

Divorced From Truth - Part 1
Despising Doctrine
Joseph Herrin (11-04-08)

II Thessalonians 2:13

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Yahshua Christ and our gathering together to Him..., let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless *the apostasy* comes first...

Apostasy: to divorce from truth

The Spirit of Christ has brought to my attention an alarming trend among the body of Christ. I have been aware for many years that most Christians do not study their Bibles. This becomes obvious when I receive correspondence from believers. I have attributed much of this to a lack of interest in spiritual things. Christians find their attention drawn to a multitude of activities in this materialistic society, and the Bible often seems an unattractive choice to spend their time when they could be watching television, or pursuing some other worldly entertainment.

Many Christians have left it up to their pastors and Bible teachers to do the actual study of the Bible, looking to ministers to tell them the things they need to know. The great error of this is that the ministers know there are many things the body of Christ does not want to hear. There are certain Scriptures that if taught upon would lead to personal strife and possibly cost the minister their job, so a great many doctrines and passages of Scripture are either avoided, or reinterpreted in some unsound manner. The apostle Paul prophesied that this would be the state of the last days of the church in which we now live.

II Timothy 4:2-4

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,* and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

We find very little reproofing, rebuking and exhorting taking place among the body of Christ today. Sadly, many in the church have gone beyond a mere

apathy toward studying the Scriptures, and now they will not “endure” sound doctrine. This was manifested recently when a brother told me he did not want to speak to me about doctrine, having concluded that to do so was divisive.

People of God, true doctrine is divisive. It divides truth from error. Many who are wed to myths and fables, who have embraced false doctrines, react very strongly when someone asks them to sit down and examine carefully what the Scriptures actually teach. A mindset has gripped many believers where they have concluded that it is okay for Christians to believe whatever they choose to believe, and that any interpretation of the Scriptures is legitimate if a person believes it. Such a conclusion is not only fallacious, but has resulted in much loss in the lives of the people of God.

II Peter 1:19-2:1

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that *no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation*, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.*

The apostle Peter in using the word “prophecy” is not speaking merely of Scriptures that foretell future events. The word “prophecy” means “words spoken by inspiration.” The men who were inspired to write the Scriptures were prophesying as they penned every line. Peter goes on to speak of false teachers arising among the body of Christ who will introduce destructive heresies. How will these heresies be discerned and refuted since the people of God have abandoned the study of the Scriptures and have concluded that doctrine is divisive and therefore to be avoided?

The apostles appointed by Christ to establish His church upon a sure foundation emphasized the need to study the Scriptures and to discern them correctly. They would be appalled to discern what has occurred in the church at this hour. The Bible may be a best seller, but it is little read, and seldom studied. In addition, many new translations of the Bible have been produced to make it more “readable,” but in the process, many errors and inaccuracies have been introduced. Accuracy in translation has been replaced by a focus

upon creating a translation that is entertaining, that will attract people's interest.

There are some truly abominable Bible translations around today. The publishers of the NIV Bible have produced a gender neutral translation in order to be politically correct. The great error of doing so is that the Holy Spirit did not inspire men to write the Scriptures in gender neutral language. Gender is indicated throughout the Bible. Such translations reveal a lack of fear of God, and a destructive pride that places man's thoughts above those of man's Creator.

Another translation horror is Eugene Peterson's The Message. This Bible reads like a slangy, casual conversation. It is not really a translation at all, but rather a paraphrase. No one who wants to seriously study the Bible would choose this translation, for there is such a wide divergence from the original Spirit inspired Scriptures as to make a study of original intent and meaning impractical.

Some believers have written to me to ask what translation I use in my studies, and which translation I am using when I provide Scripture quotations. Since I was an adolescent I have not relied upon a particular translation of the Bible in my studies. As a child I was given the King James Bible, and this was what was predominantly used in the churches I grew up in. Even so, when I was no older than a very early teenager I acquired a copy of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible with Hebrew and Greek word definitions, and I spent uncounted hours looking up specific words to ascertain their original meaning and to see how the translators rendered the word in various occurrences.

I was often astonished to find that the translators would render a single Hebrew or Greek word in more than a dozen different ways, often contradictory, frequently obscuring the true meaning of the original writer. For over ten years now I have used PC Study Bible as my chief study tool. In this computer based program I have the following translations, which I frequently cross reference and compare:

New American Standard Updated
New American Standard
New King James
Young's Literal Translation

The Amplified Bible
King James Version
American Standard Version
New International Version
Darby Bible
Greek New Testament (transliterated)
Hebrew Old Testament (transliterated)
Hebrew and Greek Interlinear

In addition to this I have hardcopies of a number of Scripture translations that I often refer to when studying, including the following:

The Concordant Translation
The Scriptures (Divine Name Translation)
The Companion Bible (E.W. Bullinger's extensive notes included)
The Holman Bible
The Recovery Bible

And lastly, I at times reference other Bible translations through the Internet which I do not have in my possession.

Very frequently in my studies I will use the Interlinear Bible. This places an English Translation beside the original Hebrew and Greek words, and includes the Strong's reference numbers for each word. A simple click on the Hebrew or Greek word will pull up the definition from Strong's Concordance. Robert Young also has produced a similar concordance, which I have in hardcopy, as well as being the translator of Young's Literal Translation of the Bible which I reference very often.

A click on the Hebrew or Greek word will also allow me to pull up the following:

The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge
New Unger's Bible Dictionary
Easton's Bible Dictionary
Fausset's Bible Dictionary
Nelson's Bible Dictionary
International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
Nave's Topical Concordance
And various other reference works.

When I include Scripture quotations in my writings I do not cite the translation unless I have made no changes to it. Oftentimes I will use a translation such as the New American Standard Bible as the basis for a quotation, but I will make changes where I have discerned that a word has not been translated accurately for understanding. I also place the divine names of God back into the text where the translators have replaced them with titular substitutes, a practice I find to be unfaithful to accurate translation.

Some of the study aids in PC Study Bible I use regularly, and others rarely, but I have found them all helpful on occasion. Because I long to discern the truth of God's words, I have accumulated these various resources to help me in my studies. The apostle Paul admonished Timothy in the following way:

II Timothy 2:15

Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.

[The Amplified Bible]

It requires patient study to rightly divide the word of God. I know Christian men who have spent hundreds, and even thousands of dollars, upon some hobby. Men who are hunting, fishing, automobile, stereo, ham radio, sports, and bicycling enthusiasts have often spent a great deal of money, devoted great amounts of time, and educated themselves to become both knowledgeable and skillful in the area of their interest. Yet these same men will often argue that they are unable to manifest the same attention to the study of Scriptures.

People of God, we will pursue that which is important to us. Our actions reveal what is in our hearts. If a man will buy a fishing boat costing thousands of dollars, a truck to pull it with, equip it with rods and reels and bait and tackle, and spend the money for licenses and fuel; if he will read the fishing magazines, and study where the fish are, when they are feeding, what they are biting; if he will find others with similar interests and spend hours conversing with them, learning new things, and increasing his knowledge and skill, but will not apply the same devotion to study of the Bible, it is not because he is incapable, or does not have the skills necessary. It is because he does not have the desire.

Christ did not go down to the local seminary or university to choose His disciples, men who would later become the apostles of the church. He chose fishermen, a tax collector, a political zealot, and other common men. These men traded a passion for other things for a passion for knowing God. This led them to apply themselves with great devotion to new interests. We read of these men:

Acts 6:4

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

These men did not reason that they lacked the ability to study the word of God in order to teach it accurately. They did not say, "I am a fisherman, not a Bible scholar." They became Bible scholars, devoting themselves to its study and teaching, relying upon the Spirit of Christ to instruct them as they did so, and they were able to lay a foundation upon which the church of God could be firmly established.

There is no less need in this hour for men and women to manifest this same devotion to Christ and His word. I am appalled at the attitude that would seek to place these two things at opposition to one another. Some say "Let's just focus upon Christ and avoid doctrine." What folly this is. The Scriptures include doctrines of the Christ, and any who fail to rightly discern these doctrines will find themselves running their race in vain.

I Timothy 4:6

In pointing out these things to the brethren, *you will be a good servant of Christ Yahshua, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine* which you have been following.

I Timothy 6:3-4

If anyone advocates a different *doctrine* and does not agree with *sound words, those of our Lord Yahshua Christ*, and with the *doctrine* conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing...

A people who "will not endure sound doctrine" will find themselves led away from godliness and from a correct understanding of Christ and His kingdom. Men and women are divorcing themselves from truth at their own peril. There is an incredible amount of deception abounding in this late hour, and conditions will grow worse. The people of God will be urged to embrace one

error after another until there is no truth left in the foundation upon which they are standing. Already the foundation has been seriously eroded, and rotten planks have replaced that which was once sound.

Many are saying, "All that is truly important is relationship. We must lead people to relationship with Christ and relationships with one another." The subtle, yet insidious error of this mindset is uncovered when one sees that this Christ with whom they are in relationship is not the Christ described in the Scriptures. It is a Christ of their own imagination and creation.

Many are proclaiming a Christ that bears no resemblance to the Son of God. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, they have formed a golden calf and called it Yahweh.

Exodus 32:4-5

He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "*This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.*" Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "*Tomorrow shall be a feast to Yahweh.*"

What has happened in times past was written for our instruction. The people of God took their gold jewelry and asked Aaron to fashion for them a god like the gods of Egypt, one they could worship and who would applaud their carnality. Aaron fashioned this idol and the people said, "This is your god," and they called it "Yahweh."

Can you not discern that the same idolatrous actions are being carried out in this very hour among the people of God? Do not be fooled because Christians say they are worshiping Christ. Many are worshiping an image of Christ they have created. They have commissioned minsters to fashion an acceptable image of Christ for them, but this image bears no more resemblance to the Son of God than the golden calf resembled Yahweh.

The Israelites acted in an unrestrained manner in front of this calf. They danced and played the harlot, engaging in sexual immorality, all the while saying it was done as a festival to Yahweh. How many Christians today are acting in a similar immoral fashion? Multitudes who confess to worship Christ are focused upon material possessions, upon pleasure, and are engaging in all manner of behavior that is displeasing to God, but the god they have fashioned

smiles on it all. The god they have fashioned even tells them they are blessed as their lives become more filled with the excesses of selfish living.

The people and the ministers today have fashioned a new christ who is all love and tolerance. This christ does not punish sin, and never manifests anger or displeasure at man. This christ is not exclusive. He says he is one way to God, perhaps the best way, but not the only way. This christ does not make sin and repentance a focus of relationship to himself or the Father. His message is simply “come to me as you are, and remain essentially as you are, and I will embrace you and love you.”

This new christ makes men and women feel good about themselves, even while they are living self-focused lives. These men and women can be living in sin, seeking to serve both God and mammon, but the christ they have formed smiles upon it all, and says, “I love you. Do not trouble yourselves about such things.”

People of God, this is the subtlety of the deception of this hour. Satan knows he does not need to get people to deny Christ with their mouths. All he needs to do is get them to embrace an image of Christ that is false.

Matthew 24:24

"For *false Christs* and false prophets *will arise* and will show great signs and wonders, *so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.*"

Christ warned His disciples in advance that these things would happen. There are false Christs in profusion in existence at this hour. Multitudes have fashioned new images of Christ that are divorced from the truth. How will the people of God know the counterfeit unless they study the true. The Scriptures reveal the true image of Christ.

John 5:39-40

“You search *the Scriptures*, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and *it is these that bear witness of Me...*”

A people who do not study the Scriptures will be easily fooled by the counterfeit doctrines and counterfeit Christs that abound in this hour. In the next part of this writing I will address some of the specific counterfeits that are being embraced enthusiastically by those who have allowed themselves to become divorced from the truth.

Divorced From Truth - Part 2

Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah - The ONLY Way to God

John 14:6

Yahshua said to him, "*I am THE way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*"

John 10:7-9

So Yahshua said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, *I am THE door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am THE door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved.*"

In part 1 of this writing I shared a great concern that is upon my heart concerning the present trend among believers in Christ to depart from sound doctrine and the study of Scriptures. This trend is leading many believers, and people of influence among the body of Christ, to embrace grievous error. I can see where much of this error is heading. It will lead to an eventual denial of Yahshua the Messiah as the ONLY way to restored relationship to God. Already, this trend is far advanced, and many believers are embracing doctrines that declare that God may be found through other ways.

