

A woman with long black hair and red lipstick, wearing a white lace wedding dress, is sitting on the floor of a jail cell. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. Her right hand is gripping a vertical yellow metal bar. The cell has several vertical yellow bars. The background is dark.

Brand New
OLD
SCHOOL
“Christianity”

A CALL TO THE BRIDE

TODD BINGHAM



Brand New Old School "Christianity" - A Call to the Bride was written to address foundational problems faced in mainstream "Christianity" due to errant doctrinal and anti-Semitic teachings. It was written to provoke the bride of Yeshua to return to the Father's way, clean herself and become the light and salt she is called to be in a world that desperately needs her to fulfill her calling.

Brand New Old School Christianity

A Call to the Bride

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BRAND NEW

OLD SCHOOL

“Christianity”

A call to the bride!

Todd Bingham

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First Edition

Chapter 1

Beginnings

I was all but born in church...more specifically the Southern Baptist denomination of the Christian church. Literally from the time I was in diapers my parents took me to church each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday night. I went to Sunday school, then to the main service pretty much my entire life.

When I was nine years old, my family moved from North Carolina to Florida. My dad took a job with the space program. At that time, I was enrolled in a private school which was connected to a Baptist church. From 2nd grade through junior high my education took place in that “Christian” environment. My only contact with other children who were not being educated in this same environment was through sports and a few neighborhood kids I would play with. We also attended this same Baptist church from the time I was 9 until I was approximately 28 years of age.

I remember as a junior high and high school aged student being a part of the youth group of the church we were attending. Every week, almost without fail, I was in a church meeting of some sort at least twice a week, and that doesn't include special meetings or revivals. To say I was church-ed as a youth would be an understatement. Though as a youth, I do not remember placing any real value on my “Christian” education or the time I spent in church, youth group or other “special” Christian groups or meetings.

At the age of 21 I got married to a wonderful woman who has managed to put up with me to date. Shortly after we were wed, we both joined the praise team at the church I had been attending from age 9. She joined as a vocalist and I as a keyboard player. For the next 5 years, with very few exceptions, we were at church every time the doors were open. If the band was playing, we were there.

Then, at about the age of 26, we began working with the youth group in addition to our involvement in the weekly church services. It was during this time frame, while working with this youth pastor, that I began to learn how to have a “quiet time” or devotional time where I would read from scripture daily and hear what the Father would say to me. I had been church-ed for approximately 26 years at this point.

During one period of time we were at the church 4 and sometimes 5 nights a week. We had the regular weekly church service which took place on Saturday evenings. We had band rehearsal one night a week, youth group meeting one night a week, and youth band rehearsal one night a week. Then, the first Sunday of each month we would have an evening service. We played at youth events and camps as well as other community events. We even went on occasion to other churches to play. On top of all of this, a ladies group met at our house one night a week for a Bible study. I lead worship for them at the beginning of each of these meetings. At various times I was also a part of different leadership teams. We were very involved.

At approximately the age of 28, I was asked by the pastor of another Baptist church in our town to become the worship leader at their church. We believed this was the Father's will so we left the church I had been in for nearly 20 years and went to

be a part of this other church. We were there for about a year or a little more when the pastor of the church resigned. I did not see eye to eye with the new pastor. He was a good man. We just disagreed on some fundamental things. I did not feel I could continue serving that group of people under his leadership. At that point a good friend of mine had started a church so we went to help him with that gathering. It was a very short time before the Father clearly led us to leave Florida and move to western North Carolina. We were 30 years old and had a 6 month old daughter at this point.

We came to North Carolina believing it was training and staging for some explosion of ministry we would most certainly be a part of. After all, we were valuable enough by this point that the Father needed to move us to another location because of our great skill and spiritual maturity. (I hope you caught the sarcasm in that statement!) Little did we know what we would be in for. There was a ministry in the area we moved to that we had followed for some time while in Florida. We had thoroughly enjoyed the music from this ministry and since that was what we were most involved in, we were drawn to them. However, when we moved, we did not feel like we were moving to be a part of that ministry though we did feel like we would have some affiliation with it.

I believe it was about 2 years before I played anywhere. Talk about a fish out of water! We had been so accustomed to being deeply involved that to be completely uninvolved, except for going to a weekly service, was a shock. I think my wife and I both went through withdrawals. Then at about the 2 year mark, I was asked by the pastor of a small Methodist church if I would lead worship at his church. Well of course I would! After all, this is what I was made for! This is what we had been moved

600 miles by the very hand of God to do...bring our gifts and spiritual maturity to bare on others. Little did I know...

After about a year, I was completely cooked. This little church, steeped in its traditions and religious beliefs had sucked the life out of me completely. There was no longer grace for me to be there. My wife felt the same way. We were not growing at all. So at this point, we left the church to recover and, for me, to lick my wounds so to speak. It was very shortly after that, the pastor who had invited us there also left the church. He too had come to the end of his service there.

During the time at the small Methodist church, I had begun to play with a small, three piece band. We played at small events that were geared around prophetic worship. It was enjoyable, but in hind sight, I believe it continued the cooking process. It was also during this time that we experienced the birth of our son which was a story all of its own.

Between when we left the small Methodist church and what would be the next church, my wife and I fell into the darkest hours of our married lives. As new parents, we made some of the most common mistakes new parents make. These would include but were not limited to making these new additions the center of our lives rather than having these new additions join our already existing lives. Specifically we allowed this new little girl and boy to be positioned between us as husband and wife. This set us up for a very, very difficult time that very nearly ended in divorce. Mind you, I was still playing “worship” music every time I could.

About a year after leaving the small Methodist church, I was asked by the pastor of a larger, Methodist biker church if I

would come and help out with their music program. I had known this man, though not intimately, for a number of years at this point. I can honestly say that from the very first time I met him, I loved him, though I really have no explanation for this. So when he asked, I gladly agreed because of my desire to help a friend who I cared deeply for.

This was a truly unique experience. The bikers were a culture my wife and I were not prepared for. Imagine if you can, a church set in a large warehouse that rolls up the doors every Sunday and allows the bikers to ride right into the church and park their bikes along the back wall of the church! It was great! They would come in all their biker attire complete with tattoos, earrings, piercings, leather chaps and vests, boots and "holy" (meaning full of holes) jeans. Many of the men in this group would have been scary to come across in the proverbial dark alley. My wife and I both learned that, while we did not believe ourselves to be prejudiced people, we actual were. We pre-judged these people because of the way they looked and dressed. But they had such an incredible heart. In fact, I would say they understand more about community than a great many mainstream churches. Certainly they lived more like a community than anything I had been a part of to this point.

It was pretty much rock-n-roll praise and worship. Loud distorted guitars, big drums and long hair were the typical Sunday morning fare. That's what the bikers liked...it's what they connected to. We witnessed growth in them and in ourselves during the approximately two years we were there. But the time spent there was a double edged sword. While my wife and I learned some things about ourselves that needed to change, it also continued the cooking process for me.

Unfortunately, about two years in to this time, the pastor fell into a scandal. He was removed from his pastoral role. As he left the church, so did I. After all, he was the only reason I went there to begin with. I didn't go because of some great calling from the Father. There was a lesson in that as well. Ministry only because someone asks you to minister is not a good reason. It must be authorized by the Father. This is demonstrated in the life of Yeshua in that He only did what He saw the Father do and He only said what He heard the Father say.

It was at this point I pretty much swore off playing music in church. In fact, I actually said “if I never play in church again, it will be OK”. I was done. I did not darken the doors of a church for two years. I played a couple of gigs in bars. It didn't take long to realize that was not the environment I wanted or needed to be in. So I just laid low. I wanted nothing to do with church or, if I'm honest, with God Himself. I was hurt and felt abandoned. I was completely disillusioned with music in general as I felt I had no real outlet to play. Bars didn't work for me. Church didn't work for me. So I just didn't go and neither did my family.

After about a year or so, my wife finally decided to go to church and take our children. She would get up and go each Sunday morning. I stayed home. I had no interest whatsoever in being in church. It took nearly another year for the Father to soften my heart enough that I could be interested in going at all. In reality, the reason I chose to go back was, I think, more for my wife and children than for me. I must admit that when I finally chose to return to a weekly church meeting, I did so afraid. I was afraid that I would get sucked back in to the machine I had been a part of for so many years and I did not want that in any way. It was another 6 months or so before the

Father softened my heart enough to be willing to volunteer to help with sound. I was in no way interested in anyone even knowing I could play. I wanted nothing to do with that still. After some time passed helping with sound, I was finally at a place I could consider playing on a very limited basis. The ride was beginning again...

I began to play more and more. I took over the entire "sound department" as it related to all aspects of the church's meetings. I was leading worship at least once or twice each month. Eventually I was asked by the pastor to be a part of the church's leadership team. Once again I found myself deeply involved on a weekly basis.

