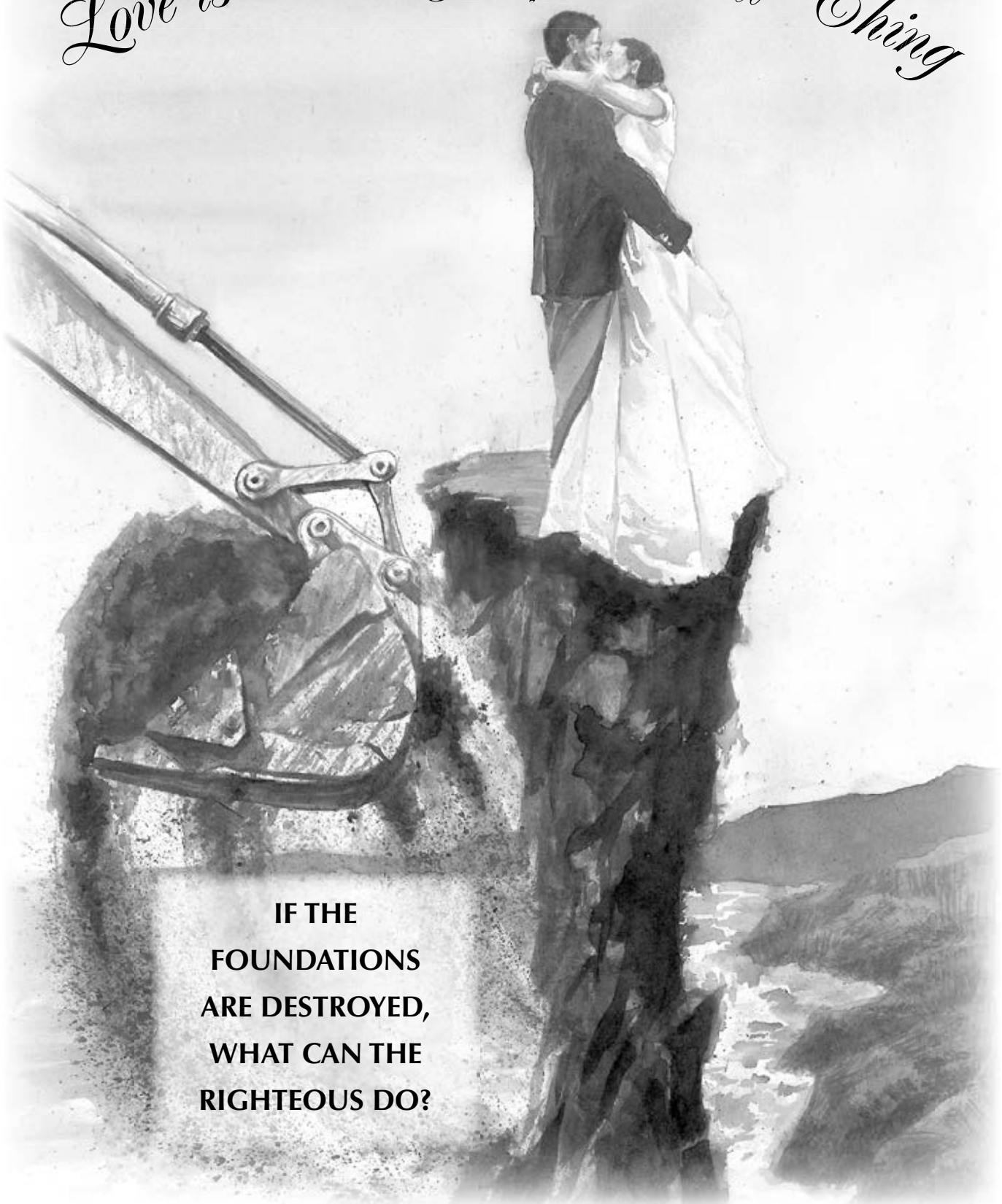


FREE

*Love is a Many Splendored Thing*



IF THE  
FOUNDATIONS  
ARE DESTROYED,  
WHAT CAN THE  
RIGHTEOUS DO?

# *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*

**B**ack in the '50s and the '60s, through the radio waves, could be heard the soothing melody and the romantic lyrics of the song, *Love Is a Many Splendored Thing*. Its poetic lines enunciate the sweetness of love and the purity of the relationship between a man and a woman. What two people, what other duet, but the melodic composition of entwined hearts of a man and a woman could cause an expression such as,

*Once on a high and windy hill,  
In the morning mist two lovers kissed and the world stood still.*

Until this present day, there was never a doubt or even a question, that those two lovers who kissed were a man and a woman. From the very beginning of mankind, the firm footing and the solid foundation for the relationship between men and women was established. It was not meant to be just any old casual relationship but a commitment and a covenant that was eternally sealed in the words,

*"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:23-24)*

For only in a covenant can they ever experience the true communion expressed by,

*Then your fingers touched my silent heart  
And taught it how to sing!*

So, love is not splintered and it is not just splendid, but as God intended, love is a many-splendored thing. *Splendor* is greater than splendid. Splendid is something grand and magnificent, but splendor is a great light of brilliance. The two being one was the beginning of that light which was to increase by being fruitful and multiplying and filling the earth. But since God is love, He wants to fill the earth and the whole universe with His love. Splendor is a great light of brilliance to the whole universe. It is a light of grandeur to shine upon the people of the nations eternally with the great light of His love.

***YES!! TRUE LOVE IS A MANY-SPLENDORED THING!***

# *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*

*Love is a many-splendored thing,  
It's the April rose that only grows, In the early Spring.  
Love is nature's way of giving,  
A reason to be living,  
The golden crown that makes a man a king.  
Once on a high and windy hill,  
In the morning mist two lovers kissed and the world stood still.  
Then your fingers touched my silent heart and taught it how to sing,  
Yes, true love's a many-splendored thing.*

**T** rue love... Is it just a fleeting fantasy, a mirage that evaporates in the harsh realities of life? Is it only a Hollywood hoax to fool us into hoping it could happen to us? If it were real, what would be its substance? How could it endure?

I happened upon a happy woman the other day. She had a certain glory upon her as she brooded over her lively and pleasant children. The deep contentment of a happy marriage and a purposeful life radiated from her. It was not that her life had been easy. By western standards she would be considered poor. Raised in an orphanage after a family tragedy, she had a lot to overcome.

And it was not that her husband was particularly handsome or faultless. He also was from a broken

family and had his own ingrained iniquities. But twelve years and five children into their marriage they are still deeply in love. There is no denying the fact that they have found something precious that has eluded most of humanity.



Their marriage is a duet<sup>1</sup> rather than a duel.<sup>2</sup> It isn't merely the result of an idyllic romance or adherence

to a set of biblical principles, although they were very much in love with one another when they were married, and they did indeed respect the authority and divine inspiration of the Bible. Countless are the failed marriages that have begun with those two valuable but insufficient ingredients. But the marriage of Jennifer and Daniel is the fruit of a restoration in their own lives to the very purpose for which they were created.

God created man in His own image and likeness, as male and female, in order to fill the earth and ultimately the universe with His highest creation, to rule over it in love. For this purpose He gave them *eros* — sexual desire for one another — and the exquisite pleasure of its fulfillment. Both are from His hand, and

<sup>1</sup> A duet is a musical composition of two complimentary and equally important parts.

<sup>2</sup> A duel is a contest with deadly weapons between two parties to settle an irreconcilable difference.

## ***Love Is a Many Splendored Thing***

both are intended not only for the propagation of human life, but also for the bonding of husband and wife into a lifelong covenant relationship to create stable, secure families.

God established the role of desire, and the suffering that attends it because of the Fall, for the stability of marriage and the family:

*<sup>16</sup> To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."<sup>17</sup> And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;<sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."* (Genesis 3:16-19)

A woman's desire for her husband kindles the fire of his *eros* for her. It is her response to his attention that gives him the confidence to take her under his protective rule and love her with his whole heart. This womanly desire stimulates his love for her and directs his sexual energies toward her. It protects both her and him from all other evil desires, even from Satan himself. It was their Creator's intention that a man and his wife would know only each other sexually, and that their coming together would bond them

heart and soul into one God-like social unit<sup>3</sup> — a building block of human civilization. They would be co-workers in creation with Him, procreating desired children and pouring their lives into those children to make them secure and productive.



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### ***The woman's respect for her husband increases as she sees him labor to provide for her from the reluctant earth, and risk his life to protect her.***

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After the Fall, God multiplied the pain that both the woman and the man would have to bear in their respective roles in the marriage. This was not so much a punishment as a provision to increase their dependence upon their Creator and to strengthen their character and their relationships with one another and with their children. The pain of childbirth bonds a woman to her children, and to her husband whose heart wells up with love and respect for his wife as he

sees her suffer to give birth to his children. The woman's respect for her husband increases as she sees him labor to provide for her from the reluctant earth, and risk his life to protect her. Their children grow up to labor alongside their parents, essential to the running of the household, fields, and herds, which gives them dignity and keeps them out of trouble.

This is the order that God intended, which He has inscribed into the conscience of every human being. It is the foundational knowledge of good and evil that fallen man is accountable to live by,<sup>4</sup> but it is abundantly clear that he has drifted a long ways from it. Most men and women today are out of this order and the resulting dysfunction is bringing humanity to the brink of destruction. The natural desire God put in woman for man she has subverted to usurp his rule, while the man has either abdicated his rulership or used his strength to dominate and oppress the woman. Marriage has become a duel rather than a duet, and countless men and women have abandoned it altogether, gratifying their sexual impulses in increasingly perverse and destructive ways. "Love" has become a "many-splintered" thing rather than a many-splendored thing, and the devastating consequences for untold generations of children are mounting into a global nightmare of unimaginable proportions.

By far the most shameful fact of this landslide of degradation is the utter impotence of Christianity

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<sup>3</sup> Genesis 2:24   <sup>4</sup> Genesis 3:22

to restrain it. Far from being the salt of the earth or the light to the nations, she has been sliding down the slippery slope of compromise herself, winking at immorality in the clergy, ordaining homosexuals, and catering to the worldly appetites of her youth. According to *The Barna Group*,<sup>5</sup> a conservative Christian research agency,

- The divorce rate among Christians in America is the same as that among non-Christians;

- At least 30% of “born-again” adults support the legalization of same-gender sexual relations;

- There is no difference between “born-again” and unchurched adults in the likelihood of viewing adult-only content on the Internet, or reading magazines, or watching videos with explicit sexual content.

And things are getting worse rather than better within Christianity as the years go by.

## Restoration

Where, then, is the restoration of humanity going to come from? Where can true love be found? It can only be found where true forgiveness is found. In fact, it can only be found where the truth is found. The truth sets people free from their sin. The problem with the world is that people are not set free from their sin. They are not forgiven and they cannot forgive, therefore they cannot live in peace with one another. And no amount of legislation can restore the order and harmony God intended for humanity.

That is not to say the world should revert to anarchy, but that those who profess faith in the Son of God should look to Him for the solution, not to this world, which is passing away, along with its desires.<sup>6</sup>

**Yahshua,\*** the Son of God, is the very Word of God in human flesh, the living embodiment of the truth. He came to undo the works of the evil one, who is the father of lies.<sup>7</sup> Yahshua came to restore true love on the earth. But He did not even try to reform the existing political or religious establishment. He called His disciples out of the existing order and taught them the way of love.

They had to forsake everything to follow Him<sup>8</sup> — jobs, possessions, family, friends, even concepts and prejudices — anything and anyone that held them back from being fully

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***Love cannot be learned  
in the abstract, but only  
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another and bearing with  
each other's faults  
and failures.***

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surrendered and available to Him. He put them on the foundation of absolute obedience to His words,<sup>9</sup> just as He was absolutely obedient to His Father's words.<sup>10</sup> On that foundation He could teach them how to love one another, in the only context in which love can be learned — living together. They were always together. Love cannot be learned in the abstract, but only in the daily realities of submitting to one another and bearing with each other's faults and failures.<sup>11</sup>

The night before His death, having taught them the way of love day and night for over three years, He left His disciples with the clearest expression of His will for them:

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)*

And the disciple who had stayed the closest to Yahshua's side gave the authoritative commentary on His most important commandment, so that there would be no confusion about what He meant:

*<sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup> Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. <sup>16</sup> By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. <sup>17</sup> But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:14-18)*

They were to lay down their lives for one another daily,<sup>12</sup> just as their Master had laid down His life for them, both practically for all their years together, and ultimately by dying in their place. Love provides for another's needs; hatred holds back.

Everything Yahshua taught His disciples, by word and deed, from the day He called them until the moment He ascended into heaven after His resurrection, was the “Gospel of the Kingdom” which He entrusted to them.<sup>13</sup> They were His apprentices, so that when fully trained they would be just like their Teacher.<sup>14</sup> So there is no confusing His last solemn command to them.

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\* For more on the name Yahshua, see *What's In A Name* on page 34 <sup>5</sup> <http://www.barna.org> <sup>6</sup> 1 John 2:17 <sup>7</sup> 1 John 3:8; John 8:44 <sup>8</sup> Mark 10:28-30; Matthew 4:17-22; 9:9 <sup>9</sup> Matthew 7:24-27; John 14:15,21,24 <sup>10</sup> John 5:19; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10 <sup>11</sup> Matthew 18:21-22; Mark 9:33-35 <sup>12</sup> Luke 9:23

## Love Is a Many Splendored Thing

They were to spend the rest of their lives doing exactly what He had done for them — make disciples, teaching them, by word and example, to obey everything He had commanded them.<sup>15</sup> But this was no burden for them, for they had been deeply loved, so they also would love deeply, from the heart.