I suspect that most who read this blog would read the opening Scriptures and agree that there is no other way to the Father other than through Christ. Some would be surprised, however, to find how far such an understanding has already suffered the effects of erosion as a stream of falsehood has been unleashed like a flood, and many Christians are beginning to depart from sound doctrine. I will cite a few prominent examples.

Some months ago I was made aware of an interview that Billy Graham had with Robert Schueller of the Crystal Cathedral in California. In this interview Billy Graham states that there may be other ways to God other than through Christianity. Robert Schueller was excited to hear Billy Graham declare this, for it fits in well with his own thinking and false doctrines. You can find this interview on YouTube.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axxlXy6bLH0&feature=related>

Billy Graham made a similar statement in an interview with Larry King.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bx29MRL4L6c&feature=related>

Please understand what is being said. It is being taught that “there is a wideness in God’s mercy.” A person can be a Hindu, or a Muslim, or a Buddhist, and if they are seeking light in the religion they are familiar with, then they belong to Christ. They need not know Christ, or even be familiar with God’s plan of redemption. All they need is to be good people who are seeking light.

There are many fallacies being swallowed to arrive at such a conclusion. One fallacy is that good men and women will seek after God of their own initiative.

Romans 3:9-12

Both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, *“There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, there is not even one.”*

Man is never the initiator of a restored relationship with God. God is always the initiator of reconciliation.

John 6:37, 44

“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out... No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”

The idea that there are good people in this world seeking for God is a fallacy. There are no “good” people.

Mark 10:17-18

As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” And Yahshua said to him, *“Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.”*

In asking this question, Yahshua was not denying that He was good. He was seeking to expose a fallacy of the man asking the question, and to get him to truly discern what he was saying. There are no “good” men. There are only fallen men who are sold as slaves to sin. Only God is good, so if this man called Christ “good,” he was in effect acknowledging that Christ was God. Yahshua

knew the man did not intend to declare this, so He asked him why he made such a statement.

It came as a great shock to me when God first revealed to me the myth of the good man who seeks for God. I was raised in Baptist churches that taught this myth. I was told that God must give every man and woman a chance to receive or reject Christ, for to fail to do so would not be fair. What this "fairness doctrine" fails to understand is that all men ALREADY REJECTED God. They did so "in Adam."

Romans 5:12, 18-19

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...Through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men... through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners...

We all sinned in Adam. When Adam rejected God and chose sin we all did the same, for we were in Adam as his seed. There is no doctrine of fairness that requires God to give all men an opportunity to receive or reject Him a second time. No! The Scriptures reveal that all now depends upon God Who chooses to have mercy on some, leading them to salvation through Christ, and Who also hardens some in their sin that they might remain vessels of wrath.

Romans 9:10-18

And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; *for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."* What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For *He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.* For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth." *So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.*

A church that does not STUDY the Scriptures today has departed from such basic truths. What happens time and again is that when man's sense of fairness, of good and evil derived from eating of the forbidden fruit, clashes with the revelation of the character and ways of God, those who are not firmly anchored in the truths of Scriptures form new doctrines according to their own understanding. Through such means an image of God is fashioned that is pleasing to the fallen mind of man, though it be as foreign to the truth as Aaron's golden calf was foreign to the true image of Yahweh.

In adopting a "fairness doctrine" that says God must give all men and women an opportunity to accept or reject Christ, the next false doctrine is then embraced of necessity. This is the doctrine that teaches that good men and women will choose Christ, while wicked men and women will reject Him. As we have seen, this is great error. "There is none righteous. No, not one." There are no "good" men or women. Only God is good.

Apart from a sovereign work of grace in the lives of those whom God chooses to have mercy on, none would ever come to Christ. Many look at Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus as exceptional. In truth, it is typical of all who come to Christ. Paul was going forth as an enemy of Christ. He was breathing out threats and murder against all who loved Christ. He was not "seeking" God. He was hardened in deception and sin. Yet, Paul was a vessel upon whom God chose to manifest His mercy.

Acts 9:3-6

As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do."

Many years ago the Lord revealed to me that I would never have chosen Him if left to myself. My coming to Christ for salvation was totally an act of His choosing to have mercy on me. I remember when this understanding dawned upon me. I was reading Romans chapter 9 and as the truth entered my being I began trembling. I was shaken by the knowledge that I was under wrath, and would have remained there, had not God chosen to have mercy on me. The Baptist doctrines I had been taught fell to the ground when the light of truth broke through to my soul.

Billy Graham and Robert Schueller teach that there are good men and women who are seeking light throughout the world. This is not so. All are children of wrath. None seeks after God. No not one. None would come to Christ unless the Spirit draws them. Salvation belongs to the Lord and He will dispense it as He pleases.

What then of the thought that there may be people in other religions who are seeking God according to what light is available to them? Billy Graham stated that people were doing so. Did he cite any Scriptures as the basis for this concept? No! It is a concept totally born of man's sense of right and wrong obtained by eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The carnal mind of man declares that such a conclusion is not only logical, but desirable. Certainly God must honor all those who are seeking light, even if the only light they have is Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, or some other false religion of demonic origin.

Can you see the error in such a conclusion? First, how can one embrace the thought that these false religions have any light?

II Corinthians 6:14-16

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols?

The Scriptures declare that these false religions are:

lawlessness
darkness
Belial (Satan)
Unbelievers
Idols

If the Scriptures declare false religions and their adherents to be darkness, then how does Billy Graham conclude that there is some light there? He does not do so by the Scriptures, but by Adamic reasoning.

Can God call people out of these religions into a knowledge of His Son to receive mercy and be reconciled to Himself. Absolutely. He has done so millions of times. However, it is erroneous to conclude that these people can

be reconciled to God apart from entering in through Christ Yahshua, the Son of God. He alone is THE WAY.

I have mentioned in a couple of previous blog postings the wildly popular book *The Shack*. This book is wildly popular not only in the sense of it being a best seller, but in the effusive praise a great many Christians are heaping upon it. I have heard a number profess that it is the best book they have ever read. The more I come to discern about the book, the more appalled I am at the acceptance it is getting among Christians. Truly, many have departed from sound doctrine and no longer study the Scriptures to recognize truth and error.

USA Today had a review of this book in which the following was stated:

Now, his first novel, The Shack—centered on dialogues between a miserable main character, Mack, and three unorthodox characterizations of the Holy Trinity—telescopes Young's transformation to a man spiritually reborn and aware every moment of God's love. It slams "legalistic" religions, denominations and doctrines. It barely even mentions the Bible.

Much is revealed in this paragraph. The book barely mentions the Bible. It presents an unorthodox view of God, and it defames those who take a stand upon doctrines of the Christ that are not flexible and inclusive as “legalistic.” What are some of the author’s beliefs? They are found in the following excerpts from the book taken from an online review.

On page 182, the character meant to represent Jesus says “Those who love me come from every stream that exists. They were Buddhists or Mormons, Baptists or Muslims, Democrats, Republicans and many who don't vote or are not part of any Sunday morning or religious institutions”. Mack (the main character) asks for clarification. “Does that mean...that all roads will lead to you?” “'Not at all,' smiled Jesus... 'Most roads don't lead anywhere. What it does mean is that I will travel any road to find you’”. Jesus then goes on to say “I am the best way any human can relate to Papa or Sarayu (the character who plays the Holy Spirit).”

There is much that is poisonous here. The author presents an image of Christ that is false. This Christ does not say, “I am THE WAY.” Instead, he says, “I am the BEST WAY.” What a wide gulf separates these two statements. The author is espousing the false doctrine that there are other ways to relationship

with God apart from Christ. God has made no other provision for restored relationship to Himself. All must enter in through the gate, which is Christ Yahshua.

This is the same error espoused by Billy Graham and Robert Schueller, that there is a “wideness” to God’s mercy. There are other paths to God aside from Christ. Today there are those who are saying Christ is the best way to the Father. Next they will be denying even this. They will say all ways are equally as good. Once truth is compromised and the Scriptures are departed from as the source to establish sound doctrine, the people of God become like a ship without anchor or rudder. They are blown about by every wind of false doctrine.

Ephesians 4:14

We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming...

The Shack is filled with Satanic deceit and false doctrine introduced subtly. It is no challenge at all for one who is grounded upon the word of God to discern the deception and falsehood present. Yet hordes of professing Christians are reading the book and heaping effusive praise upon it. Why? Because they have lost all discernment. They have fallen away from truth. They have become untethered from the Scriptures, and have failed to study them to know truth and avoid error.

This book contains other grievous errors such as portraying God the Father and the Holy Spirit as women. God the Father is depicted as saying, “I don’t need to punish people for sin. Sin is its own punishment, devouring from the inside.”

This is truly a case of fashioning a golden calf. What a wonderful god this is for those whose lives are filled with sin. This god does not punish sin. No wonder that the USA Today article stated that the Bible is hardly ever mentioned. You will not find support for such a concept of God in the Bible.

It is obvious that the author has been influenced by the study of false religions. The name given to the Asian woman who represents the Holy Spirit is Sarayu. Once more a subtlety of deception is employed. The name Sarayu is a feminine derivative of a Sanskrit word meaning “to flow.” As a masculine stem, Sarayu

means “air, wind,” i.e. “that which is streaming.”
[Source: wikipedia]

The Holy Spirit is also described with words that bear the meaning of air and wind in the Bible. Why use the name Sarayu, a name that is not found in the Bible, nor is it a common English name? Where is this name found?

The name Sarayu is mentioned repeatedly in the Rigveda. *“The Rigveda is an ancient Indian sacred collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns dedicated to the gods (devas). It is counted among the four canonical sacred texts of Hinduism known as the Vedas.”*
[Source: wikipedia]

Sarayu is the name of a river in India, and this stream which “flows” is associated with the teachings of Hinduism. It is little surprise to find that the author says that Jesus is not the only way to relationship with God. He also has the character depicting Jesus declaring that He did not come to make Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and others into Christians, declaring that He is not a Christian Himself.

“Those who love me come from every system that exists. They were Buddhists or Mormons, Baptists or Muslims.... I have no desire to make them Christian, but I do want to join them in their transformation into sons and daughters of my Papa, into my brothers and sisters.”
[The Shack's "Jesus." [p.182]]

How is it that so many are embracing this book, and praising it so highly? They are only able to do so because this generation has fallen away from the study of Scriptures and an emphasis upon sound doctrine. Even as the author of this book describes those who would divide over doctrine as “legalistic,” so too am I finding an increased tendency among Christians to accuse those who seek to emphasize sound doctrine as legalistic and manifesting a religious spirit. I have received this charge on several occasions in the past few weeks, often from believers who should know better.

Satan is shaping opinion by means of a flood of words. This shaping is subtly influencing even those saints who have been grounded in Scriptures and have been instructed by the Spirit. They are beginning to form an image of doctrine as divisive, and reproving, rebuking and exhorting as a manifestation of an argumentative and prideful spirit. There are fewer and fewer voices of truth,

as the weight of opinion is driving many into silence. May God raise up men and women who love truth with steel in their backbone. Such are badly needed to lead the body of Christ back to a true image of Christ, and a correct understanding of the ways of God.

Divorced From Truth - Part 3 The Distinctiveness of Christ

II Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Yahshua Christ is in you - unless indeed you fail the test?

I would like to give you a test of spiritual discernment. Recently I received a post from a brother in Christ who lives in Israel and maintains a mailing list. He sends out posts periodically, and I will include some comments from his most recent post. I would like you to consider what is written, and “examine it carefully.” I am giving you a heads up that I have discerned something to be amiss in it. I want you to see if the same concerns become readily apparent to you.

I have mentioned in previous posts that there is a flood of words being loosed upon the earth in this day, and this deluge impacts the opinions of believers in Christ. Many are having their opinions reshaped bit by bit without them having noticed. Unless one maintains a spiritual alertness, and is grounded in the word of God, they can find themselves beginning to drift off course in subtle ways. One day they will wake up and find that they have lost their bearings altogether.

With this in mind, I invite you to examine the following words sent out by this brother in Jerusalem.