It was during this stint of approximately 5 years that I began to question virtually everything related to church. I had now been a part of several church bodies spanning two different denominations and one non-denominational gathering over the span of about 35 years. No matter the denomination or particular body we were a part of, I had witnessed the same things. I had watched churches operate week in and week out without having any real noticeable impact on those attending or the cultures in which they were immersed. I had witnessed many pointed arguments from one denomination's perspective against another. I had seen many people who were sick or with some form of malady be prayed for to no avail. I watched people die of horrible diseases, all while the prayers of many "saints" (including myself) seemingly went unnoticed by this God who is capable of healing any manner of sickness or disease. I began to question why Yeshua never prayed a miss yet we in the church prayed to no avail on a regular basis. I began to question whether or not we as believers really have things figured out the way we would like to believe we do. Maybe, just

maybe, we needed to back up and set some things right that we had gotten wrong somewhere along the way. Maybe this needed to happen both personally and as the corporate organization of the church. I began to do some historical research on various things that I had come to know as part of “the church”. What I found was interesting to say the very least.

The present leg of my spiritual journey really began out of a diminishing love for Christmas. As a child and even into my early married years, I loved the entire Christmas season and experience. It was my favorite time of the year. I loved the Christmas music, the meals, the cooler weather...I loved it all! (Except for shopping) But at about age 25, things began to change. Challenges of balancing her family and mine with parents and siblings vying for time together became increasingly stressful for me and, as a result, for my wife. In addition, I was noticing that Christmas would go by each year and there would be little if any mention of this Savior whose birthday we were supposedly celebrating. As a fairly logical person, I began to imagine how I might feel if, at my birthday celebration, those celebrating me hardly mentioned my name or paid me any attention. As the years went by, my distaste for this holiday grew exponentially. I came to a point where I all but hated this holiday.

Then one day while at work, I did a Google search on the “origins of Christmas”. To my great surprise the beginnings of Christmas had nothing to do with Christ. In fact, December 25th was not anywhere near the time of His birth, which actually occurred in the fall. Once again my logic kicked in. I began to imagine how I might feel if my birthday were celebrated at a time of the year completely removed from my actual date of birth and that celebration time was chosen by someone else

entirely. Furthermore, how might it feel if my birthday celebration were lumped in with several other people's birthday celebrations for "convenience"? The more I researched this, the more I disliked this holiday. I reached a point where I was done with Christmas mentally, emotionally and spiritually. However, my wife was not at a place where she could hear anything different. As a result, physically, I still had to participate for the sake of my wife and children. It was about 2 years before she could hear anything different. But once she began doing her own research, she came to the same conclusions I had. It was at this point that we abandoned the practice of celebrating Christmas. We also abandoned Easter for the same reasons we abandoned Christmas.

From here I began to look into all the things I had grown up believing to see if they could actually be proven from Scripture. What I began to find (and continue to find) is that much of what I believed was questionable at best. I began to pray for the Father to really show me the truth. He began to show me things and as He did, I would write. The more I study His word, the more He reveals. This book is the fruit of that ongoing process of proving (or disproving) everything against His word rather than just accepting a teaching or belief because a man speaks it.

I truly believe we are in a time in history when the Father is calling His people back to Himself through true repentance and a hunger for a real connection with Him. I believe a part of that process is a returning to the foundations of our beliefs for the purpose of fixing those places where our beliefs have somehow gotten away from His word. There are many such places. I believe those who will submit themselves to this kind of scrutiny or auditing of their beliefs are the very "stones" He is

using to build **His** church, **His** congregation which He has been building from the beginning.

This book seeks to uncover those foundational flaws for the purpose of helping believers return to the Father. I have no desire to throw stones. If that were the purpose, I would have to start with throwing stones at myself. No one needs His forgiveness and grace any more than I do. It is my heart's desire to be a part of the bride (not just a member of the wedding party or guests) and to see the bride purify herself. She has never been closer to the return of her Groom! It is my desire to see her walk in His ways for the purpose of being pleasing to Him. It is my desire to see those believers who are destined to hear “depart from Me; I never knew you, you who practice lawlessness” (Matt. 7:23) return to Him and escape this tragic judgment. It is to that end that I have attempted here to uncover those things which I believe the Father has shown me.

This book is guaranteed to cause a response in you. You may respond in disbelief. You may respond by criticizing me or the beliefs espoused within these chapters. You may very well find yourself angry...angry with me, angry with your pastor or past teachers you have believed. You may just throw this book away as it does not fit the mold of your current belief system. Or you may respond by digging for yourself in the Word and in historical documents. This is my hope for you. I believe if you will dig for yourself, you will see the truth written in these pages and if you see the truth, I believe it will change your life and you will experience freedom like you've never known. You will experience your Savior and His God like in a way you never have before. It is from this place that you will truly begin to change the world, one “neighbor” (or near one) at a time. You will begin to affect those around you at home, at play and at

work. How you choose to respond will be entirely between you and the Father of Creation.

May the Father of Creation by His Holy Spirit lead you into all truth. I pray this book helps you in that pursuit.

Chapter 3

Foundations

Recently while driving in my truck, I had a picture flash in my mind of the kitchen floor in my house. Our house is very old and the floor is not level. The reason the floor is not level is the foundation was not the greatest of foundations to begin with. Natural settling has also taken its toll. When I saw the picture in my mind I immediately said “what’s that about?” In that instant I knew in my spirit that Yahweh was beginning to speak to me about spiritual foundations.

The next morning I was driving again and I asked Him “what do You want to talk about?” Before the words even got out of mouth I felt Him say “I want to talk about foundations”. The next image in my mind was that of a piece of military hardware.



This is an anti aircraft gun. It is portable but requires some set up prior to being used. Notice the large “legs” (out riggers) that go in four different directions. This weapon is used to defeat enemy troops from great distances as they approach whether by land, by air or by sea. It is no “coincidence” that the

picture here has four outriggers (though I did not pick it for that reason) and that they go in four different directions. Here's some free stuff for you on the number four. The number four is a very significant number. It is the creation number and has significance for earthly completeness. It is used symbolically of Yahweh setting things in proper order. It is said to be the most stable of numbers. On the fourth day all the materials for the earth were made. It speaks of the four corners of the earth (north, south, east and west) to which Yahweh's people were dispersed and from which He is gathering us. Our years are divided into four seasons (spring, summer, fall and winter) and our days are divided into four segments (morning, noon, evening and night). There are four phases of the moon. The number four portrays universal observation, worship and adoration.

If the outriggers are not set in proper order before firing the weapon, it will be ineffective at defending against the attack of the enemy. For us, if we are not set on a solid, Biblical foundation, we will be ineffective at combating the enemy. Looks like the situation in the church, doesn't it? The Father then said "what happens if this gun is fired without the outriggers being properly set?" I said "people get hurt". He said, "That's right. People get hurt and killed AND you miss the target you were trying to hit. You (personally as well as the church) continually ask Me for power and authority and it is My heart's desire to give you GREAT measures of both. Yeshua walked fully in My power and authority and you are supposed to walk as He did. However, your foundations are not solid. Much of your foundation has been built on "shifting sand" which is the doctrines, teachings and traditions of men. So even the little bit of authority and power I've given to the church, because she has not maintained a solid foundation, has caused

people to get hurt and killed AND the church is missing its target. I cannot give you personally or the church corporately any more power or authority until you return to the proper foundation. The proper foundation is My word...all of it! There is not a part of My word that is irrelevant today. Even though there are some parts of My word that are not currently being used, such as the laws for temple sacrifice, all of it is still good for doctrine and reproof. Remember I AM the same yesterday, TODAY and forever." If we are "missing the mark" and thereby hurting and killing our brothers and sister while at the same time struggling (at best) to defend against the attack of the enemy, it stands to reason in my mind that we need to get our foundational issues corrected so that we can hit the mark. It also stands to reason that *maybe* we have misunderstood what the mark is. I will address this in greater detail later. It is important to note that one of the mandates given to believers is to be a light in this world. Considering the fact that approximately 75% of the United States claims to be "Christian", is it reasonable to believe that if those "believers" were actually being a light in the world, we would see such ever increasing darkness? I don't think so.

If a building, whether a house or commercial structure, is designed well and built exactly according to the design, it will last for many, many years. The first step in building the structure is the foundation. Great care and concern must be given to making sure this is done properly so it is strong enough to support the structure for many, many years. If that building is not properly designed and built on a solid foundation, it eventually results in problems, up to and including catastrophic failure of the structure. This is what Yeshua was referring to in Matthew 7:24-27, though He was not trying to teach us how to build a house. This was His final statements in His sermon on

the mount, arguably the greatest sermon ever preached. He says that those who hear **and do** the teaching He's just finished are wise like the builder who builds on a solid foundation that withstood all the storms that life had to offer without failing. Then He says the person who hears the teaching He's just finished but **does not** do it is foolish like the builder who builds on sand. Then when life offers its storms, the house fails and the failure is great. I believe this is what we are witnessing in the church right now. I believe we are seeing failure caused at least in part by building on a foundation that is faulty because we have "done away" with the law (the building code) of Yahweh. We have devalued the "Old Testament" to the point where much of the "New Testament" church doesn't know anything about it at all. Because of this, we don't have a good solid foundation of the truth that Yahweh laid out in such great detail to help us stay on His path. He created us to be a holy, set apart and peculiar people and then gave us clear instructions on how to walk that out. From Adam and Eve forward, we have all been guilty of challenging the authority of our Creator by believing His instructions were not for us. I believe this is one of the greatest strategies Satan has ever employed...and he's been doing it since the garden.

