

THE *SEVEN*
CHURCHES
☆☆☆☆☆☆ OF ASIA

*The Path Of The Chosen
Revealed*

A. A. Cullen

2nd Edition - 2012

The Seven Churches Of Asia

The Path Of The Chosen Revealed

Second Edition

A Messianic Jewish Commentary

By P.R. Otokletos

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the great and awesome G_D Most High; the Infinite G_D of all existence whom no man has seen but the only begotten Son; the G_D of Israel: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Psalms 9:11: “And they that know thy Name will put their trust in Thee; for Thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.”

* * * * *

About P. R. Otokletos

The author Andrew A. Cullen has been writing under the pen name of P. R. Otokletos since 2004 when he began writing/blogging Messianic Jewish/Hebraic Roots commentaries across a broad range of topics.

The author is part of an emerging movement of believing Jews as well as former Christians recapturing the Hebraic roots of the Messianic faith. A movement that openly receives not just the redemptive grace of the Gospel but also the transformational lifestyle that comes with joyful pursuit of G_D's Sacred Torah ... just as it was in the first century Ce!

Despite a successful career in politics and business, the author is driven first and foremost by a desire to understand the great G_D of creation and humanity's fate. To this end the author has spent years studying the Hebrew and Greek Holy Scriptures, in a Hebraic context in order to get past the delusions of mainline religions ... to get at the truth!

In 2005 the author completed this first book "The Seven Churches of Asia - The Path of the Chosen Revealed". A work which provides a Messianic Hebraic look into the Revelation of Jesus Christ (Yeshua HaMashiach in Hebrew/Aramaic) respective to the seven church messages found in the Book of Revelation.

In his second full length book completed in 2013 "Exposing Mystery Babylon - An Attack On Lawlessness", a broad sweeping overview is provided regarding how G_D's adversary works against the children of men through confusion, lies and deceit to keep people from the truth of the Gospel Message and the Covenantal relationship offered by G_D. The work exposes the false framework of wisdom woven into this temporal world (olam hazeh) and the genuine solution for humanity (Grace and Torah) provided by G_D through Yeshua HaMashiach. This work undertakes a broad overview of the Torah Commandments and present day applicability within a Messianic context provided to us by Yeshua ... The Master Rebbe and Lord!

His most recent book "The Biblical Festivals - Messiah's Aliyah of Glory" was completed in 2014. In this work the Traditional and Messianic Hebraic perspectives relative to the Sacred Festivals are surfaced, discussed and reviewed in order to reveal the glory of G_D through the awesome fulfillment and perfection of the Festivals by, in and through Messiah Yeshua. This work essentially reveals Yeshua's great "aliyah" (ascent) to glory and consequently the great aliyah of Mashiach's faithful community ... a.k.a... Israel!

The author is convinced that nearly two thousand years of wayward understanding of the Biblical texts and man-made doctrine has significantly shrouded humanity's view of G_D ... his Messiah ... and even the very Gospel message itself. Consequently the author has dedicated his time and efforts to offer humanity a different perspective of the G_D of Israel ... a different perspective of Messiah Yeshua ... a different perspective of the Gospel message in the hopes that some might be awakened to and pursue a relationship with G_D as defined within Holy Scriptures.

There is indeed a veil of ignorance that thickens all around us and is keeping us from our destiny ... from our restoration. Like others who can see past this shroud, the author labors for no other reason than to give G_D the glory he is due and G_D's just due comes by way of the Hebraic bias ... as the reader will soon see!

The author hosts a web-site at <http://pr.otokletos.org/> where numerous Messianic Hebraic materials are provided free of charge.

Preface

According to estimates published by the United States Census Bureau, Earth's population reached 6.5 billion on February 25, 2006. In line with projections, this figure continues to grow at unprecedented rates. Approximately one fifth of all humans that have existed in the last six thousand years are currently alive. (1)

According to David Barrett's World Christian Encyclopedia there are currently more than two billion professed or practicing Christians in the world,(2) approximately 10% of all Christians reside in the United States of America. Biblical Scripture is clear however that only a remnant, or few, will choose the narrow path to the Kingdom of Heaven. This logically implies many purported Christians will not choose or find the narrow path. Subsequently vast amounts of Christians are operating under an extremely weakened or even false faith. Consequently the end days as predicted in the Book of Revelation will be a virtual slaughter house for the Earth's population; even for a vast number of professed Christians.

How and why are modern Christians in such dire circumstances?