The 2nd Jerusalem Assembly of the Knesset Christian Allies
Caucus
October 28-29, 2008

An Awesome event transpired this past week here in Jerusalem. From the opening of the Second Jerusalem Assembly of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus, there was a sense, an awareness, voiced in the expressions used both from the platform and from those in attendance that we were seated in one of those rare moments that transpire only every once in a while. In this instance, it was epochal (sic) - occurring only once in an age. The decision by the Knesset (Israel's Parliament) just four years ago to formally recognize and open dialogue with the Christian community here in the Land in order to promote a better relationship between the two is the propellant behind this

transforming engine of convergence. This is a monumental overture from the government in charge of this Jewish nation to those who have been perceived for over two centuries (he probably meant millennia) as having been the perpetrators of persecution upon them. It was a momentous event that we were able to participate in only because of decades of sacrifice by true believers seeded into this Land who have been dedicated to promoting harmony between the Christian and the Jew - often at their own expense.

The idea of meeting on the basis of our shared interest in the Land of Israel and becoming acquainted with people involved in the fate of this country, allowing them to listen to the heart of believers who love this Land as much as they was cathartic and healing in both its conception and implementation. Just the prior Saturday, the government of Israel fell due to newly elected Kadima Party leader and acting Prime Minister Tzipi (sic) Livni's inability to form a majority coalition within the Parliament (more answered prayer), thus forcing elections to be held within 90 days. It fell because the ultra-orthodox Shas party refused to join the coalition unless the PM publicly announced that a plank in the platform of that coalition would be to not divide Jerusalem. These are the brothers whom God has positioned on the front lines in this battle, manning the political bulwarks to stem this tide of madness toward giving away the Land. To witness the Shas party, represented at this event, being given a sustained ovation for their courage in this struggle by believers in Yeshua who feel the same as they brought tears to the eyes of many from both sides.

This conference concluded with an invitation to actually go into the Knesset itself for the final afternoon meeting on October 29, 2008 where Jewish MK's (Members of Knesset) held hands with believers in Yeshua and with one voice joined in prayer to this One True God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob we both worship for His favor and protection upon this nation. Never has this happened in a formally sanctioned event here in this Land of Israel before. While everyone from both sides understood this to be just a beginning with many hurdles and obstacles to overcome between us, still - it was Awesome, just Awesome.

Did anything stated here cause you concern due to its departure from sound doctrine? Keep in mind what has been shared in the previous two posts in this series. We have been speaking about the attacks on the exclusivity of Christ as the only way to access to the Father, and a trend among those in and out of the church to obscure any distinctiveness inherent in Christian belief and

doctrine. Many are altering the gospel in subtle ways until it has taken on a character foreign from the words of Scripture.

If you did not notice what stood out to me, go back and read these paragraphs again and look for what is stated concerning Christians and Jews being *brothers* and being joined in prayer to “*this One True God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob we both worship...*” Did any warning bells go off in your spirit? Have you been subtly influenced by the flood of words poured forth for many years now, until you not only are not alarmed, but might be led to add your “amen” to this brother’s comments?

Many statements such as these made by this brother in Christ sound good and reasonable. It feels right and charitable for a Christian to call a Jew his brother, and to suggest that the Christian and Jew worship the “One True God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” But is this true? Can a Christian and a “Christ-denying Jew both stand hand in hand in prayer and worship to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Are they both worshiping this same God in their own way? Where will such reasoning lead? I wrote to this brother and shared the following thoughts.

Dear H.,

There is a particular thought expressed here that I would like to comment on for your further consideration. It is found expressed in the following statements:

It is time for the Church to stop "stealing the fruit and destroying the root" of our heritage, to lay claim to our inheritance, to rise up and stand, shoulder to shoulder with His chosen people - our brothers in this family of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - the same One True God whom we worship...

This conference concluded with an invitation to actually go into the Knesset itself for the final afternoon meeting on October 29, 2008 where Jewish MK's (Members of Knesset) held hands with believers in Yeshua and with one voice joined in prayer to this One True God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob we both worship for His favor and protection upon this nation.

It is error to declare that a person who is Jewish by natural descent or by

embracing the Jewish religion is a brother to one who is born of the Spirit of Messiah, or to declare that they worship the same God. Both Christ and the apostles made this distinction clearly. Consider the following words:

John 8:33-44

They answered Him, "*We are Abraham's descendants* and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, "You will become free'?" Yahshua answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. *The slave* does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. *I know that you are Abraham's descendants*; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. *I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.*" They answered and said to Him, "*Abraham is our father.*" Yahshua said to them, "*If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.* But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. *You are doing the deeds of your father.*" They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." Yahshua said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies... "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" Yahshua answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; *it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, "He is our God"; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.*"

H., there are some very important truths contained in these words of the Son of God. Christ makes a clear delineation between natural descent as children of Abraham and qualification as a son of God by being of the spiritual descent of Abraham. The majority of those who are born of natural descent have to this date not been considered as spiritual descendants of Abraham. The flesh profits nothing. It is the Spirit that makes alive.

We must keep these things in mind when relating to the natural descendants of Abraham. They are not our brothers. They have a different father. Believers in Christ have Yahweh as their Father, but those who deny Christ have the Devil as their father. No matter how much they say that Yahweh is their God, they are liars, for if Yahweh were their Father they would love His Son.

There can be no fellowship between Christian and Jew apart from the Jew also being born again of the Spirit of Messiah and becoming a partaker of His spiritual life.

II Corinthians 6:14-16

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols?

For a Christian believer in Christ to be bound together with an unbelieving Jew is to form a partnership with righteousness and lawlessness. There can be NO fellowship between light and darkness. Christ told JEWS that did not believe in Him that they were of their father the devil. Here we are asked "what harmony has Christ with Belial?" This is a rhetorical question. The answer is implied. There is NO harmony between the two. There is NOTHING that a believer has in common with an unbeliever.

Those who say they are worshiping the God of Abraham, but have rejected Yahweh's Son are liars. They are actually worshiping a god of their own manufacture. They have committed the same error as those who formed the golden calf and worshiped it, calling it Yahweh.

Exodus 32:4-5

He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and *made it into a molten calf*; and they said, "*This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.*" Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "*Tomorrow shall be a feast to Yahweh.*"

This people have always gone astray in their hearts. They have formed images of Yahweh that are not truly Yahweh. They worship an idol, and call it Yahweh.

Do not be deceived into thinking that these Jewish believers who have rejected Messiah are brothers, or that they worship the God of Abraham as do believers in Yahshua. The Son of God has declared that this is not so, and His holy apostles have added testimony to this fact.

Romans 11:28

From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers...

Notice that Paul says God has not fully rejected them "for the sake of the fathers." He says nothing of their faith or worship of Yahweh, for it is not on this basis that they are yet loved. On the basis of faith and worship they are "enemies" of those who are worshipers of Messiah. They do not worship the same God, nor do they walk in the same truth or faith. They are separated from the Spirit of Christ, which alone is the basis by which any who are in Christ might be called brothers.

I Corinthians 6:17

But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

H., there is a spirit of ecumenism present today that is of the Devil. It seeks to convince people that there is fellowship based upon some other foundation than being a partaker of the life of Christ. This spirit of ecumenism suggests that Jews and Christians and Muslims are all people who share the faith of Abraham. I am sure you would revolt at the idea that Christian and Muslim both share the faith of Abraham. You should likewise revolt at the idea that Christian and Jew share the faith of Abraham, for Abraham manifested a different spirit from those who rejected the Son of God.

[end excerpt]

People of God, when a people begin to drift away from sound doctrine and no longer STUDY the Scriptures as they are admonished to do, they will inevitably begin forming their thoughts and opinions of what is true and false based upon a different source. Instead of seeking to know the mind of the Father in order to be found in agreement with His judgment, they will begin to form judgments according to the dictates of their own soul.

Isaiah 55:8-9

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares Yahweh. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher

than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

There is a vast disparity between the thoughts of God and the thoughts of man.

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Apart from the Spirit and the Word, we cannot know the thoughts of God. A people who are not diligently seeking to know the mind of the Father, and who have departed from the study of Scriptures, will be led into great error. Their minds will present to them many conclusions that appear righteous, but are actually unrighteous, being contrary to the thoughts of God.

In this hour there is a great pressure to be tolerant of diverse religious views and to embrace people of other “faiths.” President Bush and other world leaders have brought into the current vernacular the expression “people of faith.” Christians are lumped into one big melting pot of diverse religious beliefs along with Hindus and Muslims and Buddhists and Shamans and Roman Catholics and Mormons and Moonies. All are spoken of favorably as “people of faith.” What is inferred in such rhetoric is that it is sufficient and acceptable to have any type of religious faith. It does not matter if the faith is in a demon, a false god, or the One True God testified of in the Bible whose name is Yahweh and whose Son is Yahshua.

I believe that most professing Christians today cannot even define what it is that makes them a child of God and provides them entrance into the family of Christ. Most have some muddled idea that their confession of Christ as their Savior makes them a Christian. Some would add that one must also adhere to a few key doctrinal beliefs, such as the virgin birth of Christ, His sinless life, death on a cross, and resurrection from the dead.

Christianity is much more than adopting a core of basic beliefs and conforming oneself to a certain standard of behavior. To be a Christian one must become an entirely new creation. A man or woman must be born again spiritually, and become a partaker of the Spirit of Christ. This is the testimony of the verse cited at the opening of this article.

II Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or

do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Yahshua Christ is in you - unless indeed you fail the test?

Beyond a doubt, Yahshua Christ is not “in” a Jew who denies that Yahshua is the Son of God and who denies that He is the Jewish Messiah. On what basis then can a Christian call a non-messianic Jew their brother? On what basis can they assert that they worship the same God?

When a man or woman denies the Son of God, they are denying the Father. This is the testimony of Christ. He said, “If God were your Father, you would love Me.” They do not love the Son of God, therefore God is NOT their Father, and if God is NOT their Father, then neither are they the Christians’ brother.

Christ told the Samaritan woman at the well that a day was coming, and now was at hand, that all those who worshiped the Father must do so “in spirit and in truth.” There is no basis upon which one can claim that a Jew who denies Yahshua as the Son of God, and who does not have the indwelling Spirit of Christ, is a worshiper of Yahweh God. Mankind is either darkness or light. They are either dead in their trespasses and sins, and separated from the life of God, or they have been made alive in Christ and a partaker of the Spirit of holiness.

I am finding more and more that deception is entering into the minds of believers. They are being led astray from the simplicity of devotion to Christ. They have departed from the doctrine conforming to godliness (I Timothy 6:3). Worldly philosophy, and carnal reasoning is everywhere encroaching into the life of the church.

I have sought to clearly teach the nuts and bolts of the gospel. I would recommend the book *Overcoming Addiction by the Spirit of Christ*. Although the title refers to addiction, this book is really a basic exposition on the gospel of salvation. It describes the path by which all the children of God are called to overcome sin, Satan, and the world.

Many Christians in reading this book find that the basics of the gospel are set forth in a way that they have never considered or understood before. Understanding what is written will reveal the error of those who espouse that there is any commonality between a Christian who has been born again of the Spirit of Christ and a person of another faith, including a Jew. We are not all “people of faith.”

Satan has a plan to merge all religions into one. He is even now promoting this mindset of all religions containing “people of faith.” If you read the teachings of Freemasonry, or the Rosicrucian beliefs, or even examine the trend of the Roman Catholic Church to be the gathering point of all religions, you will see where things are heading. The following links provide resources for further study into these matters:

Freemasonry - The Spirit of Babylon: <http://www.heart4god.ws/>

Deconstructing Babel - Part 2:

<http://parablesblog.blogspot.com/2008/10/deconstructing-babel-part-2.html>

Are you discerning the subtle encroachment of this trend into evangelical Christianity? Have you noted its pressure upon your own life? These things will continue to increase until those who stand firm, declaring that there is no other name than Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah, given under heaven by which men must be saved will be hated by all men on account of their testimony. Already I can discern the tide of opinion rising against those who maintain this confession.

Divorced From Truth - Part 4 No Perfect Bible Translation

After sending out the first part of this teaching series, a sister in Christ wrote to me to ask me to provide further information on Bible translations. Some have wanted to know specifically what errors are present in various translations, and some have requested that I recommend a good translation to use for study.

I have found that many Christians tend to become very emotionally attached to a particular translation, although their reasons for doing so are usually erroneous, or poorly considered. Perhaps you have encountered people who held to the opinion that the King James Version is the only accurate translation, suggesting that all other translations are demonically influenced and to be avoided at all cost. I have sought to reason with some who held this view. I have asked them to consider the following points.