So when Peter first preached the gospel ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, telling the people how to “be saved from this perverse generation,” the effect was consistent with his training:

*Those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their property and possessions and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:41-47)*

*Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person*



*among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. (Acts 4:32-35)*

The True One<sup>16</sup> who is Love had planted true love in a handful of willing and grateful hearts, and that seed had begun to bear the first fruits of love — a people with one heart and one way, just as the prophet Jeremiah had foretold.<sup>17</sup> They loved one another in the same way their Savior had loved them — by laying down their lives

for one another — and there was no mistaking the fact that they were His disciples.<sup>18</sup> They had learned the way of love.

That is the way the church was in the first century, and there is no other way the church can be than the way it was when it was “the Way.”<sup>19</sup> That is where true love is found, and that is where true love finds a way to set people free from their sin, so that restoration can happen. It is where two lost and damaged souls like Daniel, a wandering Jew, and Jennifer, a confused Christian, could each face the truth about their own condition and receive forgiveness as they forsook everything in the waters of baptism. And it is where the wise and loving hands of their brothers and sisters could put their lives on a good foundation and teach them the way of love.

And having learned that way, two lives rescued from the collapsing world could be bonded together in a covenant of marriage that would express the true love between Messiah and His bride.

Multiplied thousands of redeemed lives such as theirs, knit together by the bonds of marriage and brotherhood, will be a great light of brilliance, a witness to the power of love that will someday fill the universe. Yes, true love is a many-splendored thing! ❧

<sup>13</sup> The gospel is primarily found in the Gospels. The letters of Paul and the other apostles consist of instruction and correction for those who are already in salvation. It is ironic that most of the popular “plans of salvation” make little use of the Gospels and much improper use of Paul’s letters. As a result, very few people have actually heard and obeyed the gospel. <sup>14</sup> Luke 6:40 <sup>15</sup> Matthew 28:19-20 <sup>16</sup> 1 John 5:20 <sup>17</sup> Jeremiah 32:38-41 <sup>18</sup> John 13:34-35

<sup>19</sup> Acts 22:4; 24:14,22



# Ruling over Desire

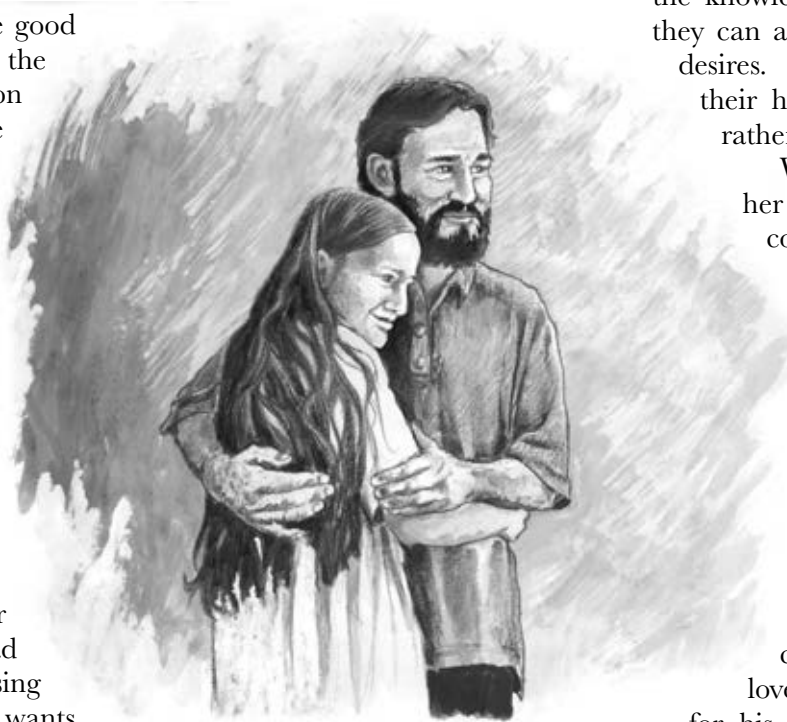
**H**ardly anyone knows why they're alive, and few take time to consider the value of man and what God's purpose was in creating us. We've been given the capacity to not only know the difference between good and evil, but to choose between them. We're not like animals, without self-control, being led around by our instincts and desires. And because we can choose, for the good or for the evil, beyond the drive of self-preservation and gratification, we can reach our highest potential as human beings, or the lowest level possible.

And what is little known is that God gave us this age, and our lifetimes, for us to determine what level we would rise or sink to. We live in an age of wickedness when Satan holds the whole world under his power and influence to lead men astray from choosing and doing good. God wants each one of us to reach his fullest potential under the testing of this evil enemy. So, the decisions you make affect the human worth and dignity you retain. A person can keep the worth he was born with, even unto eternal life, but it's hard. It will take perseverance and much suffering. Right back at the beginning of human history, God laid out what it would take:

*To the woman he said, "I will surely*

*multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."* (Genesis 3:16)

*The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?"<sup>7</sup> If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door.*



***Men and women are able to sublimate potentially violent, negative, and destructive desires into desires that nurture, protect, and build according to the self control they have over their personality.***

*Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."* (Genesis 4:6-7)

The word translated *desire* in these two passages is the same Hebrew word, and means *stretching out or longing for something or someone*. That "stretching" out can be either negative or positive. The potential is there for good or for evil, but as men and women are *born* with the knowledge of good and evil,<sup>1</sup> they can and must rule over their desires. They must sublimate<sup>2</sup> their human energies to good rather than to evil ends.

Woman must sublimate her fallen tendency to control her husband.

She must rule over her instinctive desire for man so that she builds up and encourages her husband. When she does this, it stimulates him to sublimate his fallen tendency. Instead of dominating and oppressing her, he channels his passions to love, protect, and provide for his wife and children, and directs his sexual energies towards her. It isn't enough that man would just have sexual feelings towards the opposite sex, but God intended that he would *love* his wife.

Men and women are able to sublimate potentially violent, negative, and destructive desires into desires that nurture, protect, and build, according to the self control they have over their personality — socially, mentally, emotionally,

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 3:22 <sup>2</sup> *Sublimate* – to divert the expression of an instinctual desire or impulse from its primitive form to one that is morally acceptable and constructive.

## Ruling Over Desire

physically, and spiritually. Doing so protects them from the schemes of the evil one, from succumbing to his evil temptations.

There are many obstacles that “man” (male and female) must rule over *together*, in one accord. Both genders must do their part, without strife or the battle between the sexes. But today’s world is plagued with feminists and male chauvinists, which has antagonized men and women all the more, leaving them isolated, and easy prey to the evil one. Few are left of those who rule over their passions and desires, even within marriage.

And so what becomes of those who yield to these evil impulses? The fact that God holds men accountable for *suppressing* the truth<sup>3</sup> implies that they *know* the truth and must make a *choice* to suppress it. Those who say in their heart that there is no God (by which they mean no Judgment based on their deeds) *turn aside* from the truth and *become* corrupt.<sup>4</sup> That is, they start out their lives on a path guided by the truth in their conscience, from which they turn aside by their own choice, eventually becoming depraved. Righteous men defend God’s image, upholding the good in man as an existing state of being. They retain their self-respect and self-esteem as creatures made in the likeness of their Creator.

Every man knows instinctively that after death he must face a judgment, which will determine whether he has ruled over his evil inclinations and sublimated them to the good.

*“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.” (Genesis 4:7)*

*“And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” (Genesis 4:11-12)*

Cain refused to rule over his evil desire. And he was cursed like the evil one in Genesis 3:14. The very provision given to fallen man to maintain his dignity and worth by working the earth to provide for his family was cut off to Cain.

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***Men and women have the discernment to judge what is evil and what is good, and to name the evil and overcome it, especially when the evil is as Cain’s, to the hurt of others.***

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Having made himself worthless, he would share Satan’s fate or destiny in the Lake of Fire,<sup>5</sup> as do all who will not rule over their evil desires, to the hurt of others. The same will be true for a wife who does not rule over her evil desire to take the place of authority in their family, or a husband who will not rule over his wife for her own good, and will not work by the sweat of his brow to provide for his family.<sup>6</sup>

Men and women have the discernment to judge what is evil and what is good, and to name the evil and overcome it, especially when the evil is as Cain’s, to the hurt of others.<sup>7</sup> Cain did not rule over his envy and anger. Temptation was an evil spirit crouching at the door to his heart. God, knowing

Cain’s heart, warned him through his conscience not to submit to the murderous temptation.

After he committed first-degree murder, Cain’s punishment was greater than he could bear.<sup>8</sup> He would not have enough human worth left in himself to pay the wages of his sin.<sup>9</sup> All men are appointed to die once:

*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17)*

This is the first death,<sup>10</sup> and then comes the judgment to determine whether the sins committed, the evil done, would make a person share in the same destiny as Satan. To not rule over evil desire eventually makes one worthy of the Second Death, for he loses all trace of the image of God and takes on the very nature of the evil one, for whom the Second Death is prepared.<sup>11</sup> **Yahshua\*** took the sins of the whole world into death and paid for them by experiencing the full wrath of God against our transgressions. Those who do not have a sacrifice for their sins must pay sin’s wages — the First Death and then even the Second Death if their sins were more than they could bear, that is, pay for in the First Death. 

***Please read “What about the Heathen” on page 28 for more about the First and Second Death, and the Three Eternal Destinies of Man.***

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<sup>3</sup> Romans 1:18 <sup>4</sup> Psalm 14 <sup>5</sup> Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10 <sup>6</sup> Genesis 3:16-19 <sup>7</sup> Such as the evil mentioned in Romans 1:26-32 <sup>8</sup> Genesis 4:13

<sup>9</sup> Romans 6:23 <sup>10</sup> Hebrews 9:27 <sup>11</sup> Matthew 25:41 \* **For more on the name Yahshua, see *What’s In A Name* on page 34**



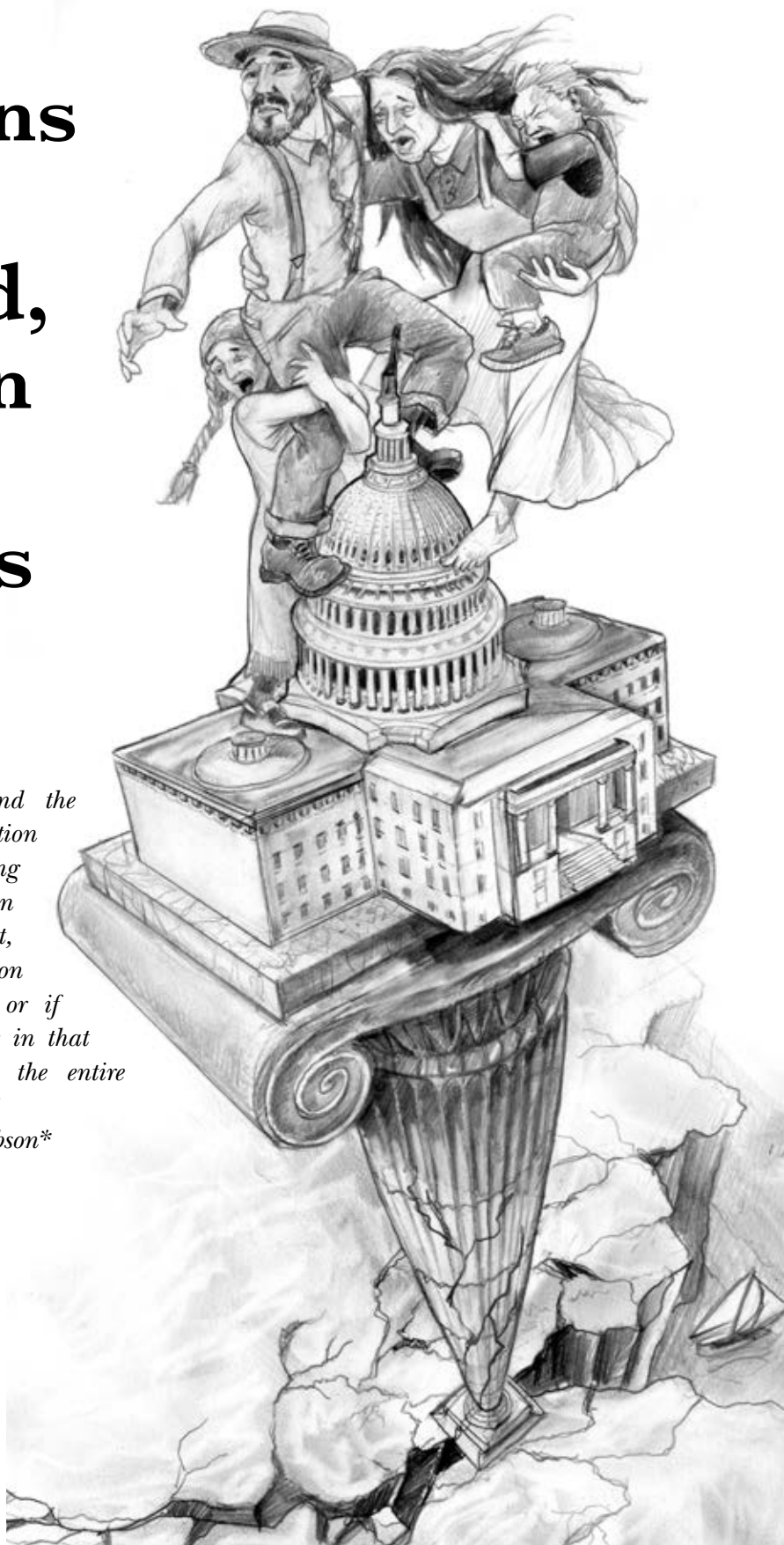
# “If the Foundations Are Destroyed, What Can the Righteous Do?”