With this new look into the Revelation of Jesus the Messiah (Yeshua HaMashiach in Hebrew/Aramaic) we will see the prophesied historical path of the Earthly Church traveled throughout the last 2000 years. See how the Church has failed to heed the prophetic warnings so mercifully provided and drifted from its scripturally ordained roots because of political and cultural influences. Most importantly see and understand what a person needs to know about faith, practical living and salvation which one will not get from the main stream Christian movement.

* * * * *

Introduction

Generations of believers in the G_D of Israel, both Jew and Gentile, have anxiously awaited the coming of the Biblical Messiah. For the vast majority of Jews in the world they still await a Messiah who has yet to come. For the vast majority of Gentiles whom shall be recognized as “Christians,” it is the second coming of Messiah, Yeshua of Nazareth that is anticipated. For all believers in the G_D of Israel there is certainly one belief common to all: Messiah will be on Earth in the future.

Regarding the return of Messiah the greatest debate amongst believers is “When will he return?” The purpose of this work however is not to declare the specific “when” regarding the coming of Messiah; this information is simply known to only G_D himself. So what then is the primary purpose of this work?

The last of all Scriptural Writings gifted to people is “The Apocalypse,” or “Revelation to John,” otherwise commonly referred to as the “Book of Revelation.” Most readers will recognize this as the last book of the Christian New Testament Writings or the “B’rit Chadasha” (Renewed Covenant) as it is known in Hebrew. Because this writing is meant for believers who live after the first coming of Yeshua, it is easy to understand why this inspired writing has enthralled believers throughout the ages. After all, believers anticipate with great hope the prophesied second coming of Messiah; it is the destiny of all mankind!

Unarguably much debate regarding portions of this Revelation, or even the entirety of this writing, has raged throughout the ages relative to meaning and interpretation. The broad utilization of symbolic and literal components within this writing causes much confusion and leads to significant variances in interpretation. Despite these complexities many individuals have genuinely attempted to understand and interpret this blessed Revelation. The author however is convinced that previous works regarding the messages to the Seven Churches of Asia have not fully developed the cultural, historical, theological and scriptural context needed to enable proper interpretation of this enigmatic writing.

The vast amount of interpretive discourse relevant to the Revelation, glosses over the seven messages to the churches and for the most part the entire first three chapters. Perhaps these messages to the seven churches do not seem exciting, or perhaps these messages are not relevant in these modern days? These messages however are pertinent to the Body of Messiah throughout the ages, as well as today, and the revelations contained within the first three chapters of this writing are indeed worthy of detailed review.

The purpose of the work then is to relay findings and insights regarding G_D's holy word in the hope that people of faith in the awesome G_D of Israel can join together at the table of reason. At the table of reason we come together for truth, clarification, strength and to reaffirm our common faith and join akin so we do not stay apart. Most importantly however we come together to know G_D better so we can bring glory unto him.

So one may ask, "Reason about what?" When the end times will begin? When will the rapture take place? Who is the anti-Christ? Unfortunately for many who seem to have such an appetite for these inevitable cataclysmic events, this discourse will not deal with these sensational topics in tremendous detail. This work will be limited to the first three chapters of this blessed Revelation. But do not for one moment think this discourse will be unexciting or lack provocation. Within these three chapters of this writing is revealed a prophetic expose of the historical path to be followed by modern civilization from the time this Revelation was given until the time Messiah returns. Furthermore our Creator has provided for us a lasting doctrinal guide which we can use to live by and cleave to him.

The analysis and findings indicate the messages to the Churches represent not just exhortations pertinent to people of their time but prophetic messages pertinent to the entire Body of Messiah throughout its entire history. Subsequently each individual message to the Church corresponds to a specific time frame throughout the last two millennia. Each message further depicts the relative spiritual health of the Church within a particular era or identifies easily enough with defined historical events or movements so we can readily ascertain a defined time period for each of the seven Church messages. The Revelation then not only contains historical details of the

“end days” but historical details regarding all the days from Messiah’s first coming to his second coming.

Of all the gifts provided within this blessed Revelation it seems however the greatest of all have been overlooked. These are the gifts of truth regarding faith and salvation which G_D, through Yeshua the Messiah, provided within this Revelation. These truths represent the key to unlocking the bindings of doctrinal differences which have kept believers apart for far too long. Doctrinal differences also most certainly have resulted in jeopardizing many people who call emptily upon the name of Messiah. From the Gospel of Luke Yeshua declares,

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great. (Luke 6:46–49)

The day of the Lord is fast approaching. Can it not be felt as the Earth heaves in anticipation of his glorious coming while the nations are in an uproar? It is imperative we understand what our Lord meant when he told us to do as he says and build our faith on a firm foundation! Unfortunately most people are dull and not paying attention in spite of their belief to the contrary.