The King James Version of the Bible was not produced until 1611. If the KJV Bible is the ONLY translation authorized and approved by God, what did the church use for the 1600 years prior to its writing? Did the church have only demonically inspired Scriptures?

If the King James Version is the ONLY Bible authorized and approved by God, then what do the Christians of the world who do not speak English use? Must the Chinese church use the English KJV Bible even when they do not speak English? Or how about the Russian church, or the French church, or the German church, or the Spanish church?

I have found that much of the reasoning of those who staunchly defend the KJV Bible is tragically tainted by nearsightedness. Those who espouse such a view are all English speaking Christians who have lived after the writing of this translation. The vast majority of church history occurred without any KJV Bible in existence, and even today English speaking Christians are only a portion of the entire body of Christ.

The arguments suggesting that the KJV is the only translation authorized and approved by God is therefore seriously misguided. It is merely a manifestation of religious prejudice. The KJV Bible is itself filled with errors, which can be easily discovered by anyone who wants to do even a cursory study of the matter. The following letter is part of a correspondence I had with a brother

who wrote to tell me that he believed the KJV was the most accurate translation available.

Dear Brother,

I would agree with you that there are some serious problems with many of the translations today, but I haven't found the KJV to be a better translation, but in most cases to be a much more flawed translation. Please don't think this is just some prejudice of mine. This conclusion comes from my own research into translations and I will share with you the reasons why I believe this to be true... All of the popular English translations are full of translation errors...

Following is an excerpt from a writing by Gary Amirault that reveals some of the information he found on the KJV Bible in doing his own research.

It was extremely painful for me (Gary Amirault) when researching Bible translations to come across the fact that in 1851 the American Bible Society compared six different editions of the King James Bible and discovered over 24,000 variations between the editions of the same Bible translation! How could there be an inerrant King James Bible when even the different editions of the King James Bible had ten's of thousands of variant readings!? I was told by tradition not to question the inerrant King James Bible. No one ever told me that even in the very first year of the King James Bible, two different printings of the very same King James were not the same. No one ever told me that the editions of the KJV up until the 19th century contained 14 additional books not in today's editions. We have an exact reprint of one of the 1611 printings that contains books such as: The Idole Bel and the Dragon, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, The prayer of Manasseh, Tobit, Judith, the Song of the Three Children, Baruch, etc.. Can you find these books in a present edition of the King James Bible? If the Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy is a true doctrine, which of the many editions of the KJV is the inerrant one? The original one contained books no longer in the present editions. Have these publishers "taken away from the Word?" Will the plagues of Revelation be on your head because you are using a KJV missing 14 books?

The Bible Inerrancy Camp and the King James Only Camp teach that we have a perfect Greek text or imply it. It is called the "Textus Receptus" by the KJV camp which is Latin for "Received Text." They teach this text was available to the King James translators which allowed them to produce an inerrant English translation. Historical records regarding this "Textus

Receptus" proves their view to be totally false.

First of all, the term "Textus Receptus" first appears in a second edition of Stephanus Greek text produced by the Elzevire Brothers in 1633, twenty two years after the King James Bible was printed! It was an advertising pitch as false as most commercials are today. The so-called Textus Receptus began its debut in 1516. It started as a work which took a self-proclaimed "humanist" Roman Catholic monk only several months to, in his own words "throw together rather than edit." One critic in England called it the "least carefully printed book ever published." Erasmus in trying to be the first to get a Greek text in print, threw together in a few months what it took his competitors at Alcalá de Henares University many years to assemble. The University's text came to be known as the Complutensian Polyglott. Erasmus only had a handful of very late manuscripts to work from, none of which contained the complete Greek New Testament, so he filled in the gaps from the Latin Vulgate. That is why the Textus Receptus has words that do not agree with any known Greek text. He corrected his text in 4 subsequent editions.

In the mid 1500's a man named Stephanus took Erasmus' text, and combined it with the Complutensian Text. He produced several editions making changes along the way. The Stephanus text, which the King James translators used, differed from the self-proclaimed "Textus Receptus" in 287 places. There are no known Greek manuscripts that agree "inerrantly" with either the Textus Receptus or the Stephanus text. Erasmus, the originator of the so-called "inerrant" Greek text later to be called the "Textus Receptus" dedicated his work to Pope Leo X who later would condemn Luther and the Reformation. For a full account of this sad chapter of church deception, read "The Text of the New Testament" by Bruce Metzger. Foundation Press in Anaheim, California also has some valuable information.

The teaching that the King James translators had a perfect Greek text is denied by the translators themselves. In the original edition of 1611 are marginal notes as follows: Note on Luke 17:36, "This 36th verse is wanting in most of the Greek copies." Note on Acts 25:6 where their text reads: "When he had tarried among them more than ten days," they inserted the following marginal note: "or, as some copies read, 'no more than eight or ten days.'" Unfortunately, notes such as these as well as much other information contained in the Original KJV have been removed to support the "Inerrancy" fraud. Enough . . . of this sad chapter of Bible translating...

There was a time when Bible writing was strictly in the hands of the church. The end result was the church put the Bible into a "Sacred" language called Latin which common people in latter times could not and were not allowed to read. It was called the Vulgate. The common people could not read the Scriptures in their native tongue of English, German, French, etc.. Getting caught with any portion of the Scriptures in your native language could get one killed by the church! Please believe us. This is true. The Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox churches did not want Christians or non-Christians reading the Scriptures.

When the first Common Language Bibles began to appear in the languages of the world, the state and church still had much control over the wording, who could read it, and which translations one could read. An Anglican Protestant was not allowed to read a Lutheran Bible. King James did not want the people of England to read the English Geneva Bible produced by John Calvin and his associates. Church leaders used the notes in the Geneva Bible as Scriptural support to tell the King how to rule. Before James the first was king of England, he was King James the sixth of Scotland. The Presbyterians caused him much trouble and their favorite Bible was the Geneva Bible. King James commissioned the King James Bible because of political reasons, not because of a love of the Creator. The English were strongly being influenced by the marginal notes in the Geneva Bible which states that the people of a monarchy had the right to overthrow that monarchy if it did not line up with Scripture. King James believed in the "Divine Right of the King." He called the Geneva Bible "seditious." Therefore, he commissioned the King James Bible.

He gave the committee 15 rules which they had to abide by while translating his Bible. Several of those selected for the committee resigned because of these stipulations. This list is printed in most well researched Bible translations reference books. We will mention just a couple to show you that this version was not going to be pure nor "inerrant." "1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit." (Doesn't sound like a "new" translation, does it?) "3. The Old Ecclesiastical Words to be kept, viz. The word church not be translated Congregation &c." (This was to insure the old Roman Catholic\Anglican rituals, ordinances, and doctrines be not altered. They couldn't change the word baptize into immerse, for example.) "4. When a Word hath divers Significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most of the Ancient Fathers, being agreeable to

the Propriety of the Place, and the Analogy of the Faith." (In others words, they must abide by the "traditions of the elders." Remember Jesus' words, "You have made the word of God of none effect by your traditions?")

These examples should be enough to show one that the King James translators were not "anointed by God" to produce an authentically original translation free from political and denominational bias. They were "appointed by James" for political and monetary reasons. King James didn't put a penny into the project, but he could make money out of the project since it was his Bible...

The translator's have this to their credit. They noted in the preface to the reader that they only took previous men's work and hoped to make a better one, knowing others would follow them and produce even a better one yet. This preface has been also removed from present day King James Bibles because it does not conform to the fundamentalist's "inerrancy" teachings. That is why the translators preface is no longer printed in current King James Bibles... We mention here, only a few points to clearly show that the teaching of an "inerrant" KJV is a pure myth.

In 1611 two separate editions of the KJV were printed. They came to be known as the "Great He Bible" and the "Great She Bible" because one printed Ruth 3:15 as "he went" and the other printed "she went." These two original King James Bibles, printed in the first year this Bible was issued, had several thousands differences. When asked to endorse the KJV, Hugh Broughton, foremost Hebrew scholar of England at that time said he would rather "be rent to pieces by wild horses than have had any part in the urging of such a wretched version of the Bible on the poor people."

It is vital to understand that when the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox church removed the Scriptures from the common people, these churches were then able to bring in hundreds of pagan doctrines, idols, and false religious rites. The mythologies of the Romans, Greeks, Teutons, Norse, Druids etc. were incorporated into church teaching which produced great darkness. Read about the dark ages of Europe which were brought about by Christian leaders, the popes, bishops, cardinals, and kings appointed by the pope.

When the Reformation began, the minds of Christian leaders were so cluttered by superstition and false doctrines that the progress they made in

breaking away from the total darkness of Romanism was really only a small step out of darkness. We forget that the Anglican Church began, not because of Godly reasons, but from political and personal ones. Also don't forget, King James was much more interested in a Bible to support his view of the "divine right of the king" than to produce an inerrant Bible. Church historians have glorified the Reformation far beyond what was really accomplished. Today, we still have a long way to go.

Today, most Bibles are produced by merchants. The church proved it only perverted the "Word of God" when she was sole guardian of it. She hid it, then changed it. Now merchants produce most Bible translations which must be sold for a profit which usually means giving the market what they want. Over 350 English translations of the New Testament have been marketed to date. The most popular and accepted translations are, of course, those which can be used to support Christendom's doctrines. Pastors will push those translations which work for them the most.

When a major Bible translation is undertaken by a publisher or some other institution, the directors are not only responsible for getting the text translated; they must also make sure that the resulting work will, over time, pay for the cost of translation and make a profit. In other words, they are under a directive to make sure that the completed Bible supports the majority view of Christendom's doctrines. The market first, accuracy to original texts second. The bottom line of present day Bible translating is: It must sell!

[End Quote by Gary Amirault]

D., this reveals just some of the things I have found about Bible translations as I researched them. It is also often overlooked by people who support the superiority of the KJV that this was the same king of England that persecuted those who disagreed in any way with the Anglican Church of England. He would even imprison men and confiscate their houses, leaving their women and children to struggle for survival. Is this the heart of someone who really loves God and who loves the children of God? It was this same King James that persecuted those we know as the Pilgrims and he tried to keep them from leaving England. Eventually they did flee to Holland to escape his tyranny, and later they sailed to America.

Is it not a conflict that we venerate these early pilgrims for their desire to worship God in Spirit and in truth, and we feel pity for all the hardship they

faced, yet we also venerate the King who caused the hardship and we declare that the translation of the scriptures that he authorized is a superior translation? Somehow the church's prejudices have disconnected them from the truth. King James was a tyrant and he was by no means a godly ruler. Yet many in the church staunchly defend the Bible that he ordered written for political and monetary reasons.

Again, I don't share these things with you to antagonize you, and I hope you are not offended that I have shared them. These are things I have learned as I have done my own studies, and I believe it is the Spirit of Yahweh that has led me to these things. I want to walk in truth and to avoid error so I weigh carefully the things people speak to me. Paul praised the Berean believers for doing this very thing.

May you be blessed with the wisdom and understanding that is in Yahshua our Lord,

Joseph

I would like to append some more information here to this page, as there are many more things that I have come across in my study of Bible translations. Adlai Loudy, in support of the Concordant Literal Version of the Bible, made some of the following observations.

In John 20:1, the King James reads: "The first day of the week . . ."

It is little known to Christendom that this is a "bogus" translation foisted upon the church by the translators, a "camel" that has been swallowed by scholars and students alike. The writer had a well-meaning brother in the Lord, who became so concerned about me and my teaching that he traveled a long distance to go over the matter with a view to readjusting me in the truth. After patiently listening to all that he had to say, I suggested a few things to him, one of which was the fact that the Scriptures, correctly translated, knew nothing about "the first day of the week." He threw up his hands in astonishment that I would make such an irreverent indictment of the "Bible!" After facing the facts. He apparently preferred "error" to the truth, as he made no attempt to reply and quit the subject without any explanation whatever.

The original, in all three of the oldest manuscripts, reads: mia ton sabbaton,

ONE OF-THE SABBATHS. Our translators presumed to know more than the great Author and corrupted the word of God. They altered "one" to read "first," inserted the word "day," for it is not in the original and is not needed in the translation, and changed "sabbaths" to the singular "week." Can one imagine a more perfidious and deceptive act of man? It truly is repugnant to those who reverently regard the original as the very word of God, and want it to speak to them as He was pleased to give it...