The truth is, much like my house, I have personally "settled" for foundations of shifting sand. Rather than being founded on the Rock who is the Word of Yahweh, I've followed the teachings and traditions of men. This is one of the primary things Yeshua confronted while walking in flesh here on the earth. Yahweh in His infinite wisdom gave us a set of instructions to live by. Those instructions are a complete road map for us to follow. He didn't just drop us off on this planet to live all alone and figure things out as we go. Then, He went one step further and gave us His very Spirit to live inside of those

who would believe in Him with their lives. This "Helper" is capable of bringing us into a place of obedience that pleases the Father and causes His light to shine through us to such a degree that the world cannot help but see Him and be drawn to Him in us.

I believe Yahweh is a redeemer by nature. I believe He is in the process of making all things new. I have believed for several years that we will reach a point where Yahweh restores His perfect creation from the garden. I believe He is in the process of doing that even now. I believe a part of that process though is reestablishing His bride on a right foundation...His word, beginning with His Torah. That means undoing much of what has been done over many centuries. Unfortunately the church has opted to follow traditions and teachings of man to the exclusion of the very mandates Yahweh Himself set forth in His word. This is what the prophet Isaiah spoke of in Isaiah 29:13 and Yeshua quoted in Matthew 15:9.

There are several analogies that could be used here I'm sure, but I have two that just make good sense to me. If you've ever played golf, you know that when the club impacts the ball, it better be square to your target. It only takes one degree off at impact to cause your ball to go somewhere you don't want it to go. Sometimes that means your ball has gone out of bounds and you have to back up to where you hit your ball from and do it again and it adds a penalty stroke to your score card. The longer the club you're using, the more potential there is to go further off target. (A driver can get you in more trouble than a sand wedge) Another great analogy is linked to shooting. You can shoot *any* gun at a range of 5 yards and do alright. Poor fundamentals are not as easily seen at this range. However back that target up to even 20 yards and employ those same poor

fundamentals and you will have a very difficult time. You may not even hit your target at all. It only takes a small fundamental error and/or your aim to be off by one degree for you to completely miss a target at only 20 yards. If you move your target out to 500 yards, you will miss your target by feet using these same poor fundamentals or having your aim off by just one degree. This is what has happened in the church over the last two thousand years especially. We have been just a degree or two off on some foundational issues and it has lead us to the point we are currently at...where the church looks very much like the world in many measurable ways.

There are plenty of statistics that bear this out. I mentioned some of these in the previous chapter. But you really don't even need the statistics. Just take an *honest, objective* look at what's going on in much of the church today and you will easily see the similarities between the church and the world. I just read an article in which a large mainstream denominational church here in the United States has embraced homosexuality and same sex marriage. The leadership of this church claims to study his Bible and yet says he believes that accepting this lifestyle is demonstrating the heart of Yeshua. I'm sure that most or maybe even his entire congregation is just continuing to follow him down this road like lemmings. Preposterous!!! The Southern Baptist denomination is the second largest denomination in the United States (behind Catholicism). In April of 2014, they held a summit called the Ethics Religious Liberty Commission Leadership Summit where they discussed, among other issues, a reconsideration of the Southern Baptist denomination's official position on homosexuality. What's to consider? What does the Word say about it? That should be the end of the discussion.

I believe we've been off in our understanding of Yahweh's laws. In my opinion, this is a **major** foundational issue. Especially in the "new testament" church, we have embraced a mindset that basically says Yahweh's law was done away with at the cross. We call this grace. "We are no longer *under* the law but under grace." I've heard this for most of my life and until recently I thought this was the truth. I believed it because I've heard many well meaning "leaders" teach it. I believed it because *I* did not have a good, solid foundation of my own in Yahweh's word and so I accepted something that was inaccurate. I believed it because I blindly took it for truth rather than searching it out for myself. I believed it because it is exactly what my sinful flesh wanted to believe.

We've embraced the idea that "we are no longer under the law" as it relates to diet, Sabbath, feasts and most of Yahweh's other laws. This has translated in most of us into an idea that we are no longer *subject* to the law. In other words we are *not required* to keep the law. Yet most people in the church today would agree that the Ten Commandments are still valid and still apply to us. In fact, there's been major "battles" in the last few years over the Ten Commandments remaining in court houses and government buildings all across the land. But how can we as "Christians" argue for keeping the Ten Commandments in those places while at the same time declaring that we are no longer "under the law"? Talk about sending mixed signals to the world! How can we claim that the Ten Commandments are still valid today when we break the fourth commandment on a weekly basis as we do not honor the Sabbath on Saturday? Even those who would argue that Sunday is the "Christian Sabbath" (which is another great deception from our enemy) seldom apply the rules of Sabbath observance found in both the "Old" and "New" Testaments.

There are several MAJOR flaws in this idea that Yahweh's law has been “done away with”. There's nowhere in scripture that tells us this is how we should live. Nowhere in any of the prophets does Yahweh tell us that at some point His law would become obsolete; and He doesn't do anything without first revealing it to His prophets. (Amos 3:7) There are some teachings of Paul that would *seem* to suggest that the law has been “done away with”. However, a closer look at the context of those teachings reveals that Paul was not at all condoning lawlessness. In fact, exactly the opposite was true of his teachings. But even if Paul taught that the law had been done away with, are we to believe that Paul set doctrine when Yeshua Himself didn't? (John 7:16) Yeshua certainly did not teach this lawless mindset.

Another major flaw with this mindset is commandment number four. This commandment states that we are to keep the Sabbath day, just as Yahweh Himself does. We cannot say in one breath that we are no longer under the law (as it relates to the Sabbath) but then in the next breath say that we are still responsible and accountable to keep the other nine commandments. That doesn't even make sense. Either Yahweh's laws still apply or they don't. So if I'm no longer “under the law” and don't have to concern myself with keeping the Sabbath, then I also do not need to worry about being faithful to my wife. I don't need to worry about going to work because if I have a need, I can just go and steal it from my neighbor. I don't have to worry about putting another god before Him by involving myself in traditions of men that have their roots in paganism. Homosexuality, divorce, pregnancy outside of marriage and abortion are no longer things I need to concern myself with if His law has been “done away with”. Do you see the error in this logic? Can you also identify much of the sinful

behavior outlined above in the church? When we “do away” with Yahweh's law, we fall into doing whatever seems or feels right to us individually. We do not have the right or authority to make the kind of changes we've made in our service to the King. He alone holds the right and authority to set the rules for how we are supposed to live in His kingdom and how we should approach Him. Maybe our understanding hasn't been exactly what it needed to be. Maybe the “law” that we are no longer under is the thousands of oral laws (traditions of men) that were enacted by the Pharisees and others. This would be the teachings and traditions of men Yeshua refers to in Matthew 15:9. Maybe what we have been and are being set free from is the curse of the law which was death. We have received the free gift of Yahweh which is eternal life through faith in Yeshua.

To take another step towards meddling with mainstream “Christianity's” thought process, let me briefly mention tithing. Much of mainstream Christianity holds to the position that the Ten Commandments are valid today, even though they ignore number four. Yet there is no mandate for tithing in the Ten Commandments. There is a fair amount of instruction on how to tithe and why listed in other places in the Torah. Interestingly enough, there isn't a single *instructive* verse in all of the “New Testament” as to how we should tithe. The number one doctrinal position of mainstream “Christianity” comes from Malachi 3:10, also part of the “Old Testament” that is supposedly no longer valid for “New Testament” believers. If the law has been done away with, then the mandate for tithing has also been done away with because it is only found outside the Ten Commandments within the Torah. Let me first say that I am in no way opposed to giving and supporting solid ministries that teach all of the Word. For me this is not about not wanting to give or being greedy and selfish. I do want to be a good

steward with the finances I'm given and part of that is giving in accordance with the Scripture. The portion of the tithe that was meant to be given to the Levitical priests was to provide them with what they needed so they could focus on teaching the Torah to the people, taking care of the temple and caring for widows, orphans and strangers rather than having to take on a job to earn pay to support themselves and their families.

In the garden Yahweh commanded Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The devil's first words to Eve were “Did Yahweh really say, 'you shall not eat of the tree'?” In other words, the very first means of deception ever recorded in scripture was the devil challenging whether or not Yahweh's people were to keep His commandments or instructions. The law of first precedence would suggest that since this is the first method by which the devil ever chose to deceive us, it would be the most common way the devil would choose to deceive us. It's interesting that the very first deception was related to what was and was not to be eaten.