From the Gospel of Matthew: Who has ears to hear, let him hear. And the disciples came, and said to him, Why speak unto them in parables? Yeshua answered them, Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but who so ever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has. Therefore I speak to them in parables: because they seeing, still see not; and hearing they still hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this peoples’ heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of

hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (Matthew 13:9–15)

Consider Revelations then to be parable-like. The masses will see and hear but not understand. Most people think they understand G_D's plan but do not. Messiah's condemnation of the waxed gross heart is valid today far more than in other days. So come and let us reason together in his Word and in his Holy Spirit!

* * * * *

Author's notes:

1. It is necessary to qualify the term "Church of Messiah" for its use is prominent throughout this work. In general this term should be used to recognize any congregation or individual who believes in the G_D of Israel and accepts Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah as the divine Word of G_D who descended from Heaven to Earth for the propitiation of human sins through his blood atoning self-sacrifice. Consequently the Body of Messiah includes believers of most Christian faiths as well as Messianic Jews.

From a purely historical perspective however this term will be used mainly to describe the Apostolic Roman Catholic Church and close relatives; this grouping represents roughly 65% of all Christians in modern times and certainly a more significant percentage at various stages throughout history—most notably prior to the reformation efforts of the sixteenth century.⁽³⁾ More importantly it is the Roman Catholic Church which is, though contentious to many, most recognizable historically as the seat of apostolic authority handed down from the early Church. This is noted despite issues regarding orthodoxy and Papal primacy which continue to fuel the separation from the Eastern Catholic Orthodoxy and other Christian communities.

Please note as well that simply utilizing the term "Church of Messiah" in no way shape or form should imply that the author believes that any so called entity represents a replacement, either spiritual or physical, to Israel.

2. Regarding historical time periods and dating, the terminology utilized within this work will be that of "The Common Era" (Ce), sometimes referred to as the "Current Era." It is the period of measured time beginning with the year 1, the traditional but debated birth date of Yeshua of Nazareth, to the present. The notations Ce and BCe (Before the Common Era) are alternative notations for "ad" (Anno Domini, Latin for "in the year of the Lord") and "BC" (Before Christ), respectively.

3. As for Messiah's NAME ... although Jesus is how Messiah is commonly referred to by greater Christianity and history itself, Messiah's Hebrew/Aramaic Name "Yeshua" meaning G_D's Salvation will be utilized herein as a matter of respect as well as historical and theological accuracy. Messiah's NAME is holy and should be very carefully handled.

4. The Revelation of Yeshua to John is considered of course to be "a revelation" ... however it is clear by any standards that Messiah delivered to humanity many, many different revelations within this sacred writing. As such the author at times will refer to the Revelation in both singular and plural forms and does so to maintain grammatical uniformity and context.

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Part 1 - Contextual Development

Because of the complex nature of the Revelation, as well as significant portions of other Sacred Scripture, it is imperative to define the framework from which any interpretive analysis will take place. When dealing with symbolic representation caution should be exercised and the basis of any interpretation be exposed and explained, lest the resulting interpretation be unsupported, overly presumptuous and without merit.

Ultimately much prophecy-related scriptural interpretation is subject to criticism simply because the nature of symbolic representation is typically not a product of defined facts until after prophesied events occur. Still further the fulfillment of prophecy is often debated even upon completion simply due to differences in subjective perspectives. Subsequently any contention of prophetic interpretation at best can be described as “possible” until such time it is found to be historically accurate. This being declared does not in itself constitute a permit for anyone to haphazardly claim scriptural discernment capability and put forth contentions which are often times baseless and hurtful to either individuals or collective groups. Within this work then a process will be defined from which the reader will be able to follow along and determine if the author has established valid arguments and positions.

As indicated there have been previous attempts to properly discern the meanings contained in the Book of Revelation. Some attempts have included genuine efforts to approach the materials professionally while sadly others have not. Some attempts have been made without apparent self-serving motives while others have not. In all cases however no interpretive works developed a contextual framework surrounding the land mass of Asia Minor, the Apostle John and the Seven Churches. It would seem impossible to even consider discerning the Church messages properly without first seeking to understand what if any contextual impact there might be regarding: a) the land mass of Asia Minor; b) the Apostle John and c) the Seven Churches.