**(Psalm 11:3)**

*“The institution of marriage and the family... has been the bedrock of civilization for five thousand years and everything of value sits on that, everything rests on it — our institutions, our government, our way of life — everything rests on that foundation. If you weaken it, or if you undermine it and you put cracks in that foundation, you necessarily threaten the entire superstructure of western civilization...”*

*~ Dr. James Dobson\**

**I**t's terrifying to be in a tall building during an earthquake knowing that its very foundation is shifting and crumbling under you. What can you do? Escape from the building before it collapses, and flee to the hills? Or wait in fear and hope that the tremor will pass? And, if the tremor passes and the building is still standing, then what? Can you shore up the foundation to be safe from the next earthquake?



\* Speech by Dr. James Dobson at the May 1, 2004, Mayday for Marriage rally in Seattle's Safeco Stadium.

## *If the Foundations Are Destroyed...*

It is true that the institution of marriage and the family is the foundation upon which human civilization stands. It was established by God in Genesis 2: 24 and 3:16-20. He alone holds the royal patent on marriage and the family, and we as human beings do not have the authority to redefine it or discard it in the event that it fails to suit us. Marriage is not the invention of a sociologist or psychologist, nor is it the product of a male-dominated culture seeking to oppress or oppose women, nor is it a force counteracting women's or gay liberation. It is the invention of the Sovereign God for the purpose of filling the earth, and ultimately the universe, with His highest creation — man (male and female) made in His image.

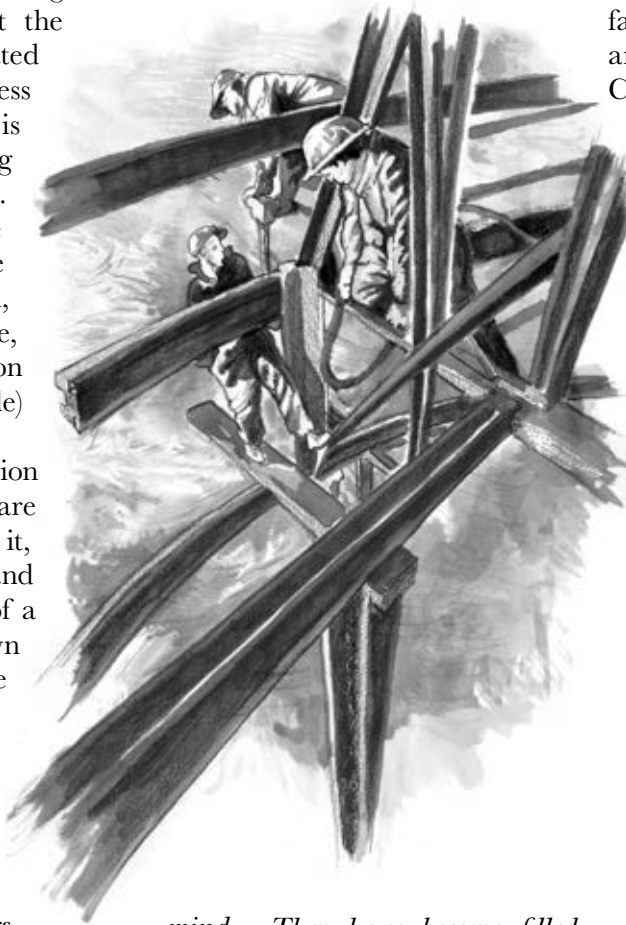
But now that foundation is in jeopardy. Forces are at work to undermine it, causing it to crack and crumble under the load of a civilization weighed down with guilt. It is as the Apostle Paul prophesied,

*"In the last days  
perilous times will  
come: for men will be  
lovers of themselves,  
lovers of money, boasters,  
proud, blasphemers,  
disobedient to parents,  
unthankful, unholy, unloving,  
unforgiving, slanderers, without  
self-control, brutal, despisers  
of good, traitors, headstrong,  
haughty, lovers of pleasure rather  
than lovers of God, having a form  
of godliness but denying its power."  
(2 Timothy 3:1-5)*

Yet these characteristics of modern humanity are merely the

outward manifestations of a deep, seething rebellion breaking forth against their Creator. Paul also described this in vivid terms,

*"... their thinking became futile  
and their foolish hearts were  
darkened... They exchanged the  
truth of God for a lie... Since  
they did not think it worthwhile  
to retain the knowledge of God,  
he gave them over to a depraved*



*mind... They have become filled  
with every kind of wickedness, evil,  
greed and depravity. They are full  
of envy, murder, strife, deceit and  
malice..." (Romans 1:21-29)*

Although the latest expression of this rebellion is a frontal assault on the institution of marriage, it is only possible because of the more subtle erosion of its underpinnings — the knowledge of good and evil

that God put in man's conscience. The erosion has taken place not only in the consciences of those with outlandish behavior, but generally in the Christian populace, resulting in the toleration and even approval of evil to a degree unthinkable not so many years ago. The divorce rate among Christians is the same as that among non-Christians, and 30% of "born-again" Christians say living together, gay sex, sexual fantasies, and viewing pornography are morally acceptable behaviors.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the church is far from being a light to the fallen civilization as it is virtually indistinguishable from it, sharing all of its vices and compromise. Truly we are living in the day when good is called evil, and evil is called good.

Five years ago Paul Weyrich, one of the foremost conservative minds behind the "Religious Right" in America for the past several decades, wrote:

*"I believe that we probably have  
lost the culture war... I am very  
concerned, as I go around the  
country and speak and talk to  
[Christian] young people, when  
I find how much of the decadent  
culture they have absorbed without  
even understanding that they  
are a part of it. And while I'm  
not suggesting that we all become  
Amish or move to Idaho, I do think  
that we have to look at what we can  
do to separate ourselves from this  
hostile culture. What steps can we  
take to make sure that we and our  
children are not infected? We need  
some sort of quarantine."*<sup>2</sup>

His admission of defeat in the war to stem the tide of moral degradation in America should have been alarming to his fellow Christians. He was actually calling

<sup>1</sup> Barna Research, "Year's Most Intriguing Findings", 2001 <sup>2</sup> Paul M. Weyrich, Letter on the Moral Minority in America, February 16, 1999

for Christians  
to separate themselves from this  
“hostile culture” lest they become  
infected. Who has heeded his call?

Stephen Bates, in his shocking exposé,  
*The Jesus Market*, documents the almost total

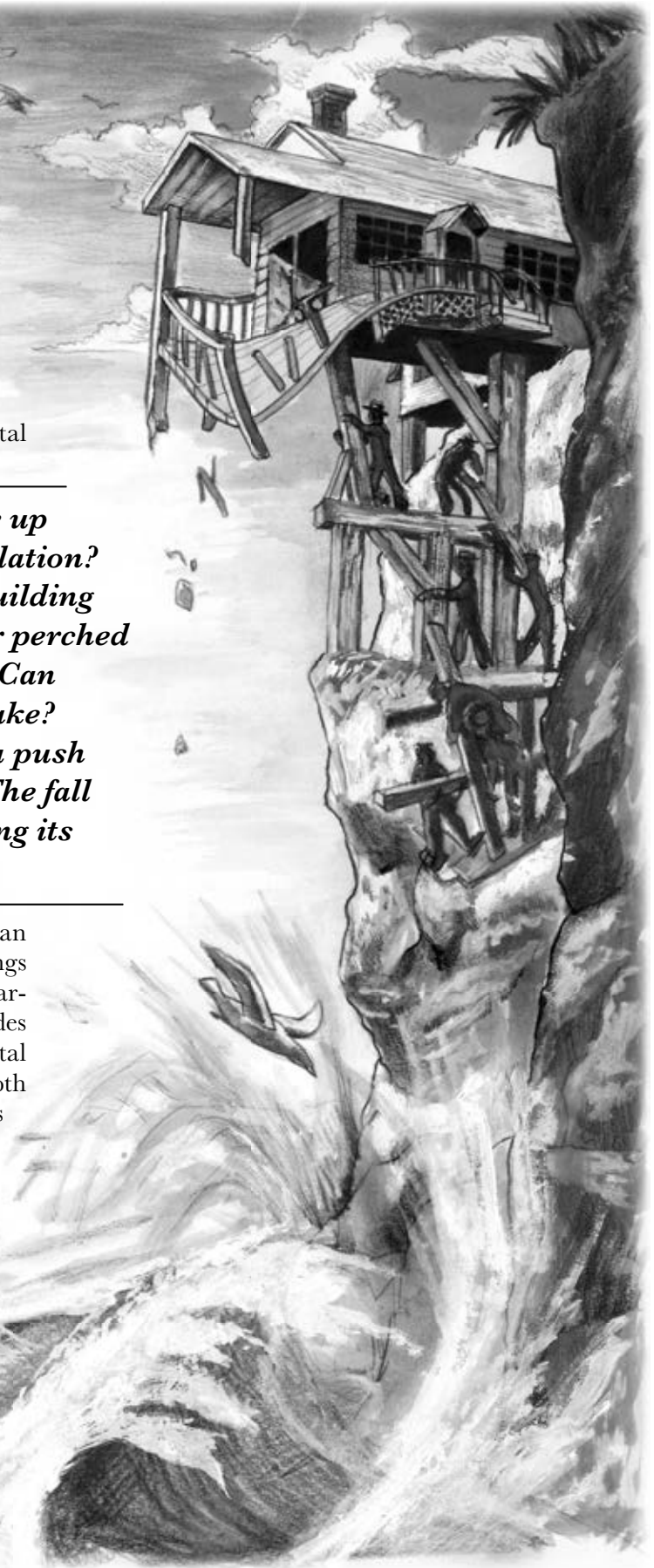
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***So what can the righteous do? Shore up  
the fractured foundations with legislation?  
Human civilization is like a great building  
straddling the San Andreas Fault, or perched  
on the edge of an eroding shoreline. Can  
you restrain the force of an earthquake?  
Can you hold back the tide? Can you push  
the floodwaters back up the river? The fall  
of man is running its course, reaching its  
fullness in these last days.***

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accommodation of the world within American  
Christianity, under the banner of being “all things  
to all men.” For example, the 4-billion-dollar-  
per-year Christian merchandise market includes  
“Christian” punk rock, hip-hop, and heavy metal  
music, by skinhead musicians in spandex and Goth  
makeup, complete with body piercing, cross  
tongue studs, and tattoos. As a result, Christians  
today can fully enjoy almost anything the world  
has to offer without setting foot outside the  
camp of Christianity, in contempt of  
the Apostle John’s words:

*“Do not love the world  
or the things*



## ***If the Foundations Are Destroyed...***

*in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world.” (1 John 2:15-16)*

It is just as the Apostle Paul described the plight of Israel in his day:

*“Unless the LORD of hosts had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah.” (Romans 9:29)*

He was echoing the words of the prophets whose description of old Israel can aptly be applied to Christendom today:

*“Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.” (Jeremiah 23:14)*

*“Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.” (Ezekiel 16:49-50)*

Christendom has become just like Sodom and Gomorrah. It is not just that one of the oldest denominations in the world has ordained an openly homosexual bishop, or even that the Mother Church has proven to be riddled with sexual predators. What is most appalling is that most

are not appalled. They “bear it beautifully,” as Paul said to the Corinthians.<sup>3</sup> And so, it seems, there is no remedy. Our hearts go out to the sincere ones in that camp who, like righteous Lot of old, are oppressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked. The souls of the righteous ones are tormented by all that they see and hear all around them, by those who indulge their flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.<sup>4</sup>

So what can the righteous do? Shore up the fractured foundations with legislation? Human civilization is like a great building straddling the San Andreas Fault, or perched

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***Unless a seed of the same pure life of God that sprang up in the first century is planted and re-established on the earth today, then there is no hope for mankind.***

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on the edge of an eroding shoreline. Can you restrain the force of an earthquake? Can you hold back the tide? Can you push the floodwaters back up the river? The fall of man is running its course, reaching its fullness in these last days. Those who are wise enough to see the disaster that awaits them will flee for their lives. But to where?

Unless a seed of the same pure life of God that sprang up in the first century is planted and re-established on the earth today, then there is no hope for mankind.

What would that life look like in the midst of today’s decadent

culture? It would look exactly as it did in the first century, for the same pure seed would sprout into the same kind of tree, bearing the same kind of fruit.<sup>5</sup> That seed would produce communities of disciples just as described in the book of Acts,<sup>6</sup> where the love of God that had been poured into their hearts<sup>7</sup> would compel them to lay down their lives for one another,<sup>8</sup> where everyone would be cared for, where there would be no rich or poor, and where they would all be devoted to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. This wholehearted devotion would preserve their set-apart distinctness, guarding them from the love of the world and its defilement.<sup>9</sup> They would live together, work together, worship together, teach their children together, and maintain a separate, holy, and clean life,<sup>10</sup> which would be a light to all who live around them.<sup>11</sup> They would be truly in the world, but not of it.<sup>12</sup>

This is the life that we who write this paper are actually striving to live today, in communities all over the world, just as we have lived for the past thirty years. The pure seed of God’s love was planted in us and continues to grow and bear the fruit of love. We uphold the marriage covenant and there is no divorce here. Our children are in an environment where they can grow up pure and secure. But we don’t expect you to just take our word for it. We invite you to come and see for yourself. That is something concrete that you can do as you see the foundations of civilization being destroyed. ❧

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<sup>3</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:4 <sup>4</sup> 2 Peter 2:7-10 <sup>5</sup> Hebrews 13:8 <sup>6</sup> Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35 <sup>7</sup> Romans 5:5 <sup>8</sup> John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:14,16,17 <sup>9</sup> 1 John 2:15-16

<sup>10</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 <sup>11</sup> 1 Peter 2:12 <sup>12</sup> John 17:14-15

# A Love Story

In a land far away, in a time long ago, God fell in love. He had been lonely for a long time. It's hard to imagine that God could feel alone, as we know He is all powerful, but He needed a friend, a bosom friend, one He could really communicate with one-to-one, who would know what He meant, someone who knew His heart. He wanted a friend who wouldn't let anything come between them, who wouldn't mistrust Him under any circumstances.