The phrase “under the law” has been translated to mean something quite a bit different than what I believe Paul was trying to communicate. I believe we've interpreted this like the law is some sort of an evil task master lording it over us, just waiting for us to fail in some way so it (the law or Yahweh) can hit us over the head with a club because of our failure. We've also interpreted this to mean that we are no longer responsible for keeping the law because we now live in grace. We've come to believe that being “under the law” or submitted to the law is bondage; that somehow by submitting ourselves to the law and attempting to keep Yahweh's law keeps us from enjoying freedom that we are suppose to be able to enjoy. I suggest that

our value system has gotten inverted. We've come to believe that good is bondage and bad is freedom. Let me explain. Yahweh's laws were and are good for instruction and correction. (2 Timothy 3:16) But as soon as I or anyone else begins to speak about the idea that we should be keeping Yahweh's law, the legalism and bondage flag gets thrown. Somehow it's being legalistic to keep the instructions Yahweh gave His people for their well being. Somehow submitting one's self to the instructions of Yahweh has become a form of bondage.

For those of you who are parents, let me pose a couple of questions to you. Do you set rules for your children? If so why? Is it not because you know what's best and you want the best for them? If you set a rule for your children, do you expect them to obey? Why? Is it not because you know what's best and you want the best for them? If they do not obey your rules, aren't their consequences? Why? Is it not because you know what's best and you want the best for them? Would it be acceptable for your children to disobey your rules and then, when confronted about it, for them to respond "I didn't want to be legalistic about it."?

Let me give you a simple example. All of us probably have this rule for our children...don't touch the burners on the stove. We know the burners can be very hot and we don't want our little ones to get hurt. Johnny did not want to be "legalistic" in his adherence to the rules though. So he decided to "do away" with that one...at least this one time. Little Johnny made an alarming discovery though. The burner is very, very hot and it hurts a lot and for a long time if you touch it while it's on. Johnny chose disobedience to the rule you set for his well being. His consequence was getting burned. How did your heart feel when Johnny came running to you crying with his newly

acquired badge of freedom? You were saddened I'm sure. Your mother's or father's heart hurt for Johnny, even though his pain came as a direct result of his own stubbornness and disobedience and pride. He thought he knew better you. Now, whether or not Johnny chooses obedience does not change his status as your child.

Remember, Yahweh is our heavenly Father and we are His children. We are created in His image and likeness. If we as imperfect, often sinful parents set rules for our children and expect them to obey is it not reasonable to think our Father would set rules for His children as well? He too knows what's best. He too hurts when we hurt, even when we have caused our own pain by disobeying Him. If we want the crop of obedience to sprout and flourish in our children, the best possible seed we can sow is obedience to our heavenly Father. We always reap what we sow. If we sow disobedience by doing away with Yahweh's instructions and choosing not to obey Him, isn't it much more likely that we will reap disobedience in our children?

In Hosea 4:6, the prophet speaks the word of God. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being priest for Me. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also reject your sons." Furthermore, in Deuteronomy 28 we're told of all the blessings we will freely receive as a reward for our obedience to Yahweh's instructions and all the curses (consequences) we will face if we disobey Yahweh's instructions. There are 14 verses that speak of the blessings that come as a result of obedience and **54** verses that speak of the curses that will come as a result of disobedience.

On the opposite side of this coin, supposedly we are free, for example, to eat whatever we want to eat. I agree that we are absolutely free to eat as we please (just like Adam and Eve). But just like Adam and Eve, there are consequences for eating things that we are not suppose to eat. Science has proven in many studies that animals like pig and shrimp and fish without scales carry far more toxins in their muscle fibers than those animals that would be considered clean according to Yahweh's word. In other words, science has now proven that the animals Yahweh said were unclean are actually not healthy for us to eat. That's right! They are unhealthy for us to eat TODAY! Why would Yahweh tell us it's alright to eat things that have now been scientifically proven to be bad for our health? Why would He say it's OK for us to ignore the very laws He wrote to keep us safe? The answer is He wouldn't and He DIDN'T. There's a chart in the appendix that shows the results of a study performed by Dr. David Macht of Johns Hopkins University in 1953. In it he shows the toxicity levels of various meats. I find it interesting that this study as well as others prove that Yahweh really did know what He was talking about when He instructed us as to what to eat and what not to eat. His instructions (laws) were and are for our benefit, not to put us in bondage. In my opinion this doctrine that the Father's law was "done away with" not only reveals a terrible flaw in our theology, but it is also an indicator of a heart that believes our loving Father would give us instruction that He, as an all knowing being, would surely have known would be "bondage", if in fact that were true. I find it equally interesting that we can say we're no longer responsible to keep the dietary laws of Yahweh but then as soon as we read some scientific document or hear a medical doctor that tells us that pork causes high blood pressure and other issues, we will quickly submit to that. Who is really our god? I suggest that in many ways, we have become our own

god. We have set ourselves in the place of deciding how we will live, what we will eat, what days to call holy. How is this different from Lucifer saying "I can be like the Most High"?

Isaiah 5:20 says, "How terrible it will be for those who call evil good and good evil, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness, who substitute what is bitter for what is sweet and what is sweet for what is bitter!" A closer look at the words for evil and good reveals something interesting. Evil is defined as moral rebellion against Yahweh. It is contrary to the will of Yahweh. When broken down into its Hebrew parts it means something dysfunctional, bad or evil. Furthermore, it means affliction, adversity, calamity, displeasing, sorrow or wretchedness. The word good when broken down into its Hebrew parts means "surround the house". It means something that functions properly. The house is surrounded by grace, beauty, love, health and prosperity. Furthermore, it means beautiful, best, bountiful, cheerful, pleasure, prosperity, wealth, welfare, and well. So where else are these words used?

The Hebrew word for evil used here is "ra". The first time it is used is in Genesis 2:9 when Yahweh refers to the tree of knowledge of good and "evil". "The LORD God caused every tree that is both beautiful and suitable for food to spring up out of the ground. The tree of life was also in the middle of the garden, along with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." In Genesis 2:16-17 He went on to say "The LORD God commanded the man: "You may freely eat from every tree of the garden, but you are not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because you will certainly die during the day that you eat from it." So the first mention of evil was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the first commandment dealt with what Adam could and could not eat. It would be a fair

statement to say that sin entered the world through disobedience over our diet. Yet somehow we believe in the "New Testament" church that we aren't bound by these "burdensome" laws regarding what we eat. Meanwhile, we deal with sickness, disease and obesity on the same ever increasing scale as the world. I'm sure the two aren't related though.

The Hebrew word for good used in Isaiah 5 is "towb". The first time this word was used is in Genesis 1:4. "And God saw the light that *it was* good. And God divided between the light and the darkness." Yahweh refers to the "light" as being good. So let's take a look at the word light that He says is good. It is the Hebrew word "or" and means light of day, light of heavenly luminaries, daylight, lightning, light of lamp, light of life, light of prosperity, **light of instruction**, light of face and **Jehovah as Israel's light**.

Yahweh says that evil is moral rebellion against Him. Moral is defined as "conforming to a standard of right behavior". Rebellion is defined as "opposition to one in authority or dominance". Evil then is defined as being in opposition to one in authority or dominance and not conforming to His standard of right behavior. It is doing things contrary to His will. He defines evil as dysfunctional, affliction, adversity, calamity, displeasing, sorrow and wretchedness. He defines good as something that functions properly, grace, beauty, love, health, prosperity, best, cheerful, pleasure, wealth and welfare. According to Isaiah 5:20, it will be terrible for those who call evil (moral rebellion against Him; doing things contrary to His will) good. Have we not done exactly that? Have we not taken the light (light of instruction) that Yahweh gave us and said that it was dysfunctional, displeasing, done away with? I did for many years because of my own ignorance and lack of personal

knowledge of Yahweh's word. I'm reminded again of Hosea 4:6 which says, "My people are destroyed because they lack knowledge of me. Because you rejected that knowledge, I will reject you as a priest for me. Since you forget the Law of your God, I will also forget your children." These are really strong words. We are destroyed, demolished, pulled down, ruined, *devoured* and annihilated because we do not possess discernment, understanding, wisdom and a clear and certain perception of truth and fact. We are rejected, despised and refused as His priests which means our service and sacrifices of worship to Him are rejected when we live in this lack of wisdom that is the forgetting of and ceasing to care about His Torah. He then ties the forgetting of the Torah to this destruction and says that since we have forgotten and stopped caring about His Torah, He will forget and stop caring about our children...our youth.

Today, in the "Christian" church, we see youth leaving their "faith" at a rate of over 70%! In other words, when our children are reaching the age when they can make their own decisions as to whether or not to continue growing in their faith, they are choosing to leave the church and abandon their faith. Kids who leave home as "believers" to go to college are giving up on their "faith" by the end of their first year in college at the rate of 73% according to Campus Crusades for Christ. Of the remaining 27% who still profess to be "Christian" after their first year, only about 5% can even tell you why they believe what they believe. They aren't even really sure of their eternal destination. This is death and destruction to the Christian faith in America! Eventually this younger generation that is walking away from their "faith" will be the ones responsible for perpetuating a system of beliefs. What will they perpetuate? Does this not sound like the fruit or effects of our forgetting Yahweh's Torah

and as a result, Him forgetting our children? May Yahweh have mercy on us all and our youth!