The Authorized Version renders Romans 7:24 thus: O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Since the King James "Bible" was made, this question has been read and reread by the saints of God, but the answer has been lacking. THE CONCORDANT VERSION, following the editor of Sinaiticus, restores the answer that has been lost all these years. It reads:

A wretched man I am! What will rescue me out of this body of death? Grace! Now I am thanking God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord...

These examples could be multiplied many times, but this will suffice to show that we should be very careful about building divisive articles, dogmas and doctrines on such imperfections, as are manifest in these older versions. Since the King James "Bible" was issued in 1611, some forty new dictionaries have been issued to keep pace with the growth and changes in the English language. The English and American revision committees made 36,191 changes —rectifications — of the King James Version that more closely conform to the original, after which President Schaff said the work was still far from perfect!

The above comments are all by Mr. Loudy. I personally have not found any translation that would merit a stamp of approval as the single best and most accurate translation. Perhaps this has been God's will to keep His children ever seeking, and ever knocking, that they might find that truth is a person, and much more than mere words on a page. Yahshua said "I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life" and He has sent us His Spirit to guide us into all Truth. If we had a single inerrant translation many would fall into the habit of

spending far too little time seeking the mind of the Spirit, believing that they could comprehend Truth through mere mental ascension.

The present state of Bible translations forces the seeker of the mind of Christ to come to the throne of God time after time, asking the Father to lead us to Truth through the working of His Spirit in us. Choosing a Bible translation is one of the thornier issues among Christians today, and many have exhibited a decided lack of grace and love toward their brothers who should disagree with some favorite translation. Nowhere is this more evident than those who have camped out around the KJV Bible, yet as we have seen, it was not divinely inspired in its translation, and has had thousands of revisions and changes, and is still full of so many errors and prejudices as to make it difficult to rely upon.

The church today resembles very much the Corinthian church that Paul derided for their carnality. They had divisions among them based upon who their favorite teacher was, Paul, Apollos, Peter, and even Yahshua. The church today still has its divisions, and one source is found in arguments over which Bible translation is the best. I believe there is no "best" translation, and the serious student would do well to compare many translations and to do research of their own. A great help to me is in comparing how a word was used in other instances by the same author, or by other authors of the time. By comparing in this manner we can see what a word's actual meaning was, and we can see if the translators have altered it in certain places to fit their own views. Time after time this has led me to discover some alteration of the Scriptures that served to obscure truth from the readers.

Let us not be saints that adopt some prejudiced view of which Bible translation is the best, but let us seek to urge one another to a pursuit of the truth and to expose error wherever we find it.

[End Article Excerpt]

Bible translations have always been subject to the fallacies of man. At times errors are introduced simply due to a lack of understanding. A far more grievous occurrence is being manifested today by Bible publishers who are making wholesale changes to Scriptures due to a lack of integrity. They are changing the wording of Scriptures because they believe they know better than God how the Bible should be written. I previously mentioned one such egregious example of this type of error is being manifested by the publishers of the NIV Bible. They have produced a new, gender neutral Bible translation

called the New International Version Inclusive Language Edition (NIVI). This Bible translation manifests the pride and arrogance of man who are seeking to transform the Bible into a form that is “politically correct” and does not offend the liberal minds of some who call themselves Christians. Much information can be found online concerning this trend by doing a search on a variety of key terms.

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/inclusive.html>

The International Bible Society, the publisher of the NIV and a number of gender neutral translations, hired Virginia Mollenkott to work on these translations. Virginia Mollenkott is a lesbian, pro-abortion, a feminist, and under her influence the International Bible Society removed the term “sodomite” from their Bible translations. In fact, Mollenkott has completely redefined what it is that God calls aberrant homosexual behavior. Another contributor to the NIV Bible was Dr. Marten Woudstra. He oversaw the Old Testament Committee, acting as its chairman. He too was an admitted homosexual.

<http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/twohomosexuals.htm>

<http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/woudstra.htm>

Understanding that Bible publication is a big business, and it is under the influence of many corrupt pressures and influences, that ungodly men and women are employed in the work of translation, is there not great reason to be very careful in our examination and study of Scriptures?

It is not hard to research some of the controversies surrounding Bible translations, or to discover how error is being introduced into the church through the corrupting of the Bible itself. Just consider, if Satan can get the people of God to do all of their reading from Bible translations he has introduced demonic doctrines into, then he will certainly find success in leading people astray into error. It is like making structural changes to a foundation of a building. Everything that is built upon the foundation is affected by the changes at the lowest level.

One of the fundamental changes made to English Bible translations is in the rendering of divine names. Can you imagine someone translating a work of the Holy Spirit where men moved by God were led to record the name Yahweh 6,828 times in the Old Testament, and 49 times to record the name Yah. Yet

the translators decided it was inappropriate to refer to God by His memorial name He used to reveal Himself to mankind? Instead, they removed every occurrence of the name of God and replaced it with a title such as Lord, or God. Many Christians think the name of the deity they worship is Lord, or God, but these are generic titles, not names.

I do not have space here to speak comprehensively of this erroneous practice of the translators of all of the popular English Bibles, but I have posted a more thorough writing in this subject titled *The Usage of Divine Names*.

There are times when the translators have rendered certain Hebrew and Greek words in a manner that is erroneous due to their own lack of understanding, or out of a desire to maintain the orthodox rendering that is most familiar to Christians and Bible teachers. You can imagine that if the translators rendered certain words in a manner that was uncommon, or unknown to a large percentage of the body of Christ, even if accuracy demanded they do so, that few people would buy their Bible translation.

In the early version of the book *God's Plan of the Ages*, I have written of one particular instance of this happening, and how in doing so the translators have hidden the actual meaning of one of the most fundamental of Bible doctrines. It has been so obscured that most Christians upon hearing it taught correctly immediately suspect that some heresy has been committed. In fact, they themselves have been taught error, and embraced it, due to the errors incorporated into popular English Bibles by the translators. I will cite a section from the aforementioned book as it speaks of the horrendous way in which the translators have rendered the Hebrew word Olam, and its Greek equivalent Aion.

[Begin excerpt]

J. Preston Eby writes:

The Hebrew word OLAM and its Greek equivalent, AION, mean a limited time, an age, and their plural means ages...

Let us look at how the word AION is used in a number of passages. About 37 times in the New Testament it is rendered "world," twice as "worlds," twice as "ages," and once as "course." Every place where the word "eternal" appears, with but one exception, it is a translation of this word AION or its adjective form AIONIOS. Twice it is rendered "evermore." Every place where

the word "everlasting" appears, but one, it is this same word or its adjective form. With but thirteen exceptions, every place where the word "ever" appears it is the same word or its adjective form. And aside from all this confusion, the word also appears in the plural, and in a number of confusing combinations, such as "the aion of the aion," "the aion of the aions," and "the aions of the aions," etc.

Some of the passages where AION is found will give us added information concerning it. In Ephesians 2:7 we find, "in the ages (aions) to come." In Colossians 1:26 we find, "the mystery which has been hid from ages (aions)." In Ephesians 2:2 we find "you walked, according to the course (aion) of this world." In Hebrews 1:2 we find, "by whom also He made the worlds (aions)." In Hebrews 11:3 we find, "the worlds (aions) were formed by the Word of God." In about fifteen instances, such as Matthew 12:32, 1 Corinthians 1:20, etc., we find it rendered "this world (aion)." Twice we find "this present world (aion)." In Galatians 1:4 we find, "deliver us from this present evil world (aion)." In Ephesians 6:12 we find, "the rulers of the darkness of this world (aion)." In II Corinthians 4:4 we find, "the god of this world (aion)." In I Corinthians 2:6 we find, "the wisdom of this world (aion)." In Luke 16:8 we find, "the children of this world (aion)." In Mark 4:19 we find, "the cares of this world (aion)." How much more understandable it would be if the translators had used the word age instead of world!

In Mark 10:30 we find that there is not only this present aion, which is evil, but also "the world (aion) to come." In Luke 20:35 we find, "but they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (aion), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage." In Hebrews 6:5 we find, "and have tasted the powers of the world (aion) to come." And in Luke 1:70, John 9:32, etc., we find that the aion had a beginning: "since the world (aion) began."

I would like to jump in here in the middle of Mr. Eby's discourse to actually do what he suggested. I would like to render the Greek "aion" here in these passages as "age" and we will see how wonderfully the passages make sense.

Eph. 2:7 "in the ages (aions) to come."

Col. 1:26 "the mystery which has been hid from the ages (aions)."

Eph. 2:2 "you walked, according to the age (aion) of this world."

Heb. 1:2 "by whom also He made the ages (aions)."

Heb. 11:3 "the ages (aions) were formed by the Word of God."

Gal. 1:4 "deliver us from this present evil age (aion)."
Eph. 6:12 "the rulers of the darkness of this age (aion)."
II Cor. 4:4 "the god of this age (aion)."
I Cor. 2:6 "the wisdom of this age (aion)."
Lk. 16:8 "the children of this age (aion)."
Mk. 4:19 "the cares of this age (aion)."
Mk. 10:30 "the age (aion) to come."
Lk. 20:35 "but they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age (aion), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage."
Heb. 6:5 "and have tasted the powers of the age (aion) to come."
John. 9:32 "since the age (aion) began."
(Now, back to Mr. Eby.)

And now in reviewing the Scriptures we have just quoted we note that this aion is something which has a king; it has princes; it is in darkness; it had a beginning; it has an ending; it is evil; it has wisdom; it has children who marry; it has cares. The aions we find were made by Christ, simply through His spoken Word, and we also find in Colossians 1:26 that the mystery of Christ in us, the hope of glory, has been hidden from these aions.

Now, if AION means ETERNAL, consider how ridiculous the Word of God would be! The Holy Spirit would be found saying, "the mystery which has been hid from eternities;" "the mystery of Christ which in other eternities was not made known;" "in the eternities to come;" "You walked according to the eternity of this world;" "by whom also He made the eternities;" "the rulers of the darkness of this eternity;" "now once in the end of the eternities has He appeared;" "the harvest is the end of the eternity;" "since eternity began;" "in the eternities to come," etc. etc... Suffice it to say here that there have been "aions" in the past, there is this present "aion," and there are "aions" to come. And these all combined make up TIME, encompassing the whole of the progressive plan and program of God for the development of His creation.

[End Excerpt]

Due to the inaccurate manner in which these two words have been translated, the church has formed doctrines that are not only founded upon error, but these doctrines have shaped the way Christians view God Himself. I encourage any Christian who has not yet done so to read the book God's Plan of the Ages with an honest heart, examining all things carefully. I am confident that many will be shocked at how they have been led astray into false doctrine, and have

failed to discern God's plan to reconcile the entire creation back to Himself through the cross of Christ.

What I have shared here is intended to reveal to the child of God the need to STUDY to show themselves "approved, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God." You will not be able to divide truth from error if your approach to the study of Scriptures is casual. Most Christians do no more than read popular translations, and even this is done sparingly. Their lack of careful examination and focused study is a measure of their own lack of interest in knowing the truths and mysteries contained in the Bible.

The Scriptures contain the wisdom of God revealed by the Holy Spirit through holy men of old. There is no greater vocation a man or woman can pursue than to know God in spirit and in truth. Should not our pursuit of the knowledge of God be conducted with the greatest measure of excellence we can bring to the endeavor? God knows those who earnestly desire to apprehend truth. He does not bestow His treasures indiscriminately. Those who yearn for truth, wisdom and understanding, who cry out for it, and pursue it passionately, will be granted that which they seek.

Proverbs 2:1-6

My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of Yahweh and discover the knowledge of God. For Yahweh gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Divorced From Truth - Part 5 Ecumenicism - Another Jesus, Another Gospel

II Corinthians 11:3-4

But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.

In this present series of writings we have been looking at the evidence that the church today is receiving a message of “another Jesus” and are embracing “a different gospel” from that which was preached by the apostles and revealed in the pages of Scripture. Satan’s methods have not changed substantially since he deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden. He is the father of lies and the great deceiver.

Satan has led frontal assaults upon the people of God before, seeking by force and intimidation to get them to deny the God who has chosen them. Such overt coercion and persecution tends to strengthen the church. Those who have no root fall away in a time of persecution, but those whose roots are established in Christ draw more life from the One who is their source. The end result is that spiritual life flourishes in times of persecution.