God had such a friend in Abraham. And Abraham loved God so dearly that he would even give his own beloved son rather than let anything come between him and God. Such a rare thing to find — someone who won't mistrust you, no matter what.

And God so loved him that He Himself made a covenant with Abraham. He could have just made a promise (surely His word was binding enough), but He went beyond just a promise. The oath that He made was self-cursing, meaning that if He didn't fulfill His part of the covenant He would be split asunder as the animals He passed between had been split in two.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, "I AM" (YHWH) bound His whole existence to keeping His oath to Abraham, and Abraham's eternal prosperity and well-being was irrevocably bound to God. Obviously, God knew Abraham's heart through and through. He

to express the depth of His love and commitment is to say that He betrothed Himself to Israel as a Husband to a Bride.<sup>2</sup> He drew her with love, treated her with kindness and adorned her with wisdom. He forgave her sins so that she could serve Him in holiness, meaning undefiled by any other loves, even the love of self.

Truly He delighted in her... but she forsook Him. She became a harlot,<sup>3</sup> one who chooses to hurt and betray her husband by lusting after others. The Scriptures record the ache of His heart.<sup>4</sup>

And His Son, Yahshua, knew the same pain; He and His Father were one.

Yahshua's love for His bride was the greatest love story ever told. He would redeem His Bride from the powers of death, more surely than any knight in shining armor had ever rescued a damsel in distress. She was

held in bondage because Death had a claim on her. Death would not release her without a ransom. Who could pay the ransom, except He who had no lien on His life?<sup>5</sup> He had no payment to make to Death of His own account. He need never have faced the anguish of death for His own sake.

*Love is a deep, tender, ineffable feeling of affection and solicitude toward a person, such as that arising from kinship, recognition of attractive qualities, or a sense of underlying oneness.*

*a feeling of intense desire and attraction toward a person with whom one is disposed to make a pair.*

*an intense emotional attachment, as for a treasured object.*

*the direction of one's will towards something, what you give your attention to.*

*a feeling of strong attachment induced by that which delights or commands admiration.*

*preeminent kindness or devotion to another.*

*affection; tenderness; as, the love of brothers and sisters.*

*to love is to take delight or pleasure in; to have a strong liking or desire for, or interest in; to be pleased with; to like.*

trusted him completely, or He would hardly have bound Himself in a covenant to him, and not only to him, but to his seed — those that would love Him with the same unfailing, absolute love.

Abraham's sons became the nation of Israel, and YHWH's love did not fail. The only way

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 15; Jeremiah 34:18-20 <sup>2</sup> Ezekiel 16; Hosea 2:19 <sup>3</sup> Isaiah 1:21 <sup>4</sup> Hosea 2:4-13; Isaiah 57:3-13; Jeremiah 2:20-22,31; 3:1-5 <sup>5</sup> John 14:30

## Love Story

Only love could move someone to embrace the condition and sufferings of another, to do more than just offer a helping hand.

And He did love. He took total identity with her, even to the ultimate point of being rejected by His own Father<sup>6</sup> when He took her guilt and sin upon Himself. He endured the unspeakable agony of death for three days and three eternally long nights,<sup>7</sup> alone, without His Father's presence; alone, without the Comfort of the Holy Spirit; alone, burdened with all the guilt of everyone, even the guilt of those who would hate and despise Him for what He had done. His love wasn't limited to those who would love Him in return. He endured an agony that cannot be imagined, because of joy<sup>8</sup> — the joy of a Bride who would love Him without fail.

This Bride is a spiritual nation of twelve tribes, being faithful where old Israel had not been faithful.<sup>9</sup>

But just as Israel of old, Messiah's Bride was unfaithful. Even after all He had done for her, she wandered away in her heart. He had to write her a letter, telling her that she had left her first love. He was on the outside of her heart, knocking, asking to be admitted.<sup>10</sup>

And worst of all, she broke her covenant of betrothal and married another husband.<sup>11</sup> Instead of

being the home of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures say she became a dwelling place for every unclean spirit.<sup>12</sup>

This would all be unbearably sad except for the hope of restoration.<sup>13</sup>

If only **Yahshua\*** could finally have a Bride who would love Him



***If only Yahshua could  
finally have a Bride  
who would love Him  
with the devoted,  
affectionate,  
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a people who would  
respond to His love, and  
love others as He did,  
without a thought  
for self.***

with the devoted, affectionate, loyal-to-the-end love, a people who would respond to His love, and love others as He did, without a thought for self. Surely His love warrants this kind of love in return.

He can't do any more than what He did, but who will respond? Who has the same heart as Abraham?

In this, the last century of human history, YHWH has again sent His Holy Spirit to earth to a people gathered together in twelve tribes, living together in unity, who aspire to be His Bride. He is sitting at the edge of His throne waiting for her to make His enemies a footstool for His feet.<sup>14</sup>

When she has done this, the Heavens will ring out, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb has come, and His wife<sup>15</sup> has made herself ready!"<sup>16</sup>

Right now, in this present age, is when she is making herself ready,<sup>17</sup> not tolerating anything unclean, not waiting for some magic, but coming to the same stature as her betrothed Husband.<sup>18</sup> She makes herself compatible in every way by taking on His heart,<sup>19</sup> to have one heart and one way,<sup>20</sup> to love as He loved,<sup>21</sup> to be as Abraham was.<sup>22</sup> And this, only this, will bring the end of this wicked and evil age.<sup>23</sup> ❧

\* For more on the name Yahshua, see *What's In A Name* on page 34 <sup>6</sup> Matthew 27:46 <sup>7</sup> Matthew 12:40 <sup>8</sup> Hebrews 12:2, Isaiah 49:6; Acts 26:7; Revelation 21:9-12 <sup>9</sup> The writers of the New Testament also describe her as a city, a commonwealth, the Body of Messiah and the church. <sup>10</sup> Revelation 2:1,4; 3:20 <sup>11</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:2-3 <sup>12</sup> Revelation 18:2, echoing Isaiah 1:21 <sup>13</sup> Isaiah 1:26 <sup>14</sup> Hebrews 10:13 <sup>15</sup> Revelation 21:9-21 <sup>16</sup> Revelation 19:7 <sup>17</sup> Revelation 19:7-8; Ephesians 2:19; Titus 2:14; Philippians 3:10-12 <sup>18</sup> Ephesians 4:13 <sup>19</sup> Ephesians 5:9; Galatians 5:22-25 <sup>20</sup> Ephesians 4:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:8; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 2:2-4 <sup>21</sup> John 13:34; 2 Corinthians 5:15; 1 John 3:16-18 <sup>22</sup> Genesis 18:19; John 8:39; Galatians 3:29; Hebrews 2:16; Isaiah 1:26 <sup>23</sup> Ephesians 5:5-6



I was shocked to see the ugly scratches on the door to my church as I arrived early Sunday morning. It was an older church, in kind of a rough neighborhood, and the fact of the vandalism didn't startle me so much. It was the glaring word "Sexist" carved in our door that stunned me. That's not what the boys in our neighborhood would have written — far from it.

Who would do such a thing? My thoughts turned to the events of the day before. I'd thought everything had gone so well and all of our guests had *seemed* happy. But some of them evidently weren't pleased with the marriage ceremony they'd witnessed. We must have seemed out-of-date, politically incorrect, even oppressive.

It made me stop and think. As far as I knew everyone present had been a Christian. No one had objected or had anything unpleasant to say, but obviously we had gone beyond someone's boundaries of how they thought marriage should be — so much so that they took a knife to scratch their harsh words on our door. It felt like an act of violence against us as a church. I felt a certain sense of violation, of hurt, that made me want to sand out the ugly words before anyone else showed up.

I had a lot to think about as I got ready for my Sunday School class. Were we "sexist"? I certainly didn't think so. We were merely traditional in our approach to marriage. We thought we were resisting the

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# The Bride of Messiah

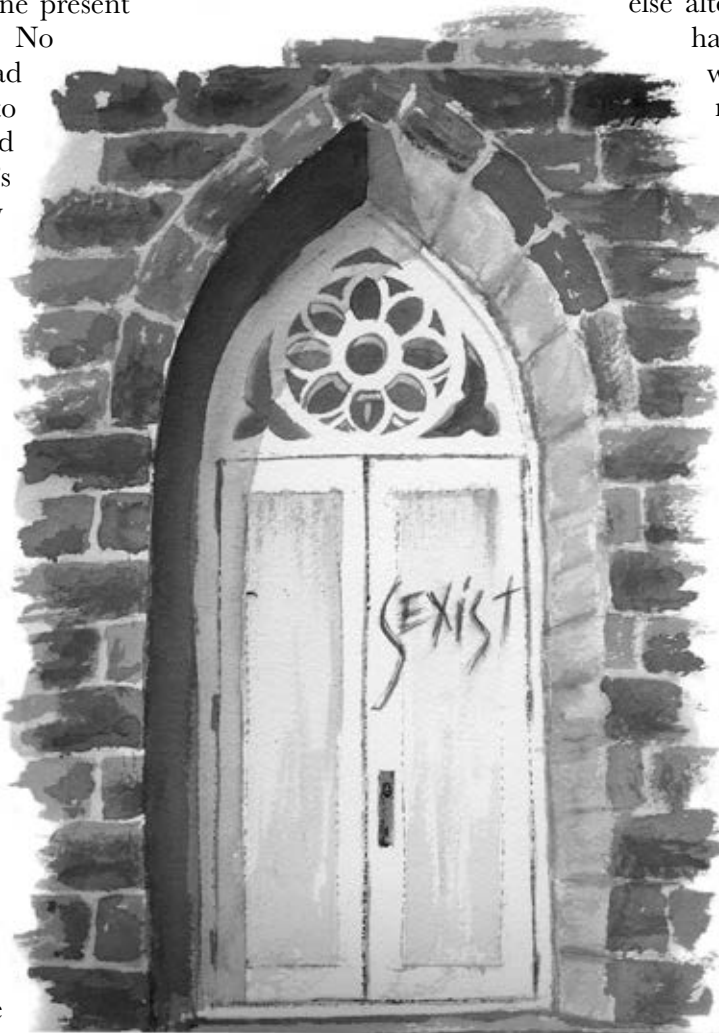
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wrong way society was going, and this little bit of vandalism seemed to confirm that. I don't think I would have thought any further about the incident if I hadn't begun to visit a group of believers living together in community. Their ideas of marriage were far more "conservative" than ours.

I was drawn to them, a matter that I could admit more to myself than to anyone else. It wasn't an easy thing to say to your Bible study or Board of Deacons that you wanted more in your life — much more — than what they had to offer. How do you nicely say that your church seems a far cry from what we read about in the New Testament every week? Whether I would ever join the community of believers I'd visited was something else altogether, but these scratches

had the odd effect of thrusting what I really thought of marriage and the church to the fore. When someone shouts in your face, "NO, YOU'RE WRONG!" it makes you think about what you do believe in.

It must have been the word "obey" that the bride had said to the groom that had set at least one of our guests off. All the rest of their vows were mirror images of each other. Were wives no longer to obey their husbands? What about the church and her Savior? Was she no longer to obey Him? More than twenty years later I still remember the thought that came to me. The way a wife submits to her husband is a picture, a reflection, of how the church of which she is a part submits to Messiah.



## ***The Bride of Messiah***

The next thought I had still rings true as well. The way the men submit to one another is equally a picture of how their church submits to Messiah. They are to submit to one another out of reverence for Him just the same as their wives are to submit to them. This submission among the men would bring the wives security, it seemed to me, and is the order under which everyone should live.<sup>1</sup> Without this submission throughout the church, there was not much defense these days against the charge of male chauvinism – of men using religion to lord it over women.

Considering my own church, and the lack of relationships the men had with one another, let alone submission, I had to ruefully conclude that the headway of the woman's liberation movement in Christianity was no surprise. Then there was the larger picture of the church's submission to Messiah. Whatever did that mean? Did it mean that the church would obey Him? That's what our "traditional" marriages would tell us about husbands and wives, isn't it? If so, things weren't looking good to me. I mean, it didn't much look as though I were a part of the Bride of Messiah.

My thoughts weren't confined to the little, inner-city congregation I was part of, but I considered the larger American church, and in fact, all of Christianity. I'd been doing a lot of reading about the faithfulness of the early church, the meaning of discipleship, and the relationship of the Kingdom of God to the kingdoms of this world. On every point the church came up short – far short – of the glory and purity and zeal she'd once had long ago.

As my disillusionment grew, I was beginning to wonder whether, really, the New Testament was just a collection of myths someone had made up. Not that I wanted to label the Word of God as myth – I'd been a Christian all my life – but what else do you call stories that people often speak of, and even admire, but have neither the power nor seemingly the desire to imitate? So, naturally enough, the ultimate destiny of the church seemed like a fantasy to me. I suspect it does to you as well. But it's there in the Scriptures plainly enough – the bride, the Lamb's wife:

*Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." (Revelation 21:9)*

This is the church Paul spoke of in Ephesians 5:22-33. It's the church loved by Christ, who gave Himself for her, in order to bring her to this place. Then she is finally and completely sanctified, cleansed – washed clean by the Word – without spot or wrinkle, a glorious bride. When was this prophecy

ever to be fulfilled? Cleansed, unblemished, holy – how was this to come about? How was she to ever get free of the things of the world when she so plainly loved and embraced them and even fought and died (and killed) for them?

*Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. (Ephesians 5:24)*

Soberly considering this verse shook me to the core of my being. If the church is not subject to Christ – if she does not obey Him – could she in any way be considered His bride? Did He give Himself for an unfaithful bride who loves the world and its pleasures? It didn't seem to me that Paul's epistles were written to a church with a once-a-week devotion to Christ. In fact, he was able to picture the relationship of the church to Messiah as a bride to her husband. How could Paul do so today when the "Bride" visits her "Savior" for an hour or two once a week and then does what she wants the rest of the time, paying mere lip service to His words? Is that what a wife is? This is the Bride of Messiah? No way! ❧

### **Ruth Graham: *Confessions of An Un-submissive Woman***

Billy wore a new conservative hat and dark coat, hoping for a good impression. Just before they came out on deck, Billy asked Ruth not to wear any lipstick because some British clergy rated lipstick worldly and Billy wanted to please them. She refused.

Ruth wrote in her diary: "Bill stooped from being a man of God to become a meddlesome husband, so I said it doesn't seem to me to be a credit to Christ to be drab. I think it is a Christian's duty to look as nice as possible. Besides, not caring about one's appearance goes against a woman's nature. That's not going to make anyone a better Christian, either. And it's not fair to the people who have to look at you. I believe my lipstick did help."

*Greater London Crusade 1954*

*From "Billy Graham - God's Ambassador" published by  
The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 5:21 and 1 Corinthians 11:3.

# *If it Ain't According to the Rules, it Ain't Marriage*

Marriage, what a beautiful gem you are. Founded from the beginning, crafted with precision and grace, from you comes the miracle of life. Hidden within you are the secrets to a healthy family and happy children. Why have you been challenged and forgotten? If you are remembered then your covenant will not be broken. Remind us who you are!

I see you written about in Genesis,<sup>1</sup> there to protect us when we were in trouble. Like the railing of a ship, you are there to keep us safe, within the boundaries.

To the man God said he must provide for his wife and rule his family with care. To the woman God said she must bear children in pain, desiring her husband and letting him rule over her. To both He said they shall leave their father's house and become one flesh, a new social unit.



Later in time God said a man shall love his wife as Messiah loved the Church. He shall wash her with the Word and keep her sanctified.<sup>2</sup> He shall nourish her and love her

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***Can you imagine telling your wife that you love her but that you don't want to live with her? Or can you imagine telling your husband he is your head, but you will only obey him if you agree with what he says? Can you imagine telling God you believe in Him but you don't need to obey His commandments?***

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as his own body, being ready to die for her. He shall also live with her in an understanding way so his prayers won't be hindered.<sup>3</sup> The woman shall respect her husband and submit to him as the Church submits to Messiah. She shall honor him.

To embrace a covenant, we must embrace what it is. Does marriage require anything besides saying, "I do"? Yes! To marry requires obedience, respect, and love. Likewise, does believing require anything besides saying, "I do"? Yes! Believing requires obedience also. Believing is central to being married to Messiah. Believing entails obeying the gospel.<sup>4</sup> What Messiah said in John 3:36,<sup>5</sup> "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does

not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him," proves there is no practical difference between believing and obeying. Believers in Messiah believe and do what He says, if they love Him.

Many Christians vehemently argue against this simple truth. Amazing, isn't it? Not only is it clearly in the Word, but it is common sense. Isn't it amazing how these concepts can form and grow so strong in people, even though it's so contradictory to the simple truth? Do people really think they can shine God on like that? Can you imagine telling your wife that you love her but that you don't want to live with her? Or can you imagine telling your husband he is your head, but you will only obey him if you agree with what he says? Can you imagine telling God you believe in Him but you don't need to obey His commandments?

Marriage has to do with ruling, submitting, loving, and respecting. If a wife doesn't submit to her husband as to the Lord (for the husband is the head of his wife as Christ also is the head of the church),<sup>6</sup> then it isn't a marriage. If believing isn't John 14:21,<sup>7</sup> then it isn't believing. If the Church isn't John 12:25-26,<sup>8</sup> then it isn't the Church. If you don't do the deeds of Abraham, then you aren't the seed of Abraham.<sup>9</sup> If the Church isn't submitting to Messiah, it isn't going to be His bride when He returns.<sup>10</sup>

The one who claims to know Him but doesn't keep His word is a liar and the truth *ain't* in him.<sup>11</sup> ❧

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 3:16 <sup>2</sup> Ephesians 5:22-23 <sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 3:7 <sup>4</sup> John 8:51; Acts 5:32; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; James 2:14 <sup>5</sup> John 3:36 <sup>6</sup> Ephesians 5:22-23 <sup>7</sup> John 14:21 <sup>8</sup> John 12:25, 26 <sup>9</sup> John 8:39

<sup>10</sup> Revelation 17:14; 21:9-12 <sup>11</sup> 1 John 2:4

# Are the Demands of the Gospel Unreasonable?

*“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” (Luke 14:26-33)*

Is it unreasonable to obey the gospel as spoken by **Yahshua**,\* the Messiah in Luke 14? The gospel is unreasonable to those who are not willing to do God’s will.<sup>1</sup> Is God unreasonable? It seems that way to many Christians today, as they are taught that any effort to obey Yahshua’s word disqualifies them from the free gift of eternal life. Yet Peter said the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God.<sup>2</sup> And Yahshua Himself said, “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”<sup>3</sup> And again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”<sup>4</sup>

The kingdom reign of Messiah is unreasonable to the natural man<sup>5</sup> and unattainable to the carnal man.<sup>6</sup> But to the faithful, the way is very narrow and hard,<sup>7</sup> but not unreasonable, for it is attainable for the spiritual man. For those who see the worth of Messiah and

understand the nature of eternal life, it is unreasonable to not obey the gospel for Him. Nothing less than total surrender of one’s life will bring about the witness of His transcending life on the Earth.

If one is satisfied with a comfortable, status quo, Sunday-go-to-meeting existence, then the demands of Yahshua’s gospel would seem unreasonable. For it would be considered irresponsible by this world’s standard to not provide for yourself a good home, nice things, a college education for your children, and a comfy retirement. But it would require great complexities of reasoning to imagine that Yahshua was envisioning such a life when He preached the so-called “hard sayings” of the gospel.

## The Rich Young Ruler

The rich young ruler came to Yahshua, believing that He could grant him eternal life.<sup>8</sup> And what is eternal life but to know God and His Son Yahshua whom He sent?<sup>9</sup> And to know Him, one must

obey Him.<sup>10</sup> And to call Him the Sovereign of one’s life,<sup>11</sup> one must follow Him, in order to serve Him where He is.<sup>12</sup> This is the one who will be honored by the Father.

Yahshua made the demands of following Him very clear to the rich young ruler. It would be impossible for him to go on with the life he had grown accustomed to and be a fully surrendered disciple at the same time. He would have to choose between his own life — everything he had always taken security in — and the eternal life that he knew Yahshua was extending to him.

*And looking at him, Jesus [Yahshua] felt a love for him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property. (Mark 10:21-22)*

What was he grieving about? What great loss caused such grief?

*Continued on page 20*

\* For more on the name Yahshua, see *What’s In A Name* on page 34 <sup>1</sup> John 7:17 <sup>2</sup> Acts 5:32 <sup>3</sup> John 14:21 <sup>4</sup> John 8:51 <sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:14

<sup>6</sup> Romans 8:5-8 <sup>7</sup> Acts 14:22; Matthew 7:14 <sup>8</sup> Mark 10:17,21,28-30; 3:31-35; Matthew 10:37; 24:14 <sup>9</sup> John 17:3 <sup>10</sup> John 14:21 <sup>11</sup> Romans 10:9 <sup>12</sup> John 12:25-26



*It requires great complexities of reasoning to imagine that Yahshua envisioned such a life of affluence when He preached the so-called “hard sayings” of the gospel.*

## Unreasonable Gospel?

He lost eternal life because he loved his own life more. For Yahshua said that one must hate his life in the world, in order to follow Him.<sup>13</sup> Yahshua was the One who could give him eternal life and told him what he must do in order to have eternal life. But the rich young ruler did not trust Him, even though he believed that what He told him to do would grant him eternal life. The word *grief* there means *to strike the bosom and to beat the breast as an outward sign of an inward grief*. This is what the rich young ruler was doing as he walked away from Eternal Life.

Could the rich young ruler go to the Father any other way, except through Yahshua — the One whom he asked what he must do, in order to be able to go to the Father?<sup>14</sup> Certainly he must have believed in Yahshua, or he would not have asked Him what he had to do in order to have what he wanted. But somehow he knew that he must *do* something more than just believe, for he asked, “What must I do?” But at hearing the unreasonable demands of the gospel, he was full of dread, heaviness, and sorrow. For he had his mind on what he would have to give up — all those things which he could not carry with him to follow Messiah as the other disciples did, who left their employment, family, friends, possessions — everything that would hinder the journey.

The good news does not make sense to one who does not see salvation as a pearl of great price,<sup>15</sup> or as a treasure hidden in a field, which is unattainable without doing what one must do to attain it. And then one must go on after baptism to attain to the kingdom reign of Messiah.<sup>16</sup> The unreasonable

demands of the gospel make the word of God seem unreasonable, and the Father unreasonable to expect anyone to have to *do* what the gospel says one must do in order to trust the Savior for his salvation. All who see Him and His word this way will walk away sad like the rich young ruler.

The rich young ruler was not just sad, but *grieved*, knowing that the heaviness and dread that came upon him was keeping him from drinking the water of life Yahshua offered Him.<sup>17</sup> The word *cowardly* in Revelations 21:8 means *dread*. Why

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***The word “grief” there means “to strike the bosom and to beat the breast as an outward sign of an inward grief.” This is what the rich young ruler was doing as he walked away from Eternal Life.***

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would it say *dread*? Why would the rich young ruler be so dreadfully sad after hearing the good news, as Yahshua called him to follow Him? Why is trusting required for believing?


*And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and*

*brimstone, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:6-8)*

The coward in Revelations 21:8 was filled with dread when he heard the good news of what it would take to drink of the water of life offered to him. As John the Baptist said, “He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but he shall incur the wrath of God.”<sup>18</sup>

## **The Outcome of Obeying the Good News**

Those who trusted Yahshua and gave themselves to actually obey what He said were gathered together into an abundant life with all the others who put their trust completely in Him. Those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed ownership of any possessions, but shared what they had with whoever had need. Whoever had lands or houses or farms, sold them and brought the proceeds and laid them at the apostles’ feet. From there they were distributed to wherever the greatest need was. And great grace was upon them all.<sup>19</sup> This is a life where nothing is held back, everything has to go — every attachment to the world, which is under the sway of the evil one and which will soon pass away.<sup>20</sup> All must be completely detached from everything that would disqualify them from the kingdom reign of Messiah.

But how can one live in the community of believers without leaving the world behind?<sup>21</sup> For one cannot drink the water of life freely unless he has no other cause greater than to drink. For that is what the word *freely* in Revelations 22:17 means — *without cause* — with no cause that would keep you from drinking what God has freely given. 

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<sup>13</sup> John 12:25-26 <sup>14</sup> John 14:6 <sup>15</sup> Matthew 13:44-45 <sup>16</sup> Philippians 3:10-13; Revelation 2:11; 3:21-22 <sup>17</sup> John 7:37-39 <sup>18</sup> John 3:36 <sup>19</sup> Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; See the story, *Son of Encouragement* on page 21 <sup>20</sup> 1 John 5:19; 2:17 <sup>21</sup> Luke 9:60



# Son of Encouragement

Joseph was in love. It was obvious. There was no way he could have done what he had done without being “head over heels” in love. In fact, his family had looked at him askance when he came home and told them who he had moved in with. Horrified, appalled, dismayed, condemning, and disapproving are the words to describe their response. Cold, aloof, withdrawn was their demeanor towards him after pleading, bribing, cajoling, appealing, threatening, and reasoning did no good whatsoever in persuading him to turn back from his choice.

“Don’t be unreasonable!” was the catch cry. “This feeling of so-called love will wear off and then where will you be?”

“Your reputation will be ruined.”

“Don’t burn your bridges.”

“I was headstrong once,” said his father, “but this is absurd. Listen to your father who has the wisdom of years. Don’t commit yourself wholeheartedly to this.”

“At least be circumspect.”

But Joseph would not listen to reason. You might have thought he was an impetuous youth, sowing his wild oats in love, but actually he was a steady man, married and respectable, very respectable, a man of property and influence who was casting it all away for the sake of love. He had met a man, not just any man, but a man who knew Yahshua.\* And

the man took him home to meet those who had seen Yahshua and heard the gospel He had preached.

While visiting in Jerusalem he had been invited home to a little cluster of small mudbrick-and-stone houses. What on earth did he see worth seeing when he came to dinner that night? Certainly they were hospitable, in the way that Middle Eastern people are famous for being hospitable, so perhaps he wasn’t struck by that. Something did strike him though, enough to want to come live with them.

Come live with them? Joseph already had a nice house, a pleasant and spacious home. Coming from a wealthy family, he was accustomed to having his own space. He and his wife had a room of their own, and their children their own rooms. He had a living room for receiving guests and a courtyard for dining. Their

kitchen was separate from the house. The servants lived in their quarters above the kitchen and stables.

And although living all together in small spaces wasn’t unusual for the culture of the day (regular people usually had the whole family living in their one- or two-room houses) these people were squished together, even more than normal. And yet, they were extraordinarily content with the arrangement. There were many families living together, finding the way to share their cramped spaces without exasperating one another, being sensitive to the needs of the others. They were quite happy to welcome him to stay the night, even though it meant a shuffle and someone giving up their sleeping space for him. He noticed that they worked out ways to combine the roof spaces and used one house in a cluster to be the central kitchen. They said



**\* For more on the name Yahshua, see *What's In A Name* on page 34**

they could always find room for one more, because whenever they packed out one house, their God gave them another one.