Our foundations have been terribly damaged over the last two thousand years. Well meaning teachers have lead us down wrong paths. (Jeremiah 16:19; Jeremiah 50:6) This is not meant to be a judgment towards them. After all, we followed! When Eve ate the forbidden fruit, she then offered it to Adam. At that moment he had a choice to make. He could choose to remain faithful to Yahweh by being obedient or he could choose to follow this minor, seemingly insignificant deviation from Yahweh's word. We know how he chose and what the results were. Can you see how we have made the same choices? We must return to Yahweh's word! We must return to the places we have gotten off of His foundation which is the whole counsel of the word of Yahweh. We must repent and ask Yahweh to forgive us for breaking His laws. (1 John 3:4) We must return to the beginning of His instructions (Torah), not as a religion but as a lifestyle of obedience. We must return to His Torah, not as a means of salvation, but as a means of showing our love to Him. We must return to His Torah if we are ever to have a hope of Him healing our land. (2 Chron. 7:14) Just like we are learning that eating whole and raw foods instead of processed foods is vital to our health and well being, we are learning that eating the whole, unprocessed word of Yahweh is vital to our spiritual and physical health and well being.

In the next chapter I will discuss in more detail whether or not the law has been "done away with".

Chapter 4

The Law Fulfilled?

Matthew 5:17-20

About 12 years ago I did a study on all of the Hebrew and Greek words for praise and worship. This really was the beginning of my deeper searching of the scriptures. As I studied these words I learned that the Hebrew language was much more colorful and pictorial than our English language. Each of the different Hebrew words for praise paints a different picture. I began to discover that when I looked at the original meanings of some of these words, they didn't mean exactly what I thought they meant. That started me asking questions about what other parts of the Bible I had not really understood due to the insufficiency of the English language and my lack of understanding. This study comes as a result of that beginning.

Matthew 5:17-20 (ISV)

17"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I didn't come to destroy them, but to fulfill them, 18 because I tell you with certainty that until heaven and earth disappear, not one letter or one stroke of a letter will disappear from the Law until everything has been accomplished. 19 So whoever sets aside one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven 20 because I tell you, unless your righteousness greatly exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven!"

This is a very interesting passage of scripture. These are the words of Yeshua Himself teaching His disciples and the people during the Sermon on the Mount. I have read these verses many,

many times over many years and until recently, I understood them to mean something a little different than what my understanding is today. You see, I read verse 17 and stopped. “I did not come to destroy them but to fulfill them.” In my mind the word “fulfill” meant to bring to an end. In other words in my mind, Yeshua was saying to His disciples, and to me, that there's no longer a need to concern myself with the laws of the “Old Testament”. He had obeyed them perfectly for me so I didn't have to. But then I saw it for the first time in a different light. I will do my best to explain what I now believe about this passage of scripture. You can do your own digging and see what Yahweh shows you. This is the most important part! You dig and find the truth through careful study and by allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth. In my experience, one of the most important parts of studying scripture is to be willing to take off the “glasses” of preconceived ideas and previous understanding and look at the scripture with fresh eyes and a willingness to allow the Holy Spirit to show you something new that you may never have seen or may have seen differently.

Before jumping in to this passage, I need to define a few terms. Hopefully providing these definitions here will give you an easy point of reference while reading the information that follows.

1) Destroy- (Greek-kataluō) to *loosen down (disintegrate)*, that is, (by implication) to *demolish* (literally or figuratively); specifically (compare [G2646](#)) to *halt* for the night: - destroy, dissolve, bring to nothing, overthrow, throw down. Webster's definition is “to ruin the structure, organic existence, or condition of; to ruin as if by tearing to shreds; to put out of existence; neutralize; annihilate; vanquish”.

2) Law- (Greek-nomos) *law* (through the idea of prescriptive usage), generally (*regulation*), specifically (of Moses [including the volume]; also of the Gospel), or figuratively (a *principle*): - law. This Greek word correlates to the Hebrew word Torah and mitsvah which mean commands, collectively the law and instruction. Webster's definition is "a binding custom or practice of a community; a rule of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognized as binding or enforced by a controlling authority; the whole body of such customs, practices or rules; the control brought about by the existence or enforcement of such law; the revelation of the will of God set forth in the "Old Testament"; the first part of the Jewish scriptures; Torah".

3) Fulfill- (Greek-plēroō) to *make replete*, that is, (literally) to *cram* (a net), *level up* (a hollow), or (figuratively) to *furnish* (or *imbue, diffuse, influence*), *satisfy*, *execute* (an office), *finish* (a period or task), *verify* (or *coincide* with a prediction), etc.: - accomplish, X after, (be) complete, end, expire, fill (up), fulfill, (be, make) full (come), fully preach, perfect, supply. Webster's definition is "to make full; to put into effect: execute; to meet the requirements of; to bring to an end; to measure up to; to convert into reality; to develop the full potentialities of".

I believe Yeshua is teaching His disciples as much as He is the multitudes. He's teaching those who are going to carry on with His work once He ascends to the Father while at the same time teaching those who would become disciples by believing Him and by being taught by those disciples He had handpicked. He's laying a foundation for the disciples to build on. He's also giving His disciples and the people some criteria for judging teachers who might mislead them in the future. By clearly stating that He did not come to "do away with" the law, He was warning those listening that if a teacher came teaching that Messiah has "done away with the law", that teacher was not

teaching according to His doctrine which was the same doctrine as the Father's. (John 7:16)

The word disciple is defined as a student or pupil who is a follower of doctrines and precepts. I have also heard disciple defined as "disciplined ones". The word doctrine is defined simply as something that is taught. A precept is a command or principle intended especially as a general rule of action; an order issued by legally constituted authority to a subordinate official. To tie this all together it would read: a disciple is a student who is under discipline and follows the teachings, commands, principles and orders issued by a legally constituted authority to a subordinate official. Yahweh is the legally constituted authority and Yeshua is the subordinate official...subordinate to Yahweh. We too are called to be disciples of Yeshua, not just converts or "Christians". If we are called to be disciples of Yeshua, then we are called to follow His doctrines and precepts. But He states very clearly that His doctrine and teaching is not His own but the Father's. In other words, as a disciple, we are to follow the doctrine of the Father, which is found in Torah.

Yeshua begins by saying that He has not come to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfill them. Right away He tells us what He *did not* come to do. He covers that first as if to be sure that those who are listening understand first and foremost that He did not come to loosen, demolish, dissolve, bring to nothing, overthrow, or throw down the Mosaic Law. I did not see or understand this part of the verse until recently. I've just skipped right ahead to the "fulfilled" part and have believed that the law of Moses was "done away with" by Yeshua and yet the scripture plainly says something different when I looked at it with fresh

eyes and asked Holy Spirit to really teach me the truth of the word.

Yeshua references the law in this verse. To be clear we must understand that those who wrote the "New Testament" had ONLY the "Old Testament" as their scriptures. The "New Testament" was being written but was not completed until about 80 years after the last disciple died. I'm sure it took some time for those scrolls to be compiled, duplicated and circulated as well. So every reference we see to "the scriptures" or "the word" by any of the authors of the "New Testament" was a direct reference to the "Old Testament". Everything they wrote was from a perspective built on Hebrew life, culture and customs that revolved around Torah and the "Old Testament" because that's who they were and that was the only scripture in existence. In other words, the "Old Testament" was and continues to be the very foundation of the "New Testament" *and* the faith of its believers. It gives definition and stability to the "New Testament" and those who are being grafted in to the Father's family of believers. For those who will accept it and live in its wisdom, the "Old Testament" offers a firm foundation and deep roots for a lifelong belief system. Without the "Old Testament" the "New Testament" could not exist. I believe *part* of the reason we see so much decay and weakness in the church is due to an abandonment of the "Old Testament" among "New Testament" believers. I also think this abandonment of the "Old Testament" is largely responsible for our youth and new believers falling away from the faith so quickly. They don't have a good foundation and root system. This was not the way the "New Testament" church of the first century approached things. When new teachings came along, they were tested *against* the "Old Testament" as a standard. If those "new teachings" did not measure up to what the "Old Testament"

taught, they were quickly discarded. Even Yeshua stated in John 7:17 “My doctrine (teaching) is not mine but His who sent Me.” Yeshua was sent by the Father and the Father's doctrine was clearly taught in the “Old Testament”, specifically in the Torah.