In all previous cases regarding this subject matter each commentator fails to begin with the basic questions: Could the common geographical land mass of Asia Minor be significant? What is

the relevance of the Seven Church communities? Why was John the Apostle selected by Yeshua to receive this divine Revelation?

As humans we all are influenced by culture, history and experiences. Hopefully it is the goal of the Biblical commentator to have these personal influences remain on the sidelines and let deductions be influenced by facts, scripture and of course where applicable the Holy Spirit. Subsequently we must look at this Revelation objectively in the context of the culture and history of the days long past and not from a modern day perspective. Ultimately we may find this review yields little in the way of insights or improved context. On the other hand we may find while we are looking for context that we will find much more than what was anticipated.

Here then is the defined process by which the author will proceed during this work.

- Initially basic historical background information relevant to the land mass of Asia Minor, the Apostle John and the Seven Churches will be provided.
- The next step will entail formulating observations and insights relative to the provided background information.
- Step three will entail synthesizing these observations and insights into a solid framework of contextual understanding which will provide the foundation for establishing interpretive outputs.
- Step four will entail utilizing the synthesized contextual framework to apply to the first three chapters of the Revelation for the purpose of discernment and interpretation.

If the reader is wondering what relevance background material review has regarding Scriptural interpretation, it will be noted “context” in scripture is most often paramount to proper comprehension. So as Messiah spoke in parabolic fashion so most people would not understand him . . . by design; we must acknowledge the Word at times is also non-obvious . . . by design. Most assuredly there are plenty of scriptural elements which are obvious; then there are elements which are both obvious and non-obvious at the same time; and still further there are elements which tend to be simply esoteric. By reviewing basic known facts we at least set the stage for

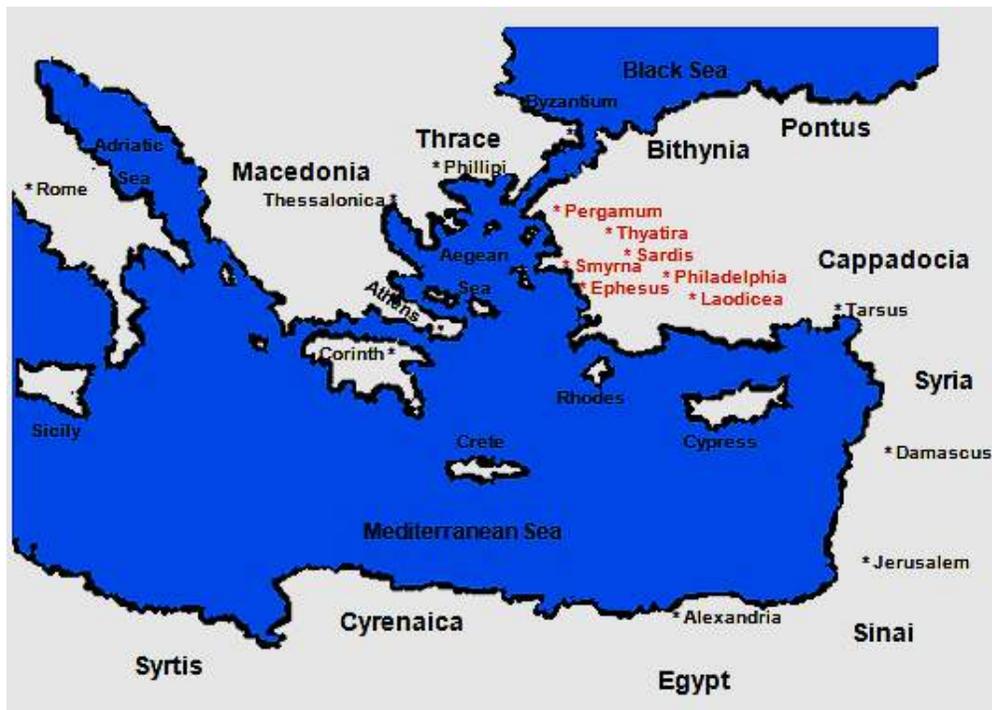
developing proper context; a context which can assist us in understanding non-obvious meanings of Scriptural components.

* * * * *

Background Information

The background information being provided is organized as follows: A map of the region, general information about Asia Minor, general information about the Seven Church communities and general information about John the Apostle.

The visual below provides general geographic details pertinent to the region and seven communities addressed in the Revelation. Scaling is approximate.