Satan comes only to kill, steal and destroy. In his wrath, Satan sought to destroy the church while it was still in its infancy. He enraged religious and political leaders to imprison, rob, and even murder the people of God. The result was much like a man who seeks to put out a fire by stomping on the blaze. The result of Satan’s fury was that the burning embers that comprised the body of Christ were scattered, and everywhere they fell they ignited new blazes. In a time of great persecution Christianity spread throughout the entire Roman Empire.

Severe persecution has tended to strengthen the body of Christ. Those who were not pure in their devotion to Christ would fall away leaving behind a core of believers who had counted the cost of following the Son of God, and were willing to pay the cost. These ones who loved Christ more than their own lives burned brightly in their devotion to Yahshua. They made an impact upon people everywhere they went. They appeared as lights in a dark world. They

were as salt that retained all of its flavor and potency.

When a particular approach does not bear the desired results, Satan will change his tactics. Our adversary knows the power of deception. He knows that a people who are confused, or unsure of the true doctrines of the gospel of Christ, will be more likely to compromise and even to fall away from the faith in a time of persecution, than those who have been firmly grounded in truth.

Satan has accomplished much through the use of subtlety. He has been adding the leaven of falsehood to the doctrines of the church. Bit by bit he has been eroding the foundation that Christians stand upon. Satan has sought to distort, skew, twist, manipulate, and obscure the knowledge of Christ. He has done the same with the gospel of salvation.

God is viewed by millions of professing Christians today in a distorted manner. He is all love, tolerance, and compassion. His wrath, justice, holiness, and consuming nature are ignored, and even denied. The remolded image of God and His Christ have emboldened multitudes of professing Christians to continue in sin, having no fear of the consequences of doing so. The gospel has been altered to appear as some sales pitch of prosperity on earth and a promise of heaven later. There is little mentioned about Christ having come to destroy the works of the devil, or to set men free from sin.

The new God and His Christ are not feared today. Christians commit far greater trespasses against the Spirit of Christ than Ananias and Sapphira who forfeited their lives for their transgression.

Acts 5:11

And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.

The church does not fear God today, for He has been recast into an image which provokes no fear. He is no longer seen as a holy judge who requires integrity and righteousness from His children. I am appalled at the absence of the fear of God manifested in the lives of Christians today. I regularly witness Christians speaking and doing things that I would tremble at the thought of doing. My fear of God leads me to seek to be constrained in word and deed knowing that I will have to give an account. Many act and speak with little evidence of any concern that they will also be called to account. I am

persuaded that this is due to having embraced an image of a God who does not punish His children; an image of a God who winks at sin and does not discipline His sons and daughters.

There is a purpose behind the deceit of Satan. He is removing all fear of God from the minds of Christians so that when he begins to rage against God and to speak blasphemous things against His Son, multitudes of believers will be cowed before his fierce anger. Having no fear of God they will embrace every lie. Having no fear of God they will suppose it is okay to deny that Christ is the only way to the Father. They will tolerate the suggestion that Yahshua is merely one manifestation of God, and that Allah, Buddha, Confucius, Shiva, etc., also are holy and their worshipers are “people of faith” as much as those who espouse faith in Yahshua the Messiah.

Having gotten the majority of Christians to compromise on the foundational truths and doctrines of the kingdom of God, Satan will then proceed to the next step, which is to set himself up as the only god to be worshiped. He will perform many lying signs and wonders, and will deceive many. He will speak blasphemous things against the God of heaven, and he will persecute the remnant who remain faithful.

Revelation 13:6-9

And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

People of God, if you would stand firm in that hour, you need to guard against all encroaching deception and error now. A flood of words is being poured out in the earth to reshape opinion and to lead many away from truth. Most Christians do not study the word of God, and they fail to test the things they are hearing every day.

I Thessalonians 5:21-22

Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.

Satan's plans are much further advanced than most Christians have discerned. The fact that books like *The Shack* are widely embraced by evangelical Christians today is evidence of a falling away from truth. Yesterday, a sister in Christ sent me a link to an article that details a joint mission between the Roman Catholic Church and leaders of the Muslim religion. I will include it in its entirety as it is very revelatory of the forces at work to bring about a denial of the uniqueness of Christ in His role as the Son of God and the ONLY way to reconciliation with God the Father.

Catholics, Muslims Affirm Shared Mission

Say Religion a Source of Harmony, Not Conflict

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 6, 2008 (Zenit.org).- *Catholics and Muslims agree that youth must be formed in their own religious traditions and correctly educated about other religions, to give witness to transcendent values in a secular society.*

The recently established Catholic-Muslim Forum affirmed this in a joint declaration released today, the result of their first seminar, which began Tuesday. The forum is comprised of 29 members of each religion and was formed by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and representatives of the 138 Muslim leaders who sent an open letter to Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders in October 2007.

The theme of the three-day seminar was "Love of God, Love of Neighbor," with a specific focus on two areas: "Theological and Spiritual Foundations" and "Human Dignity and Mutual Respect."

The final statement of the forum reflected many points of similarity between the two creeds as well as resolutions for positive action to build solidarity and peace between the two.

Foundation of love

The forum recognized the specific focus of Christian love: "The source and example of love of God and neighbor is the love of Christ for his Father, for humanity and for each person. God is Love and God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. God's love is placed in the human heart through the Holy Spirit.

It is God who first loves us thereby enabling us to love him in return."

They continued with a summary of how love for one's neighbor in word and deed follows necessarily from the Christian's love for God. This love imitates Christ's sacrificial love, and includes every human person, even enemies.

Turning to the Muslim perspective on love, the declaration affirmed: "Love is a timeless transcendent power which guides and transforms human mutual regard. This love, as indicated by the holy and beloved Prophet Muhammad, is prior to the human love for the one true God. [...] God's loving compassion for humanity is even greater than that of a mother for her child; it therefore exists before and independently of the human response to the One who is 'The Loving,'"

In regard to love of neighbor, the statement added some Muslim beliefs similar to those of Christians: "Those that believe, and do good works, the Merciful shall engender love among them. [...] Not one of you has faith until he loves for his neighbor what he loves for himself."

Given these common foundations of love for God and neighbor, participants in the seminar recognized the gift of human life and the need to protect it. They asserted the belief that human dignity is based on each person's creation "by a loving God out of love." Thus every person deserves recognition of "his or her identity and freedom by individuals, communities and governments, supported by civil legislation that assures equal rights and full citizenship."

The declaration acknowledged God's creation of human personas as male and female, and noted the commitment of the forum to ensure "that human dignity and respect are extended on an equal basis to both men and women."

Religious differences

Members of the forum wrote that love of neighbor includes respect for each person's choices regarding religion. They affirmed that religious minorities are to be respected and that sacred figures, symbols and places should not be ridiculed.

They acknowledged: "As Catholic and Muslim believers, we are aware of the summons and imperative to bear witness to the

transcendent dimension of life, through a spirituality nourished by prayer, in a world which is becoming more and more secularized and materialistic. [...]

"We are convinced that Catholics and Muslims have the duty to provide a sound education in human, civic, religious and moral values for their respective members and to promote accurate information about each other's religions."

A source of peace

Seminar participants recognized that plurality in God's creation is a richness and should not be a source of conflict. They professed the belief that "Catholics and Muslims are called to be instruments of love and harmony among believers, and for humanity as a whole, renouncing any oppression, aggressive violence and terrorism, especially that committed in the name of religion, and upholding the principle of justice for all."

They challenged individuals from any religion to come together to help the needy, and to work toward upstanding financial systems that will consider the needs of the poor and relieve individual or national suffering.

Forward looking

The joint declaration recorded the conviction that young people are the future of the religious communities as well as societies. It asserted the necessity of forming youth, in their own religions as well as in the understanding of other cultures and religions.

The statement closed with a plan to hold a second seminar in two years, in a Muslim-majority country. Benedict XVI received the members of the forum in an audience, and participants ended the seminar by expressing gratitude to God for the fruitful dialogue among them.

[Full text: www.zenit.org/article-24175?l=english]

People of God, what it being done by the Roman Catholic Church is also coming to the protestant churches. Indeed, a similar mentality is already far advanced. Note that one of the core understandings is that youths should be

formed “in their own religions.” This will soon lead to an open condemnation of proselytizing, and evangelism of people of other faiths. Already at present there are many “evangelical Christians” who say that people of other faiths, such as Jews, should not be singled out for Christian evangelism. The list of those making such statements is too large to enumerate.

It is evident where things are heading. In this article we see that “a spirituality nourished by prayer” has become the acceptable standard by which to judge a person’s righteousness. There is no mention of there being salvation and forgiveness of sins only through Christ. There is no mention of the need to be born again of the Spirit of Christ. One must simply be a person of faith, any faith, and a person who prays. If one also does kind and charitable works, then so much the better.

This Catholic endorsed mission declares that Mohammed is both “holy and beloved” and that Muslims and Catholics both worship and love “the one true God.” That such a mindset is being widely embraced was evidenced when President George W. Bush told a reporter in England that he believed that Muslims and Christians worship the same God. There was no evangelical outcry over his statement. He has made further heretical statements at the annual Iftaar dinner he has hosted annually for Muslims in the White House. In his speeches given at these dinners he has repeatedly asserted that Christian, Jew and Muslim all share the faith of Abraham and all worship the God of Abraham.

(See the writing *Freemasonry - The Spirit of Babylon*)

I have declared in writings found at the above links, that the stage is being set for persecution of those who do not show honor for false religions. Any who suggest that their religious beliefs are alone the truth, and there is no other way to God, will be labeled as religious extremists. Their language will be labeled as “the language of hate” and they will be condemned as divisive and placed in the same category as terrorists who kill and maim. Laws will soon be written and adopted world wide which will forbid any to speak negatively of another person’s religious beliefs, or to proselytize members of another religion. Already, many countries have made it a criminal act to speak out against homosexuality. Even reading publicly certain passages of Scripture that condemn homosexuality is a punishable act. Canada and Sweden are among nations that had adopted such laws limiting what people are allowed to say, and these laws will become commonplace soon.

Matthew 10:22-23

"You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next..."

Satan is doing a profound work in the lives of Christians today so that when laws making it criminal to proclaim the gospel of Christ are enacted, many believers will judge that it is not worth the trouble to do so. Indeed, the force of public opinion will be enough to silence many from speaking the truth. Many will fear being labeled as haters and religious extremists, and will compromise the truth. They will embrace the things we are seeing at this very hour being espoused by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. Many will deem it acceptable to merely be a "spiritual" person who prays. They need not pray to the God of the Bible. Any god will do.

Lift up your head and open your eyes. These things are at the door. What will you do when all the world despises those who declare that Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah, alone is the way to reconciliation with God?

Divorced From Truth - Part 6 Examining the Traditions of Christ's Nativity

I do not doubt that some who read this particular post will be shocked to find that some of the most basic traditions concerning the Christ, the Son of God, that they have heard all of their lives are in fact false. Reshaping the image of Christ is not a new phenomenon. It has been occurring since the birth of Christ when some suggested that He was born of illegitimacy.



At this time of year, many will be putting out manger scenes depicting the birth of the Christ. I have yet to see a true representation of the actual facts surrounding His birth. A typical nativity scene includes an image of a baby laid in a feeding trough, a stable, some barn animals, Mary and Joseph, shepherds, three wise men and their camels, a star, and angels.

In the presentation *Removing the High Places*, I have shared many things concerning the pagan origins of many Christmas traditions, including the date that birth of Christ is celebrated.

Following is an excerpt from this writing.

How did we arrive at the date that Christmas and Easter are observed upon. They are directly related to the worship of the heavenly bodies, particularly the Sun. The following is an entry from the Internet site wikipedia on the topic of Sol Invictus.

Sol Invictus was a religious title applied to at least three distinct divinities during the later Roman Empire: El Gabal, Mithras, and Sol.

The Romans held a festival on December 25 called Dies Natalis Solis Invicti, "the birthday of the unconquered sun." The use of the title Sol Invictus allowed several solar deities to be worshipped collectively, including Elah-Gabal, a Syrian sun god; Sol, the patron god of Emperor Aurelian (270-274); and Mithras.

Emperor Elagabalus (218-222) introduced the festival, and it reached the height of its popularity under Aurelian, who promoted it as an empire-wide holiday.

December 25 was also considered to be the date of the winter solstice, which the Romans called bruma. It was therefore the day the Sun proved itself to be "unconquered" despite the shortening of daylight hours. (When Julius Caesar introduced the Julian Calendar in 45 BC, December 25 was approximately the date of the solstice. In modern times, the solstice falls on December 21 or 22.)