God gave them another house? “How does God give houses?” he had to ask. “Through the hearts that respond to our Master’s gospel,” came the response. And of course, Joseph had to ask who their Master was and what was his “gospel.” Back then, if someone said they had a master, it was not a poetic or historic title. When they referred to their master, Joseph knew then that they were servants, even slaves, of a property owner like himself. He was called “Master” by his servants and he essentially owned their lives, telling them what to do. They had no life other than serving him within the confines of his house and estate. His wealth and enterprises provided for all of their needs too, and they lived all their lives serving him. He was their master and he ruled over them. So he didn’t need an explanation for the word *master*, but for the word *gospel*.

Excitedly they told him the very words of their Master, passed on by faithful men who had followed Him. They didn’t have everything written down in chapters and books, so they wouldn’t have referred Joseph in any way to a Bible. But they spoke to him the words of Yahshua that we have recorded in the Bible by the Holy Spirit.

*Gospel* means “good news” and it was quite the news. It took quite some time to tell, probably the whole evening and then some. They had to explain the purpose of the gospel, that it would produce a nation on earth that would be a foretaste of the kingdom of God. They had to explain the whys and wherefores of its terms, or Joseph would not be able to understand what Yahshua meant by saying, “No one can be My

disciple unless he forsakes all that he has.” Most of all they couldn’t help but tell him all about their wonderful Master.

His parents protested, “Joseph, don’t be a fool. How do you know that is true? No one rises from the dead. They’re hucksters, after your money!” But Joseph believed; he believed the unbelievable. He couldn’t explain it reasonably to his parents or his business associates. He

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***Eternal life — a gift freely given to any who would follow Yahshua to where His life had ended up. When Yahshua had stood before Pilate, He had been penniless, without home or security, betrayed by a close friend, abandoned by all His friends, despised by His countrymen, hated by the establishment, accused and branded a criminal, beaten and bloodied, and with no reputation or strength left. “Would you follow this Man?”***

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could only say, “I know what I know. I saw a people who live a resurrected life. I believe.”

It was hardly a satisfactory answer or reason for giving away all that you’ve earned and all your security, but what else could Joseph do? “It’s the least I can do to serve Him. He died for me. It’s life for life.” You see, back in those days, men still knew the value of a ransom. They

knew that if someone died for you, you owed him your whole life, even to serve as a bondsman for the rest of your days. Joseph knew it was only fitting to do so.

When he had heard about Yahshua’s death as his Passover lamb, he knew that his own sins would take him to death if he clung to his own life. “What shall I do?” he had asked.

“The only thing you can do,” Peter had said. “If you believe in your innermost heart that what we have said is true, that Yahshua was raised from the dead, then you need to confess with your mouth that He is your Master.” Master — a chilling, final word in Hebrew, *ha Adôn*, meaning among other things, *controller*. “Confess that Yahshua will control you as a master owns his slaves, and come, pick up your cross and follow Him.”

The cross — the shameful, public death for those who were outcasts from society. Peter didn’t mean that all disciples would undergo the physical torture and execution on the cross, but all disciples would bear the disgrace for following their Master. There was a death, a death to self, and it was right in front of him. Peter’s words to him didn’t need to be recorded. They are the same words his Master spoke to them.

Joseph could keep his life in this world and dismiss the requirements of the gospel as unreasonable. He could keep his house and his wealth and his reputation and his family’s approval, at least in this life. Or he could willingly lose his life and so have eternal life.

Eternal life — a gift freely given to any who would follow Yahshua to where His life had ended up. When Yahshua had stood before Pilate, He had been penniless, without home or security, betrayed by a close

hear from each other, because truly they were now living on different planes — one natural, the other spiritual.

Legally his father couldn't restrain him, and in the face of family hostility, Joseph sold all the estate that belonged to him. He couldn't release his servants without providing a new master for them, so he told them the good news that he had received. They could be free from sin and guilt, and they could come into this new life with him. Their servitude would not be much different in the daily life they had with him, but they could give up the futility of living for this life alone. They could have their sins forgiven, have eternal life and the privilege of building up this new spiritual Israel. Was it good news to them? It isn't recorded whether they came with him or not. Nor is the response of Joseph's wife or children.

Of course, Joseph also gave up his old fallen religion that had not been able to transfer him from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. He sold everything he had and hurried back to Jerusalem, eager to begin an entirely new life, being squished in and told what to do, without a penny of his own to meet his creature comforts. He actually laid *all* the proceeds of the sale of his estate at the feet of those men who had told him the good news. It was a lot of money, for he had been a rich man.

Just as he had heard the first night he visited, God provided for them through the heart of someone who responded to the good news of their Master. With the money he gave up they were able to buy another house for more brothers and sisters! And they even gave him a new name; they called him the "son of encouragement" — *Barnabas*. 🌿

friend, abandoned by all His friends, despised by His countrymen, hated by the establishment, accused and branded a criminal, beaten and bloodied, and with no reputation or strength left. "Would you follow this man?" Peter had asked him.

Following Yahshua was going to be hard, but gratitude for what this man had done for him welled up in Joseph's heart. It was right then that he fell in love. He fell in love with Yahshua and he fell in love with Peter, the man who told him this good news. He fell in love with John and with James and Andrew. He fell in love with all of them. He wanted their Master to be his Master.

Joseph knew what it meant to have a master, although he had never had one over him before. He knew he would have to leave his home and come live at his Master's home. Of course, he would have to do this in order to serve Him where He was. He could no more serve Yahshua from his house on Cyprus than one of his own servants could serve him, Joseph, while he had an occupation somewhere else. That would have divided his interests, and Yahshua rightly said that no one can serve two masters at the same time. You hate one and love the other. If Yahshua

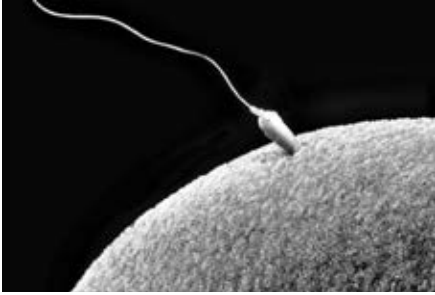
was to be his Master, it was only reasonable that Joseph would be His servant, and give up his own life to serve Him.

His mother's contempt at her son being a menial servant was indescribable. His father was more concerned with his money and reputation. He certainly thought Joseph a complete fool, even deranged to consider something as unreasonable as giving up all his possessions to follow a no-hoper who had been crucified by the Romans as a common criminal.

Joseph, being an Israelite, excitedly told his father that Yahshua was the fulfillment of the prophecies, and that His people were the new Israel, an obedient people that Yahweh longed for. Not surprisingly, this did not in any way dissuade his father. He had lived on Cyprus, even though as a Levite he should have been serving in the Temple in Jerusalem. Obviously he didn't think the commandments of God needed to be taken at face value. Their God, he maintained, only required that they come to the Temple twice a year. He wasn't so unreasonable as to expect anything more than that when, after all, they had a living to make.

So neither father nor son could

# LIFE IN TH



**M**y life began like yours — out of 300 million some-odd sperm cells, I was one of the first to make it to the little egg. Somehow I had the key and was welcomed in even before those who had gotten there before me. Once I got in, all the others were locked out and died without achieving their goal. I was the chosen one. So, full of purpose and destiny, I waited... as a body was prepared for me... the vehicle that would carry me through this world.

I was born into this world in 1961. As an infant, my parents took me to the Catholic Church to be christened, to ensure my eternal destiny with Jesus in Heaven. When I was five, they put me on a bus every morning to go to kindergarten. There I learned how to pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. I also learned new and exciting ways to go against my conscience with the other little children in my class.

As I grew up I spent a great deal of time with my main tutor — the

television. As I fixed my young eyes on the screen, a myriad thoughts, ideals, sentiments, concepts, opinions, attitudes, persuasions, temptations, passions and desires imprinted themselves on the wet clay of my eternal soul. Along with these came millions of images of every conceivable kind, many that I wish I had never seen. These things formed much of my outlook on life and the perception I had of myself, and the world I was being conformed to.

In fifth grade I started playing little league baseball. I was a pretty good player, even though I was smaller and not as strong as most of the other boys. One thing I discovered early on was that I hated to lose. My experience with competitive sports seemed to really strengthen something in me to desire to have first place, not just in games, but every area of my life.

It's not hard to see how this little boy developed into a very proud,

selfish, disrespectful, opinionated, wise-cracking, foolish, rebellious, lustful young man. I lived exclusively for my own pleasure and gain. I wouldn't let anyone tell me what to do. The way I treated many people, especially women, ruined their lives in certain ways. All the while, I somehow thought I was a pretty good guy, and if there was a God, then surely He knew my heart. Sometimes I could sense that the clay was hardening, but I tried not to think about it too much.

Then I became a born-again Christian. Someone had encouraged me to read the gospels about the life of Jesus. I was very convicted and enlightened by what I read and decided to give my life to the Lord, and was baptized. So I launched into my new life as a "born-again" believer, full of hope that my life would really change and that I could gain some real confidence that God had a place for me in His eternity.

I began to learn about how a believer is supposed to conduct himself. But somehow a lot of these things weren't so easy for me to understand. For example, I was told, "*Be in the world, but not of it.*" Well, how do you do that? I mean, I was totally wrapped up in the world — I was educated by the world, worked in the world, I was entertained by the world's music and



# IS WORLD

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*I was told, “Be in the world, but not of it.” Well, how do you do that?*

*I mean, I was totally wrapped up in the world — I was educated by the world, worked in the world, I was entertained by the world’s music and movies, I kept up on all my favorite sports. In fact, I lived my life much like every other person I knew who wasn’t a professing Christian, except that I went to Church on Sunday.*

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movies, I kept up on all my favorite sports. In fact, I lived my life much like every other person I knew who wasn’t a professing Christian, except that I went to church on Sunday (well, as much as I could anyways).

## **What I Learned...**

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)*

So, you know, I could say, “I don’t love the world or the things of the world,” just like I could say, “Oh, I am not *of* the world.” But I really wanted to know what John was talking about, because according to him, if I did love the world, then God’s love was *not* really in me. The Greek word translated *love* in that verse means the direction of the will towards whomever or

whatever one finds his joy in,<sup>1</sup> which is inescapably revealed in how one spends his time, money, and energy. John goes on to describe things a little more:

*For all that is in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:16)*

The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes... This speaks of

desire, the longings of the mind — the motivating factor of a person’s life. What are the desires that drive this world? Wealth, fame, position, possessions, status, comfort, etc. It has to do with what one sets his mind on — what kinds of things he desires. So who is not involved in these things? It’s the normal life in society today that Christians and everyone else I know indulge in.

Many even claim that material wealth is a sign of God’s blessing. But Christ Himself said, “No one of you can be My disciple unless he gives up all his possessions.”<sup>2</sup> So how does one give up all of his possessions in the context of the lifestyle of modern Christianity?



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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 12:2 <sup>2</sup> Luke 14:33



## The Pride of Life

The Amplified Bible defines the pride of life as: *assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things*. It says these do not come from the Father but are from the world itself. As a Christian I was supposed to change my thinking so that I was no longer trusting in my own resources, but in God alone. But here I go, investing heavily in health, dental, home, fire, theft and life insurance, in an effort to insulate my life from any potential vulnerability.<sup>3</sup>

As far as putting my trust in God, it's difficult to know where to turn. The Word tells us to "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." But I'm taught in my Church, "don't listen to men, only God." I'm not sure where that is in the Scripture. But I guess I can't really listen to the people who tell me that. So here I am, left to rely on hearing some kind of voice in my heart to know what God's will is for my life. I read books by Christian authors and listen to

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*As far as putting my trust in God, it's difficult to know where to turn. The Word tells us to "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." But I'm taught in my Church "Don't listen to men, only to God." I'm not sure where that is in the Scripture. But I guess I can't really listen to the people who tell me that.*

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Christian radio to get a little more insight into living by Christian principals, but there are so many different schools of thought that I end up feeling like what Paul said about "being tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine."<sup>4</sup>

## Foundations of This World

The other definition of the pride of life is: *assurance in the stability of earthly things*. Somehow as Christians, we seem to be intensely interested in preserving the foundations of the crumbling society around us. More and more the Christian leaders encourage us to get out there and vote, attend rallies, and write letters applying political pressure to the nation's leaders, all in an effort to shape society according to "Biblical Principles."

But then John goes on to say:

*And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:17)*

It seems to me that the foundations of this world have

been eroding for a long, long time. I remember when divorce was a shameful thing and there were many things we didn't even speak of that are now openly flaunted in public. So then I read what Isaiah prophesied:

*The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (Isaiah 24:5-6)*

Well, it's not too hard to imagine that this will come upon this world. It seems the people of the Earth are clearly guilty of transgressing laws, violating statutes and breaking the everlasting covenant.<sup>5</sup> And the curse is coming upon the Earth and its inhabitants. I don't think anyone would argue with that. But is it our job to make the world a better place to live? If we're striving to make the world a better place to live, doesn't that just prove that we're trying to find our assurance in the stability of earthly things? Aren't we seeking our comfort in full in this life?