* * * * *

Asia Minor-Background

Asia Minor, (Lesser Asia), lies east of the Bosphorus between the Black and Mediterranean Seas. Anatolia, as it is known in Greek, is a region of Southwest Asia which corresponds today to the Asian portion of Turkey. Anatolia means “rising of the sun” or “East.”

The approximately 180,000 square mile land mass is predominantly a plateau varying in heights from two to five thousand feet with mountain ranges running in both the north and south in generally an east to west direction along the coastlines. At its extreme northwestern limit it nearly connects with the European mainland by the narrow straits of the Bosphorus.

In between these two dominant mountain ranges various isolated peaks rise up from seven thousand to well over ten thousand feet. Throughout history this topography posed great challenges to intercommunication and travel of the inhabitants. There are only a few viable mountain passes tending to run at high elevation. The most notable being the famous “Gates of Cilicia” at the easternmost extremity of Asia Minor. This narrow gorge at over 3,000 feet in elevation represents the only viable entrance from the plains of Syria and was the route followed by the Eastern intruders and conquerors of Asia Minor. At the extreme west the mountains taper gradually but do so in a manner creating numerous rises and projections into the sea. This topography ultimately produced many bays, inlets and harbors which are the predominant reason why Asia Minor was able to become such a historically and commercially prominent land mass!

As far back as recorded history Asia Minor has been the proverbial transport highway between peoples migrating east to west and often west to east. From earliest historical eras, evidence of the Halizones-Chalybes culture can be found here. Close by are other ancient tribes. At the western extremity evidence of the ancient Thracian tribes are prevalent while peoples of Semitic origin can be affiliated with the inland region and the historical roots of ancient Cappadocia.

History suggests the ancient Hittites overran much of the land mass between 1500 and 1000 BCE. Archeological evidence attests to their once prominent presence. Before the Hittites, there is scant evidence that some Turanian (northern Caucasus) peoples may have long been settled in the land.

Because of its strategic location at the intersection of Asia and Europe and close proximity to Africa, Asia Minor has been a cradle for numerous civilizations since prehistoric times. Archeological evidence supports settlements from the Neolithic Age onward. The settlement of Troy starts in the Neolithic and continues forward into the Iron Age.

Major civilizations and peoples that have settled in or conquered Anatolia include the: Colchians, Hattians, Luwians, Hittites, Phrygians, Cimmerians, Lydians, Persians, Celts, Tabals, Meshechs, Greeks, Pelasgians, Armenians, Jews, Romans, Goths, Kurds, Byzantines, Seljuk Turks, and Ottomans. Obviously these peoples belonged to many varied ethnic and linguistic traditions. Through recorded history, Anatolians have spoken both Indo-European and Semitic languages, as well as many languages of uncertain affiliation.

From time immemorial Asia Minor has been the cross roads between Eastern and Western cultures vying for supremacy and looking to use this land mass as the spring board for conquest and expansion. In essence Asia Minor has been that one place where Eastern and Western cultures have traditionally met and waged their unending battles. (4)



A modern satellite view of Asia Minor

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The Seven Churches-Background

Ephesus

Ephesus was purportedly founded in the eleventh century BCE by Greek colonists and is now just a place of antiquity in present day Turkey.

During the Roman Republic, Ephesus was the capital of pro-consular Asia, which covered the western part of Asia Minor. The city bore the title of “the first and greatest metropolis of Asia.” The population of Ephesus has been estimated to be in the range of 400,000 to 500,000 inhabitants in the year 100 CE. In addition to the great Temple of Artemis, purportedly the largest building of the ancient world, Ephesus boasted a civic library and a theater, which was the largest in the world,

capable of holding 50,000 spectators. Also built in Ephesus around this time were the Roman Baths, including what is believed to be the first instance of indoor plumbed toilets.

From a Christian perspective Ephesus has a rich and storied history. Having the faith introduced by Jews it eventually rose in prominence second only to Antioch in the early Church. With the likes of Paul, Timothy and John the Apostle ministering within the community, as well as being the traditional post-resurrection home of Yeshua's mother Mary, the fame of this early Church community is forever cemented in history.

The Roman city of Ephesus was abandoned in the sixth century Ce when, despite repeated dredges during the city's history, the harbor completely filled in with river silt, removing its access to the Aegean Sea and of course its first and most prominent attribute. The final ruin of Ephesus was completed by the Mongol conqueror Timur-Leng around 1403 Ce and by nearly a half-century of civil wars among its Turkish masters.