The Sol Invictus festival has a "strong claim on the responsibility" for the date of Christmas, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia.

[End Excerpt]

It is hardly considered today that there is no mention of the church celebrating the birth of Yahshua. The apostles are absolutely silent concerning this matter, and there is little reason to believe that the early church held any celebration that bore even a slight resemblance to Christmas today. They most certainly would not have commemorated the birth of Christ on December 25th. There is no Biblical evidence to support this date as the birth of Christ. This date was chosen solely due to it having already been established as a pagan holiday in celebration of the Sun god.

As mentioned in a previous post, the Roman Catholic Church practiced syncretism. Syncretism is the fusing of diverse beliefs, philosophies or religions. When Rome was declared a Christian nation by the emperor Constantine, the Roman church declared all of the citizens of Rome to be Christians. No actual conversion was necessary, and the "Christianized" pagans were even able to keep their old religious practices and holidays. The Roman Catholic Church merely reinterpreted the symbols and practices of

pagan traditions to give them an appearance of being Christian.

Because Sol Invictus was such a popular holiday in Roman society, the church embraced it. December 25th was celebrated as “the birth of the unconquerable Sun” and was reinterpreted as “the birth of the Son of God.” Many of the original pagan practices are still seen today, mixed in with images of Christianity. I will not detail these here, as they are mentioned in the presentation to which I have provided a link.

What does God think about the mixing of the holy and the profane? The Scriptures are clear.

Ezekiel 44:23

"Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."

II Corinthians 6:14-17

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And *what agreement has the temple of God with idols?* For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "*Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.*"

The church from its early ages has been seeking to find some agreement between the holy and the unholy, between the One True God and idols. Nowhere is this witnessed to a greater extent than the two most celebrated holidays of the modern church, holidays that the early church knew nothing about. Both Christmas and Easter are pagan in origin, and Easter even bears the name of the pagan goddess of fertility, Eostre, which is the same as the Old Testament Astarte and Ashtoreth.

What date was the Son of God born upon? There is much evidence that Yahshua was born on the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles is a foreshadowing of God dwelling with man in fulness. The two are signified to be “tabernacling” together.

God established three festivals that the Jews were to observe annually. All three served as a prophetic foreshadowing of His plan to redeem mankind and bring man into a fulness of fellowship with Himself, and conformity to His image. Yahshua is the great Author and Finisher of the works of God. His life is therefore linked to all of the Feasts of Yahweh. He was born on Tabernacles. He died on Passover, and He sent forth His Spirit at Pentecost.

One of the names of Christ is Emmanuel, meaning "God with us." The Feast of Tabernacles is intended to portray God dwelling with man, and it would be very fitting for Christ to be born at this time. There are many resources on the Internet that have delved into this matter, and which provide numerous evidences supporting a conclusion of the Christ being born at the Feast of Tabernacles, which falls in late September, or early October of the year. I will include a few of these evidences.

Many have cited the fact that the gospel of Luke mentions shepherds watching their flocks at night outside Bethlehem when the angels appear to them (Luke 2:8). It was a common practice of the shepherds to keep their flocks in the field from April until October. During the cold and rainy season beginning in October, the shepherds would take the flocks back to their homes and keep them under shelter. Adam Clarke's commentary has this to say:

As these shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks, it is a presumptive argument that October had not yet commenced, and that, consequently, our Lord was not born on the 25th of December, when no flocks were out in the fields; nor could He have been born later than September, as the flocks were still in the fields by night. On this very ground the nativity in December should be given up. The feeding of the flocks by night in the fields is a chronological fact, which casts considerable light upon this disputed point. [Source: Adam Clarke's Commentary, Abingdon Press, Nashville, note on Luke 2:8]

The fact of their being shepherds in the field is not enough to establish conclusively that Christ was born during the Feast of Tabernacles. However, it would allow for this to be the date, and it does cast great doubt on December 25th as the date, which history reveals to have been arrived at from pagan sources, rather than the Bible.

The Companion Bible, whose notes were written by E. W. Bullinger, likewise shares the following in Appendix 179.

Shepherds and their flocks would not be found "abiding" (Gr. agraleo) in the open fields at night in December (Tebeth), for the paramount reason that there would be no pasturage at that time. It was the custom then (as now) to withdraw the flocks during the month Marchesven (Oct. -Nov.) from the open districts and house them for the winter.

We can find further support for a September to October date in the account from Luke as it speaks of the Roman government issuing a decree for a census to be taken.

Luke 2:1-7

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Rome was a well ordered empire, and would not unnecessarily sought to provoke its subjects, nor to disrupt commerce. The most favorable time for a census to be held would be after the harvest season, for much of the Empire was agrarian, and getting the crops harvested was as important to Rome as it was to her subjects. The census would also need to be conducted while travel was still favorable, before the wet and cold of winter set in. This leaves September and October as the best time to conduct a census, for the harvest would have been brought in and winter had yet to arrive.

Let us look to some further Scripture evidence of the birth of Christ. One great clue is found in John's gospel.

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh, and [skeno - *tabernacled*] among us...

The Greek word skeno is found in this passage. Strong's concordance defines this word in the following way:

skenoo (skay-no'-o); from NT:4636; *to tent or encamp*, i.e. (figuratively) to occupy (as a mansion) or (specifically) *to reside (as God did in the Tabernacle of old, a symbol of protection and communion)*

During the Feast of Tabernacles the Jews were instructed to construct booths, or dwelling places, outside their homes. These were primitive affairs of boughs and branches as defined in Leviticus.



Leviticus 23:40

"Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God for seven days."

These booths were constructed everywhere and anywhere that they could find room to construct them.

Nehemiah 8:15-17

So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written." So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. The entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them.

E.W. Bullinger, once more in appendix 179 of *The Companion Bible* provides this insight.

The word tabernacled here receives beautiful significance from the

knowledge that "the Lord of Glory" was "found in fashion as a man", and thus tabernacling in human flesh. And in turn it shows in equally beautiful significance that our Lord was born on the first day of the great Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, viz. the 15th of Tisri, corresponding to September 29 (modern reckoning).

The Circumcision of our Lord took place therefore on the eighth day, the last day of the Feast, the "Great Day of the Feast" of John 7.37 ("Tabernacles" had eight days. The Feast of Unleavened Bread had seven days, and Pentecost one. See Lev. 23).

Many other authors and teachers have set forth evidences of the Feast of Tabernacles as the date of the Messiah's birth. Eddie Chumney in *The Seven Festivals of the Messiah* writes of this matter. He uses the more traditional Hebrew word Sukkot when speaking of Tabernacles.

As we have stated earlier in this chapter, the Feast of Sukkot is called "the season of our joy" and "the feast of the nations." With this in mind, in Luke 2:10 it is written, "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings [basar in Hebrew; otherwise known as the gospel] of great joy [Sukkot is called the 'season of our joy'], which shall be to all people [Sukkot is called 'the feast of the nations']." So, we can see from this that the terminology the angel used to announce the birth of Yeshua were themes and messages associated with the Feast of Sukkot.

I will give one final testimony in this matter of Christ being born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. This also has bearing on the tradition that depicts Christ as being laid in a manger, which is assumed to be a feeding trough for barn animals. Following are the words of Andy Thomas.

Why was there no room at the inn? Bethlehem is only about 5 miles from Jerusalem, and all the men of Israel had come to attend the festival of Tabernacles as required by the law of Moses. Every room for miles around Jerusalem would have been already taken by pilgrims, so all that Mary and Joseph could find for shelter was a sukkah. And in a normal sukkah there is a "bread trough" for the celebrants to store their food. It can be, also, translated as a "manger." Since Jesus Christ is the BREAD OF LIFE, it would make sense that He was laid in the "bread trough" or "manger" in the sukkah they were staying in.

[Source: http://www.ljcf.org/What_day_was_Jesus_born.html]

This is indeed a marvelous testimony. The Son of God came to tabernacle among men. He was born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and because there was no other room available, His parents found lodging in a Sukkah, or booth, constructed for this feast. The “bread that came down from heaven” was laid in the “bread trough” in the Sukkah where the bread would have been kept to feed those dwelling there.

John 6:51-56

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" So Yahshua said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."

Many more witnesses could be provided as testimony. For my part, I believe that what I have shared here describes the actual details of the birth of the Son of God. I can state emphatically that He was not born on December 25th, and there is little doubt that many of the other images and details that the church has embraced are equally erroneous. We are called to “examine all things carefully.” I think it is fair to say that very few Christians today have ever examined the traditions the church observes today concerning the birth of Christ and the observance of Christmas.

I corresponded with Glen Pickren this past week regarding these things, and he wrote out the following timeline of events surrounding the birth of Christ which reveals further errors in the traditional story.

That is a great study supporting Jesus' birth during Tabernacles (referring to the link above). I had thought that was likely for some time for the reason that for the shepherd's to be in the fields it would have to be after the harvest and before winter. Second, the similitude of God tabernacling among us was simply too rich to be ignored, especially since we know Jesus is also the fulfillment of Passover and Pentecost.

This leads to the matter of the error placing the magi at Jesus' birth. The

scriptures clearly indicate that this was not the case. After Jesus' birth, his parents remained in Bethlehem or Jerusalem until Mary's period of uncleanness had ended. Then, they went to the temple to dedicate Jesus to the Lord. After that, the scriptures say they returned to Nazareth.

Luk 2:39

(39) When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

However, Luk 2:41

(41) Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

This leads to Matthew's account of the magi. He does not say the magi were there. He merely says, "after the child was born in Bethlehem wise men arrived from the east."

These wise men showed up at Herod's palace looking for a king having been led there by a star that had appeared...

Mat 2:7

(7) Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared.

The wise men leave the palace heading for Bethlehem and:

Mat 2:9-10

(9) After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. (10) When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

They had seen the star in the east which had guided them in the general direction, but since they were looking for a child who was king, they went to the king assuming the child would be in the palace. But, having left, the "star" not only reappears but moved as it "went on before them" until it "came and stood over the place the child was..."

But, we have another clue. The child is not in a stable.

Mat 2:11

(11) After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

As soon as they leave town secretly to avoid Herod, Joseph is told in a dream to flee to Egypt, which he obeys being fully provided with finances for the journey by the gifts of the magi.

Going to the calendar, we believe Jesus was born in the Fall during tabernacles, we know that Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth about a month after His birth and we know that they went to Jerusalem every Passover. Given that they were so poor they could only afford to sacrifice two doves, it is unlikely they would make the journey at any other time. Therefore, the magi came during the first or second Passover after Jesus' birth when He was either roughly six months old or 1 1/2 years. This is supported in that Herod, having been told the exact time of the appearance of the star, ordered all of the male children under two years old to be killed.

While it takes a little digging to come up with the dates, even a cursory reading of the scriptures shows that there is no way the magi were at the birth. If so, why the persistence of the three kings in the manger scene. I think the answer comes from the tradition of Christmas. Without the wise men's "presence," we have no biblical cover for the "presents."

This last statement is a very good insight. The church has placed the wise men at the birth of Christ to provide some rationale for giving gifts. The Bible clearly teaches that the wise men did not show up at the birth of the Messiah. They came a couple years later.

Matthew 2:16

*Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from *two years old and under*, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.*

Herod discerned from the wise men that the sign of the Messiah had appeared less than two years previously. He concluded that the child was no older than two and slew all of the children under the age of two. In Matthew 2 we read of the angel appearing to Joseph and telling him to take the CHILD and his

mother and flee to Egypt. The Greek word from Matthew 2 translated as child is *paidion*. This is in contrast to the word that spoke of Mary giving birth to a BABE in Luke chapter 2, which is *brephos*. *Brephos* means “a baby,” while *paidion* means “little child.”

To put a final nail in the coffin of the false representation of the wise men appearing at the birth of Christ, we read in Scriptures that the wise men came to Joseph and Mary in “the house.” No longer do we read of an inn, or a manger, or a booth. They were at that time dwelling in a house.

On the Roman feast of Sol Invictus, or Saturnalia, held on December 25th, it was customary to give gifts.

The custom of giving gifts at the start of a new year, for example the handsel in Britain or the étrenne in France, began with the strena of Roman times. During the holiday season of the Saturnalia, Romans exchanged a variety of gifts and favors. Wax candles or lamps, tied up with bits of holly, were offered to adults to light the way in the coming year. Sometimes they were presented with bags of nuts during the festival, which were probably used as marbles or as gambling stakes. Children were often given small clay figurines called sigilla.