As a side note, I believe what happens in the natural is a reflection of what is happening or has already happened in the spirit. Today, in the natural, we are witnessing the absolute destruction of our Constitution as American citizens. The very document our country was founded on is being *destroyed* or *done away with* before our eyes and there seems to be no stopping it. We are living in an increasingly lawless society that is becoming more and more of a threat to our safety and the safety of our loved ones. I believe this is a reflection of what the church has done in the spirit. We have “done away with”, brought to an end, and even “destroyed” the word of Yahweh by teaching and believing that His word, specifically His Torah (instructions or law) has been somehow “done away with”. I believe we are reaping what we have sown, even though we have probably sown in ignorance for the most part. That’s one of the tricky parts about the laws of sowing and reaping. If you buy a bag of red fescue grass seeds, you most likely want to grow a red fescue lawn. If somehow there’s rye seeds mixed in, and then you sow those seeds you will get both types of grass, even though that was not what you intended. I know that was true in my case. I did not see this until now even though I had spent many years deeply involved in the church. Remember, Yahweh chooses to reveal Himself and His word in His timing. Maybe this is your time.

Then Yeshua reiterates His first statement as if to be sure that the listeners and readers got it. “I did not come to [loosen, demolish, dissolve, bring to nothing, overthrow or throw them

down] but to *fulfill* them.” What did He mean by “fulfill”? Until recently my understanding was that He had completed the law and brought it to an end. In my mind this meant that I was no longer responsible for observing the law; it was “done away with”. This implies that Yeshua was obedient to Yahweh’s laws for me so I didn't have to be obedient to them. Yeshua is called the first of many brothers and we are called children of Yahweh. I did not have siblings growing up but I do have two children. In our home, if one child is completely obedient, it does not mean that the other is released from any responsibility to be obedient. Furthermore, if this were the case, why couldn't Yahweh's obedience get Adam and Eve off the hook? Why couldn't Yahweh's adherence to His own laws release them from having to be obedient? We also know that Yeshua did not “do away with” or “complete” all of the prophets. There are too many things in prophecy that we have not seen yet.

Here are a few other places in the “New Testament” where this same word “fulfill” is used. Let's see what happens when we replace the word “fulfill” with “done away with”.

- 1) Philippians 2:2- then [do away with] my joy, that you may be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind.
- 2) Colossians 1:25- of which I became a minister, according to the administration of God given to me for you, to [do away with] the Word of God;
- 3) Colossians 4:17- And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you [do away with] it.
- 4) 2 Thessalonians 1:11- Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of the calling

and [do away with] all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,

Do you see how this definition of fulfill negatively impacts the other places in the “New Testament” where authors used the same word? I personally don't think the “done away with” translation fits this word in any of the places it is used. It just doesn't work. There are several definitions that actually do work though. My favorite definitions are “to develop the full potentialities of” and “to convert into reality”. Try plugging *these* definitions of the word fulfilled into these passages as well as the passage in Matthew that we have focused on. I believe you will begin to see a different picture than maybe what you've seen to date. I know I did.

What was Yeshua actually saying? This is what I discovered. He says that He came to fulfill the law and prophets. One definition of fulfill is to bring to an end. But it makes no sense to use this definition in the context of the verse because He started off by saying He *did not* come to bring the law or prophets to an end. He would have directly contradicted Himself within the same verse. The word fulfill is also defined as “to fill up, to make full, to fully preach, to perfect, to convert into reality and to develop the full potentialities of”. So He said, “I did not come to loosen, demolish, dissolve, bring to nothing, overthrow or throw down the Law of Moses or the prophets. I came to make the Law of Moses and the prophets full of meaning, to preach them fully and to perfect them; to develop the full potentialities of them and to convert them into reality.” He came to *be* the word (the Torah) in the flesh and give us the perfect example of how to live a life holy and set apart unto Yahweh. I believe as our model, His perfect obedience was an example of how we should endeavor to live. He did come to

bring to an end the curse of the law as our kinsman redeemer. For all of those who would believe in Him and accept His finished work as our kinsmen redeemer by faith, His death paid the price sin requires which is death. He became the curse because "cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree". (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13)

Yeshua goes on, as if to really drive His point home, by saying in verse 18 "...because I tell you with certainty that until heaven and earth disappear, not one letter or one stroke of a letter will disappear from the Law until everything has been accomplished." We have not yet seen heaven and earth disappear. "Everything" has not been accomplished yet. He has not returned in the clouds to call His people home. He has not yet put to an end forever our adversary the devil. Therefore I believe that not one letter or stroke, jot or tittle, not the smallest part of any of Yahweh's laws given through His servant Moses has been "done away with". Then Yeshua says something very interesting in verse 19. "So whoever sets aside one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven". He does not say that whoever does not keep the commandments will be cast into hell. This is not an issue of salvation! This is an issue of obedience. Our obedience to His instruction is what brings us into maturity as sons and daughters. This obedience is a way to demonstrate that He has our heart. (Deut. 13:3-4; John 14:15; John 15:10; 1 John 5:2-3; 2 John 1:6) We know that we are saved by grace only through faith in the completed work of Yeshua. But clearly there will be those in the kingdom who are greatest, those who are least and I'm sure varying degrees in between. One of the primary criteria, if not *the* primary criteria, for Yahweh determining who

is greatest and least in the kingdom will be how well we have obeyed His written instructions for our lives...His Torah.

This begs a question. What is the purpose of the law in the “New Testament church” if our forgiveness and salvation hinge only on our acceptance of Yeshua's sacrifice? I believe the purpose of the law in the “New Testament church” is the same purpose it had in the “Old Testament church”. Remember, the Mosaic Law was given to Yahweh's people at Mount Sinai after He had saved them and set them free after 430 years in captivity and slavery under a pagan system. They had lived all those years around every imaginable god and every conceivable sin and form of wickedness. They had lived under a strong oppression inflicted by Satan through the Egyptians. They were not even allowed to worship and serve Yahweh the way they were supposed to. Otherwise there would have been no need for Moses to petition pharaoh to release the people so they might go and worship Yahweh. Yahweh gave the law to the people through Moses to remind them (and us) of how they were suppose to live...as those set apart and different from the world and the world's system. He had removed them from slavery and bondage but by giving them the law, I believe He was offering them an even greater level of salvation. He was giving them instructions on how to be exceedingly blessed in every area of their lives. He was teaching them how to avoid sickness and disease. He was teaching them how to truly live free from the bondage of sin and all of the curses it brings. Ultimately, He was teaching them how to be holy as He is holy for the purpose of intimacy with Him, just like He enjoyed with Adam and Eve in the garden prior to their sin. His greatest desire from the beginning of time has been that His creation would come into covenant and intimacy with Him and remain there. Just like with the Israelites, once He has “saved” us, we have the

opportunity to walk in His ways, by His instructions for the purpose of purifying ourselves in order to draw near to Him and to mature into the sons and daughters He is calling us to be.

In Matthew 5:20 through Matthew 7:23 Yeshua gives instruction on how His disciples should live their lives. He tells us that our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees. He does not tell us that our righteousness is completely different from that of the Pharisees but that it must exceed their righteousness. He does not indicate that at His death we would magically receive all the righteousness we need. The word "exceed" here means to excel beyond or increase beyond. How do we live there? The Pharisees believed their righteousness and salvation came *only* from how well they could keep Torah. In many cases, they traded relationship with Yahweh for adherence to the law. This was not the heart of our Creator. Yeshua tells us that our righteousness must excel or increase beyond merely being obedient to the law. We must marry our obedience to His law with a dynamic, intimate relationship with Him. Revelation 12:17 speaks of the dragon enraged with the woman and with her offspring who "keep the commandments of God **and** have the testimony of Yeshua". I believe we must have both in order to be any real threat to the enemy. The first step is accepting Yeshua's completed work for our salvation and restoration back into covenant with Yahweh. This is why Yeshua calls Himself the gate or door. We must enter into the Father's kingdom through Him, but that is just the beginning. He came to point us back to the Father and to make a way whereby we could return from our sinfulness back to the Father.

Yeshua references several parts of the law specifically and then takes them to an even greater, even more set apart place. As an example, Yeshua says "You have heard that it was told

those who lived long ago, 'You must not murder,' and 'Whoever murders will be subject to punishment.' But I say to you, anyone who is angry with his brother without a cause will be subject to punishment. And whoever says to his brother 'Raka!' will be subject to the Council. And whoever says 'You fool!' will be subject to hell fire." Also He says "You have heard that it was said, 'You must not commit adultery.' But I say to you, anyone who stares at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." There are many more examples like this. Notice how He ties the law to the heart issues. He is concerned that our obedience comes from a heart that has been set free from the slavery to sin and bondage to this world's systems, false doctrines and idolatry. The Pharisees were really good at self disciplining their way to obedience. We must go beyond self discipline as the sole motivation for our obedience to the point of being obedient, even if we don't understand and even if it kills us, because we love Him. He desires that our obedience comes as a result of our love for Him and out of a desire to demonstrate that love to Him. In 1 John 5:3 we are told "For this demonstrates our love for God: We keep his commandments, and his commandments are not difficult." He desires that we love Him enough to obey Him, whether we understand or not. I believe this obedience includes His written and spoken word...and one will NEVER contradict the other.