Today the modern and quaint town of Selcuk is well reputed for its closeness to the ancient city of Ephesus, the Virgin Mary's House and other Seljukian works of art. Selcuk is famous for its fascinating mixture of all historical periods. Its strategic location has made it a popular place to settle down during the centuries. The name "Selcuk" comes from the Turkish tribes settled in the region by the twelfth century. (5)

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Smyrna

Smyrna said to have been founded in the third millennium BCe is now the modern day Turkish city of Izmir. Throughout antiquity it was the early leading city-state of Greek Ionia. It is believed the epic poet Homer resided here. Smyrna's Roman period, beginning in the first century BCe, was its second great era. During this period Smyrna was notable as being the most loyal city, in

Asia Minor, to Rome and was the first place in Asia Minor to construct a temple to the goddess Roma. Smyrna was a “free city” which meant the residents were able to govern themselves.

Christianity was preached to Smyrna at an early date, and by the second century Ce the city had become prominent within the Christian world. The most prominent “favorite son” of Smyrna was Polycarp, their bishop martyred in the second century and an early Church leader with a rich historical record and whom tradition regards highly.

In modern times after the defeat of the Central Powers in World War I, the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 allocated Smyrna, as well as parts of Eastern Thrace, to Greece. This was formalized by the Treaty of Sèvres, and the city was occupied on May 15, 1919, by Greece. The Greek army then pushed east into Anatolia during the Greco-Turkish War but the Turks drove the Greeks back to the sea. In September 1922, Smyrna was recaptured by the Turks. Following the success of the nationalist movement, the Treaty of Sèvres was revoked and the Treaty of Lausanne was signed, marking the end of the Greco-Turkish War and incorporating the city of Smyrna, now Izmir, into modern day Turkey.

Today, Izmir is Turkey’s third largest city and is known as “the pearl of Aegean.” It is widely regarded as the most Westernized city of Turkey in terms of values, ideology, lifestyle, and gender roles. (6)

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Pergamon

Pergamon, also known as Pergamum was a city in western Asia Minor north of Smyrna and inland only fifteen miles from the Aegean Sea. The town derived some of its importance from its commanding position built on a cone-shaped hill rising 1,000 feet above the surrounding valley. Its Greek name means “citadel.” For a while it was the capitol of the Roman province of Asia.

Pergamon was famous for its library and beautiful architecture. It also contained a complex of temples to Zeus, Athena and other Greek gods, and even temples to some Roman emperors.

Historically linked with Pergamon were the Attalids, staunch supporters of Rome amongst the Hellenistic successor states. For this support Pergamon was rewarded with vast domains within in Asia Minor. Ultimately in 133 BCe these domains were bequeathed back to Rome in order to maintain peace.

The ancient city was composed of the Acropolis, whose main function was social and cultural as much as it was sacred; the Lower City, or realm of the lower classes; and the Asklepon, one of the earliest medical and therapeutic centers on historical record.

Today the city of Bergama lies over some remains of the ancient city. Bergama has two of the country's most celebrated archaeological sites: the Acropolis and the Asklepon of ancient Pergamon, both listed among the top one hundred historical sites on the Mediterranean. (7)

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Thyatira

Thyatira was a Macedonian colony established where several divinities were the focus of worship, such as Aesculapius, Bacchus, Artemis, and Apollo, in whose honor games were instituted. Vespasian began great undertakings at Thyatira; it was visited by Hadrian in the year 123 Ce, and by Caracalla in 215 Ce.

Thyatira was an insignificant town until it was re-founded by Seleucus Nicator in the third century BCe. It was originally a military fort but lost this purpose with the rise of the Romans and soon became a very wealthy commercial city. Thyatira had a number of organized trade guilds. Every skilled worker was a member of a union (listed as tailors, woolworkers, tanners, potters,

bakers, etc.). It was famous for its dyeing. Among the ruins, inscriptions have been found relating to the guild of dyers in the city in ancient times.

From a Christian perspective Thyatira was an early center of Christianity. The Apostle Paul visited the city on a number of occasions during his missionary travels. Lydia, the seller of dyed cloth and who was converted by Paul at Philippi (Acts 16:14) was from Thyatira.

Following the Ottoman conquest the area known as Thyatira was changed to Ak-Hissar or Akhisar which means “the white fortress.” (8)

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Sardis

Sardis, modern day “Sart,” was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, the seat of a conventus under the Roman Empire, and the metropolis of the province Lydia in later Roman and Byzantine times. It was situated in the middle Hermus valley, at the foot of Mt. Tmolus.

