CHRIST that has historically been called “the Universal Church”.

So, the reality is, that: **There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one**

^a Acts 2:41-42

^b 1 Corinthians 12:13

^c Colossians 1:24

faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.^a And there is one Universal Church that spans over every temporal, cultural, genetic, and geographical boundary; knit together by one amazing HOLY SPIRIT that unifies that assembly as the Body of the Messiah!

And that one Body has the same *hope* of eternal life in the Kingdom of GOD! We were all called by the same *GOD* to holiness and love. We all serve the same *LORD*, JESUS CHRIST our Savior! We all hold to one *faith*, preserved in the Word of GOD. We all began our journey in the Way through *baptism*. And we all are living each day to please one holy *GOD*, Who created each one of us!

So clearly, being baptized into JESUS our MESSIAH makes us a part of something so big, that it is impossible to comprehend at this point how amazing and vast it is!

Astonishingly, our baptism into JESUS CHRIST extends back into the First Covenant also, because Paul wrote: **For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**^b (*Emphasis Added*)

Paul explains that every true disciple who is baptized into CHRIST has put the MESSIAH on like a person puts on a garment! And, in the LORD, all the things that might cause divisions: such as our nationality, our economic status, or our GOD-given gender, no longer divide us, so we can all have perfect unity and become spiritually “*one*” in CHRIST JESUS our LORD!

Therefore, if we are *one* with CHRIST, then we are also grafted into the promises that GOD made to Abraham and his Seed; and we are united to all of the people of GOD, from all of History!

That is why Paul explains: **Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the**

^a Ephesians 4:4-6

^b Galatians 3:27-29

commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.^a

So, now that we understand some of the amazing blessings and promises that we receive when we are spiritually united to JESUS CHRIST in baptism, next we need to understand what the act of baptism symbolizes and how baptism's symbolism points back to the first step in becoming a disciple of JESUS; which is repentance.

And we should remember that we learned that repentance was: the turning away from the broad path of sin so that we could then follow JESUS in the narrow path of righteousness. And this harmoniously agrees with the eternal Law of our GOD!

With that in mind, Paul explains: **What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.^b**

For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that

^a Ephesians 2:11-14

^b Romans 6:1-13

you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.^a

There is no clearer passage in the entire Word of GOD to describe the amazing symbolism of baptism! In the glorious New Covenant that is founded on the blood of our MESSIAH: when we are baptized into His wonderful name, we are being baptized into His death along with Him! And as a perfect sign of our sincere desire to repent of all sin: we die to sin, as we are symbolically *buried* with our Savior!

So, once we understand the awesome symbolism of baptism, and what we are committing to, we can understand why Paul was shocked that some folks who called themselves followers of the MESSIAH thought that they could *continue* to live in sin!

When the Apostles wrote to the churches, their letters assumed that every follower of JESUS was baptized. And the Apostles openly taught that baptism is a clear renunciation of all sin and a symbol of our unification to JESUS CHRIST! So, because every Biblical disciple of JESUS CHRIST has died to sin, we can now live for the will of GOD in righteousness, holiness, and truth!

Truly, when we join JESUS in death (by crucifying our old man of sin) we symbolize that moment with baptism, to picture being *buried with Him*! And, if we have chosen to die to sin with JESUS (and stay dead to sin), then we can be confident that we will also be resurrected (*just as He was*) to eternal life!

By committing to become disciples of JESUS CHRIST through the act of baptism, we are declaring that we will not only *die* to sin in repentance but that we will also *live* in obedience to GOD by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, just as JESUS lived before us!

And our magnificent Messiah did all of this for us so **that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.^b**

^a Romans 6:1-13

^b Romans 8:4

Thus, this brings us to the final thing we must understand about baptism. Do you remember how Peter preached at Pentecost: **“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”**^a

Well, the truth is: Peter told the people to do two things. He told them to “repent” and “be baptized”. But then he said they would *receive* the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT if they obeyed those two commands.

So, when we believe in JESUS CHRIST, repent of our sins, and obey His command to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and HOLY SPIRIT; according to Peter, we receive the indescribable gift of the HOLY SPIRIT! And this is why baptism is so closely associated with the HOLY SPIRIT in the Bible!

But, just as the prophets foretold: we receive the HOLY SPIRIT when we unite ourselves to JESUS CHRIST our LORD; so that the righteous requirement of the Law would be fulfilled in us.

This is why our GOD once promised: **“I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”**^b

Truly, this is the good news that we celebrate through baptism! And, as always, the true Gospel of our MESSIAH is completely consistent with the overarching message of the Bible, from the very first Hebrew word of Genesis to the very last Greek word of Revelation.

^a Acts 2:38

^b Ezekiel 36:27

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