<http://lonestar.texas.net/~robison/saturnalia.html>

The church had to come up with some justification to continue this pagan tradition. They therefore altered the story of Christ’s nativity and had the wise men arrive a couple years earlier than the Scriptures suggest. The star over the manger scene is therefore also out of place, belonging to another time, and leading to a different destination - a house, not a stable.

It should also be noted that the Bible nowhere identifies the number of magi, or wise men. Current church tradition always says there are three. There may have been a great many more. The number three is erroneously adopted because it is mentioned that the wise men brought three different gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

We cannot conclude this study without mention of the angels. They too provide evidence that Christ was born at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Luke 2:13-14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host

praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles is called Hashanna Rabba - The Great Hosanna. This day was the climax of the entire season of feasts, or holy days. Hosanna is a Hebrew word that means “save now.” Is this not the cause for the angels’ rejoicing, and for the shepherds to rejoice as well? God had sent His salvation! There truly was peace and good will toward men. On this date the priest recited the Hallel (praise) Psalm 118, to which the people respond at every line with the word “Hallelujah!”

This is a Messianic Psalm, including the following lines:

Psalms 118:15

The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous...

Can you imagine the shepherds arriving at the tent, (booth, sukkah) that Joseph and Mary were residing in with the young babe? There would truly have been joyful shouting in the tents of the righteous. This Psalm continues:

Psalms 118:26-27

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of Yahweh; We have blessed you from the house of Yahweh. Yahweh is God, and He has given us light...

As these words were recited the light of the world was finally dwelling among man. What a glorious story God had written!

The traditions of man are a cheap substitute for the truth. It is my hope that in these last days that Yahweh might restore His people to a foundation of truth. May He lead us back to a knowledge and understanding of His feast days and what they foretell, and deliver us from the pagan corruptions that the church has embraced.

Divorced From Truth - Part 7 Yahshua - Carpenter, or Master Builder?

In the previous post we examined some of the traditions of the church surrounding the birth of Christ. In this post I want to look at a further tradition of the church, and I invite you to test the things shared here. Examine them to see if they are true. The tradition I am speaking of is that which declares that Yahshua was a carpenter, and the son of a carpenter.

I had never looked into this matter until some months ago a brother in Christ, Randy Barnes, sent me some of his thoughts on the matter. Since then I have looked into this topic further, and I think there is much reason to question the traditional view of Christ being a carpenter.

There is little said in a direct manner concerning the life of Christ before He began His ministry. The church tradition that declares Him to be a carpenter is based primarily upon the following verse.

Matthew 13:55

"Is not this *the carpenter's son*? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?"

It was common in the day in which Yahshua lived for the sons to learn the trade of their father. It is assumed that Yahshua was instructed by Joseph in the same trade in which he was employed. Much is based upon the translation of the Greek word *tekton* which is rendered here as *carpenter*.

The Greek word *tekton* is not the equivalent of the English word *carpenter*. It is a much more general term denoting one who is an artificer, a tradesman, or builder. This term was used to speak of architects, stone masons, builders, and those who worked in cloth and fabric. Were the translators correct in choosing to render this word as *carpenter*? There is much evidence to suggest that Joseph was a builder who worked in stone, and that Yahshua was Himself a master builder.

Some of the evidence was not available when the King James Version of the Bible was written in 1611. It was not until the 1980s that the city of Sepphori was discovered and excavated. Sepphoris was built as a Roman city and it lies only four miles from Nazareth, the city in which Yahshua grew up. Nazareth was a small town of approximately 400 residents, while Sepphoris had a

population in excess of 30,000.

What is very interesting to note is that Sepphoris was a new city in the time of Christ. Its homes and large public buildings were being constructed during the period in which Yahshua lived. Josephus mentions this city in his writings, praising it as the most beautiful city in the region. Sepphoris was an affluent city and the homes and public buildings in it were well constructed, and often ornate. It had a Roman theater, homes with spectacular mosaic floors, and a water system of unparalleled construction.

As this city lay so close to Nazareth, it would have been quite practical for Joseph and Yahshua to make the short trip there to work in the construction trades that were booming at the time. Yet, there is much Scriptural evidence that would make the occupation of the Lord as a Master Builder more certain.

First, let us observe that this word *tekton* is used in reference to one who is a builder.

I Corinthians 3:10

According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise *master builder* I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

The Greek word translated *master builder* is *architekton*. Strong's Concordance provides the following definition.

architekton; from NT:746 and NT:5045; a chief constructor, i.e. "architect":

This Greek word is formed from the root word *tekton*, which we have mentioned refers to one who is an artificer, or builder, or skilled tradesman. The prefix *arche* has been added to the word to indicate one who is a "chief," or a "master." It is easy to see how the English word *architect* resembles this Greek word. An architect is not simply a carpenter, but is one who understands the entire design of a building. He is often the one who has originated the design of a building and who draws up plans for it, and oversees the construction of all phases of the building.

Christ certainly fulfills this description in a spiritual sense. He came to "build" His church. The people of God are referred to as a temple constructed of living stones.

Matthew 16:18

"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."

It must be noted that wood was not the chief building material in Israel. Stone was the primary tool, being readily available and very durable. It also had the added benefit of being resistant to fire. We must remember that fire was a great threat in those days. A city constructed of wood would be very vulnerable, particularly considering that Israel knew many wars and an enemy would have quickly razed any town that was built of wood.

Christ speaks to Peter and tells him that He will build His church upon "this rock." In instance after instance in which Christ and His disciples speak of building stonework is mentioned. The evidence leads to the conclusion that Christ was very knowledgeable in constructing buildings out of stone. He was not a carpenter in the sense that we are familiar with in the West. Few homes in America are constructed of stone.

Let us look at some more evidence that reveals Christ's familiarity with stone construction.

Mark 13:1-2

As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Master, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" And Yahshua said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."

Some of the common English translations have used the word *teacher* in this passage, rather than *master*. This word is not translated from the Hebrew word Rabbi, which indicates a teacher, but from the Greek word didaskalos. This Greek word refers to someone who is a master in his field. It is at times translated as *doctor*. It is understandable that the translators would render this word as teacher, for a teacher must be a master of the field in which he seeks to instruct others. Yet, what is being inferred in this passage is not that Yahshua is a teacher, but a master in his field.

If Yahshua were a master builder, then it would be very fitting for the disciples to refer to him as "master" when pointing out to him the stone work of the Temple. The Hebrew equivalent of the Greek didaskalos is rabboni (not to be confused with rabbi).

John 20:16

Yahshua said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Master (didaskalos)).

We see then that among Christ's closest associates He was referred to by this title that indicates one who is a master. In what sense was Yahshua a master? It was common in that day to identify a man by his occupation.

Matthew 13:55

"Is not this the (tekton's) son?"

In this verse we see Joseph is completely identified by his occupation. His name is not even mentioned. Similarly, the Scriptures identify the occupation of all of the disciples, many of whom were fishermen. Religious teachers of the Jews were called "Rabbi," which would be similar to someone addressing a man today by the title "Teacher." Paul's companion on many journeys was Luke.

Colossians 4:14

Luke, *the beloved physician*, sends you his greetings...

In other places we read of men being identified by their occupation.

II Timothy 4:14

Alexander *the coppersmith* did me much harm..

Acts 10:32

He is staying at the house of Simon *the tanner* by the sea.

Women who had an occupation outside the home were likewise identified by their occupation.

Acts 16:14

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, *a seller of purple fabrics*...

We can understand therefore, that Yahshua would also have been referred to in ways that referenced his occupation, especially is He had been known to be a master of His craft. It seems reasonable to conclude that the Greek word didaskalos, and the Hebrew Rabboni, when used as a title for Christ, were

employed as references to His former occupation as a master builder. This title would certainly have been appropriate for other reasons as well, a fact I am not seeking to refute. Certainly there is an aspect of this word being used as a reference to one who has authority, and Christ had authority.

John 13:13-14

"You call Me Master (didaskalos) and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master (didaskalos), washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

A very intriguing passage that sheds light on the occupation of the Son of God is the following.

John 2:19-20

Yahshua answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

It is interesting to note that the Jews did not question whether Yahshua had the skills necessary to construct a temple, one which we know was built of stone. They merely questioned the time frame. How could Yahshua build in three days what it took them forty-six years to build? That they did not question His knowledge of construction of large public buildings could be taken as evidence that He had a reputation as a master of such construction. Perhaps He had even overseen some of the large public buildings in Sepphoris.

The temple in Jerusalem was a magnificent structure. It would be similar to someone today standing in front of a great architectural wonder, perhaps the Empire State Building, and saying, "Tear this down and I will rebuild it in three days." Would we not protest not only that the time frame was impossibly unrealistic, but also question the knowledge and abilities of the one making the claim? Yet the Jewish leaders did not question the abilities of Christ. If He were merely a carpenter, as some suggest, certainly they would have sneered at His claims.

For me, some of the greatest evidence supporting the conclusion that Yahshua was by occupation a master builder, and was well versed in stone construction, comes from many of the analogies employed in Scripture in reference to His spiritual work. Christ was Himself often found employing terms that dealt with stone construction.

Matthew 16:18

"I also say to you that you are Peter, and *upon this rock I will build My church...*"

Luke 6:47-48

"Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: *he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.*"

Christ reveals some knowledge of what it took to construct a "well built" house. Did He come by this knowledge while constructing houses for the affluent residents of Sepphoris? In many places we find the Lord making references to building substantial edifices out of stone.

Luke 20:17-18

He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written, *'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.'*"

A master builder would have understood the principles of calculating the cost to construct a building, and would probably have had encounters with people whose desires overreached their abilities to pay for that which they wanted. Yahshua used such an analogy when urging those who wanted to be His disciples to first calculate the cost.

Luke 14:28-30

"For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"

Consider also, that even as earthly fathers teach their sons the trade they are familiar with, so too would the heavenly Father have instructed His Son according to His own trade. Is Yahweh not the architect and builder of all things?

Hebrews 11:10

For [Abraham] was looking for the city which has foundations, *whose architect and builder is God.*

I have found in my own life, as in the lives of many others, that one's physical occupation often is used by God to symbolize the spiritual call upon their lives. Thus we read of many of the disciples being fishermen, and Yahshua tells them He will make them "fishers of men." God directed me for two years to teach classes at a local technical college. While there He showed me that this was a symbol of His call on my life to teach "higher education" to His children.

Would we not anticipate that the physical occupation of our Lord would also be symbolic of His spiritual occupation? Consider the following parallels. Yahshua stated that He would "build His church." This church is compared to a temple of living stones. If He were employed as a master builder who was skilled in stone construction, then the parallel would be readily seen. Yet consider also what the Lord told His disciples He was going to do when He departed from them.

John 14:2-3

"In My Father's house are many *dwelling places*; if it were not so, I would have told you; for *I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.*"

Had Yahshua also been employed in building residences for the citizens of Sepphoris, which Josephus refers to as the most beautiful city in the region, we can once again readily see the parallel between physical and spiritual vocation. Of course, the dwelling places Christ has gone to prepare in heaven are not that which is built with hands. They are the glorified bodies the saints are to inhabit.

II Corinthians 5:1-3

For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.

It is these dwelling places Yahshua has gone ahead to prepare for His disciples. As a wise master builder, He knows very well what He is about. These dwelling

places will be wonders to behold. I am sure that whatever Christ did in His earthly vocation, that He did all with great wisdom and a spirit of excellence. If He were a builder, He would have been a Master Builder. Truly the word Rabboni would have been an appropriate accolade.

If any should disagree with the conclusions of this writing, I will not be offended in any regard. This writing is not shared to be contentious. I do find that there are many things the church has received as traditions that arise from disputable sources and reasoning. We are called to “examine all things carefully.”

It has been my intent to provoke consideration of some of the basic “facts” which have been delivered to the body of Christ. As it is evident in the last two writings, these “facts” are not always derived from a careful examination of Scripture. Many church teachings have arisen from sources outside the Scriptures. I think it is a marvelous thing that the Spirit of Christ is leading many of God’s people to a new examination of those things they have received as traditional beliefs concerning the Son of God. As long as the Spirit and the Word are our guides, we will do well.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days.