The last Lydian king, Croesus (560–546 BCE), famous for his extraordinary wealth, is said to have panned gold from the river Pactolus and was the first monarch to mint coins. According to legend, the gold came from the famous King Midas who, cursed with the golden touch, washed in the Pactolus to rid himself of it. It is likely that trade and organization of commerce, however, were the real sources of the Lydian wealth. King Croesus controlled most of western Asia Minor and made generous offerings to the temples of Delphi, Artemis and Didyma.

Sardis was dominated by Persia from 546 BCE, when King Croesus and Sardis fell to Cyrus. The ancient historian Herodotus records the shock of the Lydian defeat, as they considered the city impregnable. Sardis was captured by Antiochus the Great at the end of the third century BCE.

In 17 Ce Sardis experienced a devastating earthquake, after which Emperor Tiberius rebuilt the city. It was one of the great cities of western Asia Minor till the later Byzantine period. Its importance was due to its military strength, its location on an important highway leading from the interior to the Aegean coast, and its possession of the wide and fertile plain of the Hermus.

A great colonnaded marble road of 4600 feet in length divided the Roman city, whose population was estimated as large as 120,000 in the time of the Apostle John. Hadrian visited the city in 123 Ce. Later, Emperor Diocletian reorganized Asia in (297 Ce), and Sardis became capital of the revived district of Lydia.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century Sardis was destroyed by the Turks. In 1369 it ceased to exist. By the nineteenth century, Sardis was in ruins, showing construction chiefly of the Roman period. (9)

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Philadelphia

Philadelphia was founded in 189 BCe by King Eumenes II of Pergamon (197–160 BCe), in the vicinity of Callatebus on the left bank of the Cogamus. He named the city for the love of his brother who would be his successor, Attalus II (159–138 BCe). Not long thereafter Pergamon's King Attalus III Philometer, lacking an heir, bequeathed his kingdom including Philadelphia, to his Roman allies when he died in 133 BCe. Rome set up the province of Asia in 129 BCe by combining Ionia and the former Kingdom of Pergamon.

The city's location was most favorable for commercial and strategic purposes. After Emperor Tiberius aided in their rebuilding after an earthquake, it took the new name of Neocaesarea (New Caesar). Under Vespasian's rule (69–79 Ce), it changed names to Flavia. By the third century paganism had held on in the face of a Christianizing empire, and the city became known as little

Athens for its dedication to deities. None of these names or epithets lasted, and today the modern city is called Alasehir. (10)

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Laodicea

Laodicea located in the Lycus River Valley together with Hierapolis and Colossae was built between 261–253 BCE on the river Lycus. Laodicea was situated on the long spur of a hill between the valleys of the rivers Asopus and Caprus, which discharge into the Lycus. The town was originally called Diospolis, and afterwards Rhoas, then Laodicea, the building of which is ascribed to Antiochus II Theos in honor of his wife Laodice. It was situated only 6 miles south of Hierapolis, 12 miles west of Colossae and 100 miles east of Ephesus while being situated on a major road.

About the end of the first century BCE Laodicea was a principal city of Asia Minor, both as to industries and commerce, being famous for its woolen fabrics and its sandals. Laodicea was also a great center of banking and finance and was one of the wealthiest cities of the ancient world. When the city was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 CE they refused aid from the Roman Empire and rebuilt the city from their own wealth. The city had received from Rome the title of free city, and it became the center of a *conventus iudicis* which comprised twenty-four cities besides itself.

The city had a school of medicine and gave birth to the two sceptic philosophers, Antiochus and Theiodas. Its coins and inscriptions show evidence of the worship of Zeus, Æsculapius, Apollo, and the emperors, but the principal deity worshipped in Laodicea was the Phrygian god “Men Karou,” the Carian Men.