A little later in His sermon, Yeshua says something else that is very interesting to me. Starting in Matthew 7:23 He says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven." Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice

lawlessness!" The first valid question is "What is the will of the Father"? According to Yeshua, only those who *keep* doing the Father's will get into the kingdom. I think that makes knowing what the Father's will is pretty important. The word for "will" is defined as "what one wishes or has determined shall be done; what God wishes to be done by us (commands & precepts)". Now the word "lawlessness" here is also translated as "iniquity" or "evil" in other translations. The Greek word is *anomia* and is defined as "illegality, violation of the law, transgression of the law and unrighteousness; the condition of without law whether because of ignorance or violation of it; contempt and violation of the law". There are multiple Hebrew words that can be connected to this Greek word. Here's a quick list of what most of those Hebrew words mean: wickedness, iniquity, unrighteousness, worthlessness, destruction, heinous crime, habitual sinfulness, treachery, foolishness, apostasy, crime, continual rebellion, deceit, something disgusting or abominable. Yeshua is speaking here of people who are clearly acting in His name and operating in some gifts, signs and wonders and demonstrations of power. In other words, He is talking about those whom we might say are "in the ministry" and who are "anointed". I believe we need to closely evaluate ourselves by the standard of His word to determine if we are operating in this kind of lawlessness by operating in gifts, signs and wonders and demonstrations of power without being submitted to His law. I also believe that by setting this right according to His word, we will see true authority, not just power, begin to come forth in our lives. Many of the false prophets of old had demonstrations of power. Furthermore, Yeshua warns us multiple times that in the last days many false prophets would arise with great signs, wonders and miracles and deceive many. Even today shamans use "power" to heal the sick, practice divination, shape shift and all sorts of other evils. The devil possesses power. I don't

believe we need to walk in power but rather in authority like Yeshua did. We cannot have true authority or be authorized by Yahweh until we are willing to come under His authority by being obedient to His word. Before a person can lead, they must first learn to follow. Our obedience demonstrates and proves our love for Him. (1 John 5:3) Once this is established, He begins to know us (Matt. 7:23) and then He can and will trust us and begin to give us His authority over all things.

Yeshua wraps up this sermon in Matthew 7:24-27 by saying "Therefore, everyone who listens to these messages of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on a rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, but it did not collapse because its foundation was on the rock. Everyone who keeps on hearing these messages of mine and never puts them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and battered that house, and it collapsed, and its collapse was total." Those listening to this sermon now had to choose what they would do with what they had heard. He always confronts us to bring us to the point of decision and at the end of the day, it always comes back to the same decision that Adam and Eve were faced with in the garden...obedience which brings life and blessings or disobedience which brings death and curses. If we will put into practice the teachings in this sermon, Yeshua promises that no matter what the devil may throw at us in this life, we will stand, just like the house built on the Rock. It is a sure thing that in this life there will be storms. There will be rain and floods and winds that will beat against us, both in the natural and spiritual realms. But if we have built our "house" on the strong foundation which is the rock of Yahweh, Yeshua, Ruach haQadesh (Holy Spirit) and the whole council of His word we

will not be destroyed. We may stumble but we will not fall headlong.

There are some teachings later in the "New Testament", specifically by Paul, that seem to suggest that the law has been done away with or is obsolete for "New Testament" believers. A closer look at those specific passages reveals that Paul was not at all teaching departure from the law. He did teach that the law in and of itself was not the means to achieve salvation. He taught that the grace of Christ through faith was our only means to salvation. I will not go into those passages specifically here. However, I think something else is important to mention. First, it's important to understand who Paul was. He was the Pharisee of Pharisees *and* Jew among Jews. In other words, he knew the Torah and the rest of the "Old Testament" plus Jewish culture, customs, traditions and idioms as well as anyone and better than most. He had dedicated his life to knowing and understanding Torah. I do not believe he would have turned his back on all that he knew to be true and right. I do believe he turned his back on the *system* of the Pharisees and their many man-made laws and traditions. I believe he turned his back on the pervasive thought among Pharisees that they were better than everyone else. He clearly states in several places that he supports the law and believes in it. I believe he was chosen by the Father *because* of his deep understanding of Torah. Who better to carry on with the work of re-establishing the Father's way which Yeshua had started than someone who knew the words of the Father well? If the law wasn't important or was going to be just a thing of the past, why would Yahweh pick someone who knew the law so well? If Yahweh intended to move away from the laws He so carefully set forth, why not choose someone who was "fresh" who could learn and teach the "new" ideas. We know that the Father knows everything past, present and future. He knew

before He selected Paul what Paul would do. I do not believe with that foreknowledge the Father would have hand-picked someone who would ultimately attempt to undo what the Father had established in the “Old Testament”. Also, Paul would have been standing in opposition to the words of Yeshua as well as every other author in all of Scripture, both “Old and “New Testaments”. That doesn't make sense. Even if Paul's words were meant to do away with the law, you would have to ask yourself if you would accept Paul's teachings over Yeshua's. This is illogical on all counts in my opinion.

I do not believe the law has been “done away with”. I do believe that Christ did away with the curse of the law, which is death, by His wonderful sacrifice made for me and you. I do not believe that salvation can be attained by any other means than believing in what Yeshua did on the cross. I do believe that obedience to the law expresses our love to the Father in a tangible way according to 1 John 5:3. I believe that obedience positions us for blessings in every area of our lives. I also believe obedience positions us to walk in the true authority that Yahweh intended for us...the same authority Yeshua walked in.

Offended yet? I was too when I first began to see this. I was offended by every teacher who has ever told me that I was no longer required to observe the Father's instructions. However, being offended is not the answer. All of those well meaning teachers are a part of your path to the Father. Most likely one of those teachers is responsible for introducing you to Yeshua. DO NOT despise the path you have traveled to get to this point. Rather, understand that from the time you accepted Yeshua, your path was actually a path of redemption which would cause you to return to the Father's way. His timing is perfect. Having said that, sometimes we can be very stubborn when it comes to

following His instructions and so we often resist His leading. Often times our religious experience is the very thing that causes us to be resistant to the deeper things He has for us. When this occurs, we miss out on Him leading us into new levels of truth.

I would like to pose a simple question to you. If I'm wrong about this, what have I lost? I have not abandoned my belief in the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit. I still believe in the redemptive work Yeshua performed at the cross. I still walk in the salvation freely given to me by the Father. The worst case scenario is that I stand before the Father on judgment day having done my best to walk in the fullness of His word. Would He condemn me for that? I don't believe so. However, if I'm right about this, those who would not embrace His instructions and walk in them, like Yeshua did, may miss out on much of the kingdom by being "least in the kingdom". They may even hear "depart from me you workers of lawlessness". I want to be as close to the Father and the Son as possible when I step into His kingdom. I want to be part of the bride, not just part of the wedding party or one of the invited guests who sees the bride and groom from a distance.

In the next chapter I will address why I believe the doctrine that the law has been "done away with" was such a brilliant strategy of the enemy.

Chapter 5

The Wages of Sin

“For the wages of sin is death...” Romans 6:23a

If the law has been done away with, as so many teach and believe in mainstream Christianity, then what is sin? After all, sin is concisely defined in 1 John 3:4 as transgression of the law. “Whoever commits sin also transgresses the law [of God]; for sin is the transgression of the law.” (NKJV) Another translation reads “Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God.” (NLT) If the law really has been “done away with” and has no application in our lives today, then there really is no biblical definition of sin and Paul had no need to discuss the wages of sin here in Romans 6. Sin cannot be owed a wage if there is no definition of sin and hence, no such thing as sin. Furthermore, if there is no biblical definition of sin, we cannot be judged for sinning on judgment day and therefore, we have no need of a Savior. See how quickly this anti-law doctrine unravels? As a side note, the word “anomia” used in 1 John 3:4 in the phrase “transgresses the law”, is the same word used by Yeshua in Matthew 7:23 when he says “...depart from Me you who practice **lawlessness.**” (NASB) Here's another popular translation: “...get away from Me, you who **break God's laws.**” (NLT) A little deeper study reveals this word “anomia” as central to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans which Yeshua says He hates in Revelation 2:6 and Revelation 2:15. For more on this, see “Nicolaitans” in the appendix. I believe the downward spiral into lawlessness we see in our society is a direct result of this anti-law doctrine that we have bought in to over the last 2,000 years in mainstream Christianity.

Paul spoke well here to teach of the serious nature of sin. The Greek word “opsonion” translated here as wages is defined as a “soldier's pay; that part of a soldier's support given as pay and rations”. The word translated as sin is “hamartia”. This word is defined as “to be without a share in; to miss the mark; to wander from the law of God; to violate God's law”. Death here is the word “thanatos”. It is defined as “the death of the body; that separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul and the body by which the life on earth is ended”.