<sup>3</sup> Luke 6:24-26 <sup>4</sup> Ephesians 4:14 <sup>5</sup> Genesis 3:16-19; 9:1-7 <sup>6</sup> John 9:41; 1 John 2:4



## The Starting Point

All this takes me back to the starting point — my relationship with Christ. I either belong to Him or I don't. I am either forgiven or I'm not. This is important! You know what I mean? Like the old saying goes, "Just because you say it, don't make it so." Regardless of what other Christians tell me about how to think, and how they assure me that I'm saved, it seems there is some objective criteria in the Scriptures by which to judge my salvation. If I do not truly know Him, but claim that I do, it would be better if I had not been the one that got to the egg first.<sup>6</sup>

I consider the words of Christ in John 12:25-26:

*He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.*

So if I love my life in this world, then I will lose it. That word *love*, means *to be attached* to life in this world by common interests and sentiment. But I can expect to inherit eternal life if I hate my life in this world, *detaching* myself from this world and its fallen agenda and its crown prince. After all, John said that "the whole world lies under the power of the evil one."<sup>7</sup> Christ Himself referred to Satan as "the ruler of this world."<sup>8</sup>

In order to be detached from life in this world, one must follow Him to where He is, for it is only there, in that place where one can serve Him. And it is only those who serve Him who will be honored by His Father.

This brings light to what He said in Luke 14:26,

*If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*

We must come to Him without any other attachments, even to our own life in this world, if we want to be His disciple. The Greek says that if we don't forsake these things, we *won't be able* to be His disciple. So it's not a matter of being saved by doing some good deed, but rather it's the reality that no one can serve

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***In order to be detached from life in this world, one must follow Him to where He is, for it is only there, in that place where one can serve Him. And it is only those who serve Him who will be honored by His Father.***

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two masters. Christ spoke of this dichotomy in Matthew 6:31-33,

<sup>31</sup>*Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'* <sup>32</sup>*For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.* <sup>33</sup>*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

So one category — those who are *of* this world — is described in verses 31 and 32. The other category — His people who serve Him where He is — is described in verse 33. So where is this *place* where


you can seek first His Kingdom and have all your needs met? I guess it takes a community, just as it did in the First Church in Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup>

## The Spirit and the Bride Say, "Come!"

All things considered, I can only conclude that the only confidence I can have that I have passed out of death and into life, is if I am living a life of love<sup>10</sup> and unity<sup>11</sup> with all those who have surrendered everything to make Him their only possession and their King.

You may have guessed by now that I found the narrow way out of *this world and its lusts* into the abundant life of Messiah where we are able to serve Him where He is — where He has caused His name to dwell, in His Community. He is the Chief Cornerstone and unshakable Foundation of this house.<sup>12</sup> For there is no other way the Church can be than the way it was when it was called "the Way."<sup>13</sup>

This is the witness of the truth of God's love to the world that must go to the ends of the Earth before the end of this age can come and Christ can return and set up His Kingdom on the Earth. It is necessary that there would be a tangible witness of His life before the nations and the clear comprehensive gospel to give revelation and understanding of how one comes into this life.<sup>14</sup>

So my warm invitation to you is to come and visit one of our communities and get to know us. We were just like you, groping to know how to serve God in a fallen world. But now He has made a way for us to live together in peace and harmony and He has given us a practical, down-to-earth way to obey His commands every day. Please come! 

*Michael*

<sup>7</sup> 1 John 5:19 <sup>8</sup> John 14:30 <sup>9</sup> Acts 4:32-34 <sup>10</sup> 1 John 3:14,16,17; John 13:34,35 <sup>11</sup> John 17:21-24 <sup>12</sup> 1 Peter 2:5,6; 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:19

<sup>13</sup> Acts 9:2; 2:41-47; 4:32-37; 22:4; 24:14,22 <sup>14</sup> Matthew 24:14; Acts 2:40; 5:20

*Thoughtful people  
have long struggled  
in the face of the  
Christian doctrine  
of Heaven and Hell,  
causing them to  
consider the destiny  
of the countless  
millions of people  
who have never had  
the opportunity to  
hear about Jesus.*



# *What about the Heathen?*

*Understanding the  
Three Eternal Destinies of Man  
as presented by the  
Word of God*

*T*his question looms in the minds of many Christians, and the classic answer, at least from the Calvinist camp, makes God out to be a vindictive<sup>1</sup> monster: *all men are born totally depraved, worthy of eternal damnation regardless of how they live their lives or whether they have ever heard of Jesus Christ.*

We utterly reject this misrepresentation of God's justice and would like to set the record straight from the Holy Scriptures. While it is *not* possible for a man to work his way to heaven, it is also *not* true that he is doomed to eternal death regardless of how he lives his life. What *is* the truth about man's eternal destiny?

First of all, it is true that when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command in the Garden of Eden and ate the forbidden fruit, they incurred the sentence of death:

*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17)*

Their physical death was not immediate, but their spiritual death was, and their fallen condition was

passed on to their offspring, as the record shows, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore, since “the wages of sin is death,”<sup>3</sup> then “it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”<sup>4</sup>

This much is clear to most Christians, but what happens after the judgment? This is the part that is widely misunderstood. But remember, the Bible says “it is appointed for men to die once. . .” It doesn’t say *twice*. Yet there is a *second death*:

*But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* (Revelation 21:8)

This verse identifies a certain character of people whose destiny will be a second and unending death in the lake of fire. But what about those who are not of that character? That is why there must be a judgment:

*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one*

*according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.* (Revelation 20:11-15)

Let’s be clear: this is *not* the judgment of *believers* in Christ, for their eternal destiny does not depend on their works.<sup>5</sup> This is the judgment of all those who died *without Christ*. They are raised from the *first death* to be judged as to whether they are worthy of the *second death*, based on how they lived their lives.

Now some will say this judgment is merely a formality — not a judgment at all, but a sentencing. They will say that no one’s name was found written in the Book of Life because they didn’t believe in Jesus,<sup>6</sup> so all were cast into the lake of fire. They fail to distinguish between this “Book of Life” for the nations and the “Lamb’s Book of Life” for the holy nation. They suppose that God raises men from the first death to stand before Him so that He can gloat at them while He pretends to look up their name in the Book of Life, knowing it will not be there. Then He callously casts them into the lake of fire. But this is not God’s character.

Abraham, the father of our faith, when he appealed to God to spare the few righteous in Sodom, knew something about the character of God that escapes many Christians today:

*“Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked,*

<sup>1</sup> *vindictive* — disposed to seek revenge; showing malicious ill will and a desire to hurt; motivated by spite.

<sup>2</sup> Romans 3:23

<sup>3</sup> Romans 6:23

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 9:27

<sup>5</sup> There is a judgment of believers that Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, but its purpose is to determine who is worthy to rule with Christ during the Millennial Age. This judgment takes place at Christ’s return, 1000 years before the so-called “Great White Throne” judgment. But the eternal destiny of true believers is sealed according to Ephesians 1:13-14.

<sup>6</sup> The “cowardly and unbelieving” in Revelation 21:8 are those who *willfully rejected* the gospel as John 3:18,36 describes, not those who *never heard* the gospel. But some Christians will say there is no excuse, because if anyone were really sincere, God would send a missionary to him, even in the remotest corner of China. Rightly did our Master say of such self-righteous judges: “Woe to you, for you travel over land and sea to win one convert, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves!” (Matthew 23:15)

*What about the millions of people who never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ? Are they going to eternal destruction?*



## What About the Heathen?

*so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”* (Genesis 18:25)

Of course Abraham was especially thinking of his nephew Lot, and God heard his plea and rescued Lot and his daughters. Although he was not included in the covenant with Abraham, Lot is described as being *righteous*.<sup>7</sup> And while this passage does not speak of Lot's eternal destiny, but merely his temporal deliverance from the destruction of Sodom, yet it speaks of God's character as understood by Abraham, the *friend* of God.<sup>8</sup>

We stand with Abraham, knowing that God will righteously judge all people according to their works, and not just throw them all willy-nilly into the lake of fire. Those who are not *worthy* of the second death will be granted a second life, and it is over them that Messiah and His Bride (those who have truly believed in Him) will rule throughout eternity.<sup>9</sup>

Now let's take a closer look at the basis of this judgment:

*“Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil...’* (Genesis 3:22)

After Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would have to live by that knowledge, choosing to do the good and not to do the evil. Even though fallen man could not do this perfectly, God still held him accountable to exercise his will to overcome the temptation to do evil, just as He told Cain:

*“If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”* (Genesis 4:7)

Of course, Cain did not master it, but all are not like Cain. All do not murder. All are not immoral. Many strive to do the good they know in their conscience, and are grieved when they fail, and do everything possible to make restitution when they do wrong. These have a natural righteousness of their own, a natural faith or persuasion that God is good and that He will judge all men justly. They value the dignity of life. They recognize the image of the

who would fail to respect His image in his fellow man to the point of committing murder. But beyond that, God commissioned Noah and his sons after the flood to be fruitful and multiply abundantly on the earth. If man was now worthless and totally depraved, why would a loving Creator want to fill the earth with such creatures?

So fallen man still bears the image of his Creator and retains intrinsic<sup>11</sup> worth to the degree that he lives by the knowledge of good and evil, inherent<sup>12</sup> in his conscience. Even though he has an inborn inclination to sin, he is able and accountable to do the good that he knows in his conscience and to

*Far be it from you to slay the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and wicked alike.  
Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?* (GENESIS 18:25)

Creator in His creation. They work hard and are faithful in their marriages.<sup>10</sup> They labor to put their values into their children. They bear suffering without growing bitter. They try to keep a good conscience. And God does not despise their efforts.

True, all men sin and fall short of the glory of God, but not all fall *utterly* short. Glory means weight or value. Adam, before he fell, had great value, having been made in God's image. When he fell, God's image in him was marred, but not obliterated. This is very clear from what God said *after* Adam's fall, and in fact even after the Flood:

*“Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man. And you, be fruitful and multiply; abound on the earth and multiply in it.”* (Genesis 9:6-7)

Man still bears God's image and has great value in God's eyes, as He requires capital punishment for any

keep himself from the kinds of sins that would make him worthy of the second death.<sup>13</sup>

Yet regardless of how careful a man is to live by his conscience, he will not do so perfectly, for he is a fallen creature. He will sin, and his sin must be paid for, as it is an inviolable law that the wages of sin is death. A man's good deeds cannot save him from the consequences of his sin — the first death. His natural righteousness cannot restore him to fellowship with God, nor make him worthy of ruling and reigning with Christ. All of his good deeds are of no more value than filthy rags<sup>14</sup> for obtaining the righteousness of God, which can only be imputed to a man on the basis of faith, which comes from hearing the word of Christ from someone sent to preach the Good News.<sup>15</sup>

So whoever dies without Christ must go to the first death to pay the wages of his own sin, since he does not

<sup>7</sup> 2 Peter 2:7-8

<sup>8</sup> 2 Chr 20:7; Isa 41:8; James 2:23

<sup>9</sup> Rev 22:3-5

<sup>10</sup> Gen 3:16-19

<sup>11</sup> *intrinsic* — belonging to a thing by its very nature.

<sup>12</sup> *inherent* — existing as an essential constituent or characteristic; in the nature of something.

<sup>13</sup> Rev 21:8; 22:15; Rom 1:28-32

<sup>14</sup> Isa 64:6

<sup>15</sup> Rom 10:13-17

have a sacrifice for his sins. How then does he pay these wages? It is according to how much worth remains in him, how much integrity and courage he has to face the truth about himself. For in death he is finally alone with his conscience, forced to face his sin, with nowhere to hide and nothing to distract his mind from the awareness of his own guilt. Every evil deed, every base thought, every selfish motive comes out of hiding to torture him. Like a worm burrowing into the recesses of his memory, eating away at his every excuse, so is the path of his thoughts as his conscience fully awakens. The unquenchable fire of his self-inquisition leaves him either weeping in remorse or gnashing his teeth as he resists the truth about himself.<sup>16</sup>

Those who resist the truth, reasoning away their guilt even in death, prove themselves unable to pay sin's wages. They are the same in death as they were in life — set in their ways, their hearts fully hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. A second death awaits them, where they will gnash their teeth eternally. There is a mystery here. King David wrote,

*“From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from His dwelling place He watches all who live on earth — He who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.”* (Psalm 33:13-15)

The Creator of man forms, fashions, or molds each man's heart according to what he does or gives himself to. Eventually the heart, like clay, becomes “set” in its way, and so that

*The righteous  
are not perfect  
and do sin.  
Still, they work  
hard and are  
faithful in their  
marriages,  
abiding by  
the truth they  
know in their  
conscience.*



person's character will remain eternally<sup>17</sup> — some bent towards evil, and some towards good.

The latter, in death, will weep in remorse, accepting the full responsibility for their sins rather than blaming them on others. They are the ones who are able to pay sin's wages. When they are resurrected to stand judgment, they will have fully received the discipline of death and will find mercy and not condemnation. This mercy and comfort will come at the hands of the bride of Messiah, who, according to the Apostle Paul,<sup>18</sup> will be judging the nations on God's behalf. They will wipe away the tears of those who were judged not worthy of the second death:

*“Then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’”* (Revelation 21:2-4)

The “tabernacle” or “dwelling place” of God is the bride or wife of Messiah,<sup>19</sup> who will dwell with men — the resurrected righteous people of the nations. That is how God Himself will be with them — through the wife of Messiah.<sup>20</sup> Redeemed Man will rule

with Messiah over Restored Man,<sup>21</sup> and the original commission given to Adam will be restored to him, once sin and death and the evil one himself are no more:<sup>22</sup>

*“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”* (Genesis 1:28)

Amazingly, in Psalm 8, King David prophesied that man (both the redeemed and restored man) would rule over all the works of God's hands, including all the galaxies of planets. Surely without death, restored man will quickly fill up the earth and go on to colonize the universe with restored humanity, under the ever-increasing government of God<sup>23</sup> — the redeemed corporate<sup>24</sup> man, which is the wife<sup>25</sup> of Messiah.

So we hope that you can see that there is a lot more in God's heart towards His highest creation, mankind, than to throw countless millions into the lake of fire for the crime of not having been born in the right place and time to hear the true gospel. If you are interested in reading more about man's eternal destiny, please visit our web site, [www.twelvetribe.org](http://www.twelvetribe.org), and look for the section about ***The Three Eternal Destinies of Man***. Or better yet, just come and visit one of our communities and we will be more than happy to talk with you. ☺

<sup>16</sup> Rom 2:14-16; Mt 18:34; Acts 2:24;

1 Cor 15:55-56

<sup>17</sup> Rev 22:11

<sup>18</sup> 1 Cor 6:2

<sup>19</sup> Rev 21:9

<sup>20</sup> Rev 21:9,12

<sup>21</sup> Rev 22:5

<sup>22</sup> Rev 20:10,14

<sup>23</sup> Rev 21:24, NKJV; Isa 9:6-7

<sup>24</sup> Corporate — composed of individuals acting together as one entity.

<sup>25</sup> Rev 21:9,12

# The Righteousness of God

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed...*

*(Romans 1:16-17)*

The Gospel is something that reveals the righteousness, or rightness of God, and certainly it is true that the greatest *right* thing that God did was John 3:16,

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Yet it is interesting that this is not what Paul goes on to talk about in Romans 1:

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness... (Romans 1:18)*

According to Paul the ungodly and unrighteous men that His wrath is poured out upon are characterized by the fact that they *suppress the truth* in unrighteousness. Of course if one is met with the opportunity to respond to the good news of Christ's sacrifice and rejects it, you could see that as suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. However, in what Paul proceeds to write he does not go in that direction:

*...because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been*

*made, so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1:19-20)*

He says that the truth they suppress is something that is evident within them (*for God has made it so*). It is an inborn understanding of God's invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature. Not only is that knowledge known deep within us, but it is also substantiated through what has been made.

Is this speaking of John 3:16? Is that what is known about God innately? Not according to Romans 10:14 and 17:

*How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ... So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

So John 3:16 is not instinctively known, but has to be *heard*. However, it says that *all* are without excuse in regard to knowing the things of Romans 1:18-32.

*For even though they **knew** God, they did not **honor** Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (Romans 1:21)*

What kind of knowing could they innately have of God within their very nature, and how could

they honor Him as God according to that knowing? It is clear that there is a requirement put upon men based on what they are born with, which is apart from John 3:18,

*He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Here **Yahshua**\* says that the one who has *not believed* in the name of the only begotten Son of God is judged already. Paul would ask, "How can they believe if they haven't heard?" *Not believing* indicates a *conscious rejection* of something that has been clearly communicated to you. It is understandable that God would hold you accountable for that. To say that God would hold accountable those who have *not* heard the message from a reputable source *conceals*, rather than *revealing* the righteousness of God. Rather than giving the Gospel its power, it takes it away. ❀

*(Please see "What about the Heathen" on page 28 for more on this subject.)*

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**\* For more on the name Yahshua, see the following article, *What's In A Name***



# WHAT'S IN A NAME



*Some time ago when I was in college, I was searching for something meaningful in life. I wasn't finding it in school. I had been primed all my life to go to college and then on to "life", whatever that meant. Somehow, being one more cog in the machine didn't appeal to me. I wanted true friends and I wanted to do something with my life that really made a difference. I was experiencing neither.*

*A few years earlier in high school, I was at a concert in much of the same state of mind as I would be several years later — lonely and searching for something.*

*When I left the concert someone must have handed me a little paper. It was from some people who lived in a community. This was very interesting to me since I was looking for something like this. However, in the busyness of my life, I put it into my closet and forgot about it.*

*As the years went by, I would see them at many of the events that I went to. They were beginning to capture my interest. One day a friend and I happened to park right behind their big maroon-and-cream-colored bus. On the back it read, "We Know the Way, We'll Bring You Home." I thought to myself, "That's what I want, a real home." As we were sitting there, I asked my friend if he knew anything about them.*

*He answered, "Yeah, they are some community that follows God."*

When he said this, my heart leapt inside. That was what I was looking for — a community where people loved the God of the Bible. So I asked him, "Do they believe in Jesus?"

"No way," was his reply, "they follow some guru called 'Yahshua.'"

"Yahshua," I thought to myself, "who is that?" I was disappointed, to say the least. These people seemed so nice, but if they didn't follow the Son of God then I didn't want to have anything to do with them. If there was one thing I didn't

need to get involved with, it was some strange religion. So I decided to steer clear of them.

Eventually, there I was in college, still very lonely and still searching. Some friends had invited me to several concerts that would be happening that summer. I decided to go with them. At one of the first shows, I saw that same bus and I was instantly intrigued again. Something about these people seemed so special, but, I had to remind myself, they didn't follow the Son of God. It had been a couple of years since I had first come in contact with them. I had

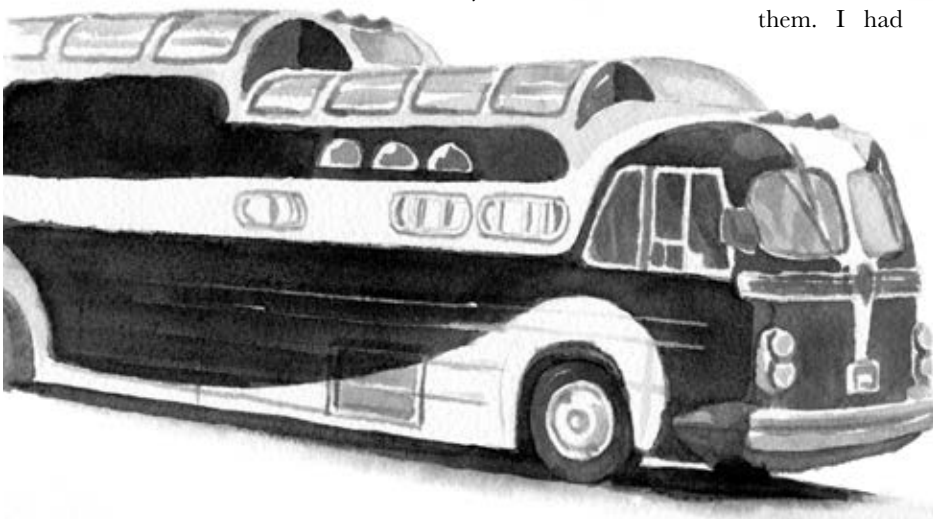
gone my way, searching for something real, but had found nothing.

At one of those shows, I was walking through the parking lot and saw a good friend of mine. Oddly enough, he was sitting very near that bus. He was talking with someone and I sat down to join the conversation. After a few minutes, I asked him if he knew anything about that bus. He told me that I should talk to the other man, because he was part of the community that was traveling on the bus.

I was excited, since I had never actually talked to anyone from the bus; I had just heard things about them. The things I had heard about them following "Yahshua" had kept me away for almost two years. But I was full of questions about the community and what they believed. My first question was, of course, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

To my surprise, the man said, "Of course we do. Our entire life revolves around Him and His teachings!"

I could hardly believe it!



He went on to explain to me that while most people call the Son of God Jesus, they preferred His original Hebrew name, Yahshua. He told me that it actually meant “God’s Salvation.”

The more he talked the more everything began to make sense to me. I had grown up in a society that had caused me to question everything, but somehow I never questioned what had been handed down to me at church. I thought that because these people didn’t say Jesus, although they were full of love and kindness, they must be bad. But what I found out was that *Jesus* wasn’t even the Savior’s name!

So now, as you have guessed, I am a part of this people who follow the Son of God, and I would like to share with you the amazing things I have learned about His name.

In the days of John the Baptist and the Son of God, the preserved language of the devout Jews was Hebrew. So, when the angel Gabriel brought the good news to the Hebrew virgin, Miriam (or *Mary* in English), that she would give birth to the Savior of the world, and told her what His name would be, what language do you suppose he spoke? Hebrew, of course! And certainly Miriam and Yoceph (or *Joseph* in English) named the child just as the angel had commanded them — *Yahshua*.

In Matthew 1:21, your Bible probably reads, “...and you shall call His name *Jesus*, for He will save His people from their sins.” But the name *Jesus* is a modern English adaptation of the Greek name, *Iesous*, which is itself a corruption of the original Hebrew name *Yahshua*. The name *Jesus* or *Iesous* has no meaning of its own,<sup>1</sup> but the Hebrew name *Yahshua* literally means *Yahweh’s Salvation*,<sup>2</sup> which makes sense out of what the angel said in Matthew 1:21, “...you shall call His name *Yahshua* [Yahweh’s Salvation], for He shall save His people from their sins.”

If you look in an old King James Bible, you will find the name Jesus in these two passages:

*Which also our fathers that came after brought in with **Jesus** into the*

*possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David... (Acts 7:45, KJV)*

*For if **Jesus** had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. (Hebrews 4:8, KJV)*

However, if you look in any modern Bible, including more recently printed King James Bibles, you will find that in place of the name Jesus they use the name Joshua, for in the context it is clear that it is speaking there of Moses’ successor and not the Son of God. But in the Greek manuscript the name in both of these verses is *Iesous*.

You see, *Joshua* is the popular English transliteration of the Hebrew name *Yahshua*. Joshua of the Old Testament had the same name as the One called *Jesus* in the New Testament, for Joshua was the prophetic forerunner of the Son of God, bringing Israel into the Promised Land and leading them to victory over their enemies. But since the translators obviously know this fact, why do they only translate *Iesous* as *Joshua* in these two verses, and as Jesus everywhere else?

The fact is, the name of God’s Son was not even pronounced as “Jesus” in English until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, simply because there was no “J” sound or letter in English until then.<sup>3</sup> The modern letter “J” developed from the letter “I” which began to be written with a “tail” when it appeared as the first letter in a word. So in old English the name now written as Jesus was actually written and pronounced much like the

original Greek *Iesous*. Eventually the hard “J” sound crept into the English language to accompany the different way of writing the initial “I” in the name.

You may also find it interesting that in Acts 26:14-15, it says that the apostle Paul heard the name of the Son of God pronounced “in the Hebrew tongue” by the Son of God Himself, so he certainly didn’t hear the Greek name *Iesous* or the English name *Jesus*, but rather the Hebrew name, the name above all names, **Yahshua**.<sup>4</sup>

I’d much rather call the Son of God, my Savior, by His true name — the name His own mother, Miriam, and foster father, Yoceph, and all of His Jewish friends called Him. Not only have I found out what His true name is, but His true Body on earth as well. I am so thankful to have finally found true rest with the true Savior. Please take the time to read the other articles in this paper. You are always welcome to come visit us in any of our communities. Our addresses are on the back of this paper.

**Michael**



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Some authorities say that *Iesous* is derived from an earlier form meaning “healing Zeus,” the supreme god of ancient Greek mythology.

<sup>2</sup> **Yah** is the personal name of God, and **shua** is from a Hebrew root word that means “to save.” God identified Himself to Moses as **YAH** (meaning “I AM”) in Exodus 3:14, as in Psalm 68:4 (“whose name is Yah”), and as most familiar in the word **Halleluyah** (“Praise Yah”). And in John 5:43 and 17:11, Yahshua says that He came in His Father’s name, “the name which You have given Me” (NASB), so it is not surprising that the Father’s name would be incorporated into the Son’s name, **Yahshua**.

<sup>3</sup> *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 1496, 1507.

<sup>4</sup> Philippians 2:9; Acts 4:12

**EDAH** — *The word for community in Hebrew is edah, which also means beehive. This word portrays the way a group of people or hive of bees live and work together with a common identity. Bees live a selfless life of devotion to the bee kingdom. They have no concern for themselves but only for the hive and the constant production of honey. So it is with those who are in the communities of God.*

### Like a Swarm

Have you ever watched a beehive? It is fascinating seeing thousands of little bees working together to produce honey. As you come near the hive, you can hear an exciting buzz as they go about the many tasks necessary to keep the hive alive. The workers are responsible to collect nectar and guard the hive. The young bees keep the hive in good condition, feed the larvae, and support in other household chores. There is never a dull moment in the busy life of a little bee.

This is much like the life that we have. No matter what we do, we love to do it together. Daily we gather to thank our Master for His salvation, and to hear Him speak to us through one another. This gathering keeps alive a genuine love and care for each other. As we work, we take advantage of the daily situations, guarding ourselves from the selfishness and pride that would come in to separate us and take away our love. Our children are a vital part of our life. We not only educate them, but we work with them to accomplish the simple tasks necessary to maintain a family life. Our life is not a dull routine of chores, but is full of the warmth that comes from the sweet fellowship of friends speaking their hearts to one another, celebrating the Sabbath every week, and participating in weddings and festivals.

But there are a few things that differ in our life from that of a beehive. One is that we are not driven by instinct or controlled by something separate from our own will. Each of us is here because we chose to leave behind our own separate lives to increase the life of this hive. Our life is not enclosed like the hive of a bee, nor do we have a stinger to harm any uninvited guests. We welcome anyone to experience our life with us. Please come and see what it is like to be part of a beehive of people expressing the warmth and love of our Creator. 🌸

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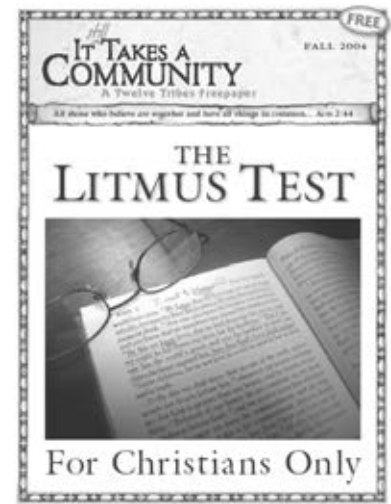
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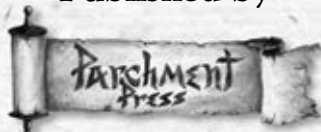
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