Recently our family was faced with a painful event. A dear family pet was diagnosed with cancer which was already advanced. He died just two days later. Virtually everyone has experienced something like this. Whether it was a pet or worse yet, a family member or close friend, we have all crossed paths with this horrible disease. I certainly do not want to give this more weight than it deserves or get it out of perspective. This is an animal. However, it is an animal that we had come to love who has given his best as friend, companion and protector to each of the members of my family. I know not even one small sparrow falls that the Father doesn't take notice of so I know He takes care and concern over this.

In this process, I found myself asking the Father to help me learn from Him. I know that in every circumstance He wants to walk with us and teach us. I was reminded of this passage of scripture in which Paul tries to communicate the very serious nature and consequences of sin. Then I was reminded of the Father's instruction to Adam regarding the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He gave an instruction, a law, and the penalty for disobeying that instruction was death. In other words, prior to disobeying the instructions of the Father, death

did not exist. Adam and Eve would have physically lived forever had they not sinned.

Paul states that the payment sin demands to receive are physical death. Too often this thought is lost when we are confronted by death. In the process of mourning and the emotions that often accompany mourning, we lose sight of the fact that death, all death, is the cost of sin. Disobedience brings death into the world but it does not occur at a 1:1 ratio... *you sin you die*. It is true that when I sin I open the door of my life to sickness, disease and death, but it does not exclusively happen this way. Death is no respecter of persons. Adam's sin gave death the opportunity to sink its tentacles into every living being on the face of the planet because Adam was placed in charge from the beginning. Before we get too down on Adam for his choice, it's important to remember that we too have opportunities every day to choose just like Adam, and, just like Adam we all too often choose poorly. We too choose disobedience and in doing so, we become indebted to sin and it demands its wage...from each individual and from every living thing on the planet.

As I remember this animal that lost his life to cancer, I'm fully aware that he was not capable of sin. He could not choose disobedience to the Father's instruction. His susceptibility to this disease comes as a result of the sin I and all of mankind has inflicted on this planet from the beginning. We have all sinned and fall short (or miss the mark) of the glory of God. And as we sin, which I all too often take far too lightly, we subject ourselves, others around us and every living thing on the planet to the wages of sin...death. One analogy could be the national debt of the United States. It continues to grow out of control. At

some point though, the debt must be paid. When it comes due, it will affect all of us. Likewise sin demands its payment.

We know that Christ came to pay the debt, the wages, of our sin. When we personally receive His perfect sacrifice and work of redemption on the cross, our debt is paid in full. We no longer owe the debt from the sins prior to our repentance and acceptance of the forgiveness He paid for. However, each new time we sin, we are required to repent and ask forgiveness again to keep the wages of sin “paid in full”. What if we sin but are unaware of it? Sin does not take into account whether or not I realize I've sinned. It only keeps tally of the wage it's owed as a result of my sin. If the definition for sin found in 1 John 3:4 is true and sin really is the transgression of the Father's law, then it seems important to know His law so we at least have a chance of not breaking it. If I have a rule in my mind that I want my children to follow but I never tell them what that rule is, what are the chances they will get it right? Not too good. What if Yahweh's law really is still in effect? Then, as an example, each time we eat something that transgresses the Father's instructions, like Adam and Eve did, we re-introduce sin into the world and we become indebted to it...and sin **will** collect on what its owed unless it's paid by the blood of Yeshua. The strategy of getting the people of Yahweh to believe that His instructions, His rules, are no longer in effect seems brilliant to me. In the garden He was able to get Eve and then Adam to question the validity of Yahweh's law, and He's been doing it ever since. It is Satan's number one objective to separate the people of Yahweh from their Creator. He sets out to kill, steal and destroy. He knew from the beginning and all the way up to today that the wages of sin (breaking the laws of Yahweh) is death. (Romans 6:23) He also fully understood that sin is breaking Yahweh's law. (1 John 3:4) What better strategy to

execute a soft kill than to get us to believe that the very laws which would keep us alive, healthy and strong are no longer in effect and that obedience to those laws is bondage. In one fell swoop he was able to get the creation to question the supreme authority of the Creator, the validity of His laws, and the very heart behind those instructions. **BRILLIANT!**

In John 10:10 Yeshua teaches that the thief (Satan) comes only to steal, kill and destroy but He comes to give life more abundant. There is *no* life in death and *no* death in life. They are polar opposites. In 1 Peter 5:8 we're told that the devil roams around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Webster's definition for the word devour is "to use up or destroy as if by eating; to eat up greedily or ravenously; to prey upon". Obviously we are not being physically eaten like a lion would eat its prey...or are we? Many of the diseases that are killing us are in fact eating or consuming our bodies. The death that results from many of the sicknesses and diseases today is no less final than that experienced by the lion's prey. However, it is much less humane.

So here we are in a world riddled with sin, sickness, disease and death. Turn on the television and you're sure to see some actor, actress or professional athlete tout the "beauty" of their homosexual lifestyle. This doesn't come only through individuals. The industries that many of these individuals work for are pushing this lifestyle as well. Meanwhile we continue to support those industries with our time and dollars, even though we say we disagree with their choices. We continue to watch the shows and the sports that contain this sort of content and in doing so, we tell the networks, the actors and actresses, and the athletes that we really do condone what they are doing. It's not only homosexuality though. The Creator says it is unlawful to

murder. Yet we are entertained by shows that are built around murder. The Creator says it is unlawful to commit adultery, yet we have no problem supporting with our time and dollars shows that promote this type of behavior. The Creator says it is unlawful to eat certain things. Yet we choose to eat things that we are clearly told in scripture we are not to eat. We say we are no longer “under the law” and therefore we can eat whatever we please. Meanwhile we continue down the road of obesity, heart disease, cancer, diabetes and generally poor health at an ever increasing rate with no consideration at all for the fact that what we are putting in our mouths *might* be partially responsible for these trends. This does not sound like a people who are blessed going in and coming out, in the cities and the fields. (Deut. 28:1-14) We really like to quote these verses but we forget (and maybe just didn't know) that these blessings are predicated on our obedience to His commandments. Instead I fear that we are more on the course of Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

We know the Father cannot act towards us apart from His great love for us. So the question arises in my mind...if He can only act towards His people in love, then aren't the instructions He gave an act of love? Did the all knowing Creator of the universe who loves us more than we can even imagine give us instructions that would place us in bondage? Did He issue His instructions to somehow keep us from the “finer things” in life? Or is it possible that we have misunderstood His heart in those instructions? Is it possible that His instructions were meant for our health and well being? Is it possible that in the garden and again at Mt. Sinai, He knew the future would hold all manner of sickness, disease and pain if we as His creation were to disobey Him? I believe His instructions came from His great heart of love and His great desire for us to have a blessed life more abundant than we could have ever imagined. I believe He

wanted us to be so blessed with health, well-being and even material things that those who do not know Him would see how blessed we are and come to us to find out how they could experience the same level of blessing. (Deut. 4:6-8)

Yeshua said He came to give us **life** not death and *that* life was to be more abundant. He also told us that this life would be eternal. All human souls and spirits live eternally, it's just a question of where. John 3:16 says "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish, but have everlasting life." The word for life used here is "zoe". This word most commonly refers to physical life as we think of it. It wouldn't make sense for Him to speak of everlasting spiritual life as everyone is already guaranteed this. Maybe Yeshua was trying to point us back to the Father in such a way that we really could have that everlasting life that was more abundant than we could imagine. Maybe His example of perfect obedience to the Father was meant to show us the right way to live so that we could live blessed the way Deuteronomy 28 speaks of.

Now you may disagree with me and that's OK. But before you decide where you stand on this, take some time to look at the world around you and ask yourself if this is really the world the Creator had in mind. Ask yourself if the circumstances in our world really reflect a Creator's heart of love towards us or do the circumstances largely reflect something else? Before you point a finger at the world, those "sinners" in the world or our government for the mess we're in, remember, we as believers are the ones called the light of the world. If when we look at the world what we see is increasing darkness, we must recognize it comes as a result of our not being the light we are supposed to be. Before you make your stand, take some time to really look

at the entirety of scripture and understand if what you've been told or have come to believe by whatever means makes sense in the light of the whole word which we're told is good for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16-remember when this was written, there was no "New Testament". Paul was speaking predominantly of the "Old Testament".) This is not an indictment but rather the cry of my heart for the bride to wake up, take a look in the mirror and see herself for what she has become. Then, with a humble heart, to come before her Creator with a heart that wants to repent and return to Him and become all she is to become before she is united with her Groom. I believe this is a key component to unlocking 2 Chronicles 7:14 and actually seeing Him heal our land. I also believe if we could get hold of this, it would lead us into the times of refreshing spoken of in Acts 3:19-21 which would usher in His coming.

In the next chapter I will address what I believe to be a **major** issue in mainstream Christianity today.



Brand New Old School "Christianity" - A Call to the Bride was written to address foundational problems faced in mainstream "Christianity" due to errant doctrinal and anti-Semitic teachings. It was written to provoke the bride of Yeshua to return to the Father's way, clean herself and become the light and salt she is called to be in a world that desperately needs her to fulfill her calling.

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