Today the remains of Laodicea are but a few miles south of the hot calcium waters of modern day Pamukkale, and four miles north from the modern textile city of Denizli. The calcium rich waters would often times clog the piping system creating delays in delivery and the water would

often arrive to the city at lukewarm temperature and need to be reheated. Many have noted the irony of Revelation 3:15. (11)

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The Route

The road carrying John's letter began at Ephesus, and moved north through Smyrna and Pergamon before turning east to Thyatira. Then dropping south, the letters were carried to Sardis, then southeast to Philadelphia and finally Laodicea. Archaeological evidence of the ancient road demonstrates that it continued to Colossae and eventually to the Mediterranean port at Attalia. The road connected the cities on what presumably functioned as an ancient postal and trade route. (12)

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John the Apostle-Background

John was the son of Zebedee and Salome and brother of the Apostle James the Greater. He authored the fourth Gospel and is credited additionally with three epistles as well as the Revelation. In the Gospels the two brothers are often called "the sons of Zebedee" and received from Yeshua the more familiar title of "Boanerges," or "sons of thunder." Prior to their discipleship the brothers were fishermen who worked with their father in the Lake of Genesareth. According to tradition they were disciples of John the Baptist and were called by Yeshua from the circle of John's followers to become his own disciples.

In the various lists of the apostles, John holds the third place in Acts, the third place in Luke, and the fourth place in both Matthew and Mark. Typically John is listed after James with the exception of a few passages. Because of this order of introduction the typical conclusion is John was the younger of the two brothers.

In any case John held a prominent position in the apostolic body as seen in Scripture. Peter, James, and John were the only witnesses: when Yeshua raised to life Jairus' daughter, of the Transfiguration, and of Yeshua's agony in Gethsemani. Only John and Peter were sent into the city to make the preparation for the Passover Seder/Last Supper. At the Seder itself John's place was directly next to Yeshua on whose breast he leaned. John was also that "other disciple," who with Peter followed Yeshua after the arrest into the palace of the high priest. John alone remained near Yeshua at the foot of the execution stake on Calvary with the mother of Yeshua and the other pious women, and took the heartbroken mother into his care as instructed by Messiah. After Yeshua's Resurrection, John and Peter were the first of the disciples to hasten to the grave and John was the first to believe Yeshua had truly risen. Later when Yeshua appeared at the Lake of Genesareth, John was also the first of the seven disciples present to recognize Messiah standing on the shore.

John in action and written word has shown how close the relationship was between he and Yeshua. A relationship in which he always stood by his Lord and Master by the title with which he is accustomed to indicate himself: "the disciple whom Yeshua loved."

After Yeshua's ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers, John took, together with Peter, a prominent part in the founding and guidance of the early Body of Messiah. It is John in the company of Peter at the healing of the lame man in the Temple. With Peter he is also thrown into prison. It is John again with Peter visiting the newly converted in Samaria. The scriptural record is clear John was indeed a major player in the infantile body of followers.

Of the other New Testament writings, it is primarily from the three Epistles of John and the Revelation that anything further is learned concerning his person. The unity of the author of the three accredited epistles, handed down under the name of John the Evangelist, should be presumed

as valid. Both the Epistles and the Revelation presuppose their author John belonged to a group of personal eyewitnesses of the life and work of Yeshua, had connections with Asia Minor, was acquainted with the conditions existing in the various Christian communities, and that he held a position of authority recognized by all Christian communities as leader of this part of the Church. Moreover, the Revelation declares to us its author was on the island of Patmos for the Word of G_D and for the testimony of Yeshua when he was honored with the heavenly Revelation further supporting the traditional view of John the Evangelist. (13)

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Review of John's Gospel

Because of the prominence of John's Gospel within Christian history it is important to review this writing in the hopes of understanding the apostle better.

The Gospel of John is a narrative of the life of Yeshua from his baptism to his Resurrection and his manifestation of himself in the midst of his disciples. The chronicle falls into four sections:

- The Introduction (1:1–18), containing a brief summary of the Gospel.
- The Pre-Passion Ministry (1:19–12:50), which recounts the public life of Yeshua from his baptism to the eve of his Passion.
- The Passion and Resurrection (13:1–21:23).
- A brief epilogue (21:24–25).

The arrangement of subject matter by John follows the historical order of events as can be seen from the aforementioned segmentation. Notable is how John displays a special concern to denote exactly the time of the occurrence, and the connection, of the various events fitted into this chronological narrative. Right from the start of his narrative he details the circumstances around the start of Yeshua's public ministry with four definite indications of the time. John places

emphasis on the first miracles: “This beginning of miracles did Yeshua in Cana of Galilee . . .” and “This is again the second miracle that Yeshua did. Finally we see John refer repeatedly to the great religious and national festivals of the Hebrews for the purpose of indicating the exact historical sequence of the facts related. Not only is this indicative of an eyewitness account but also of a purpose.

The Fourth Gospel is written in Greek, and even a cursory study of it is sufficient to reveal a fairly unique character. Especially characteristic is the diction used by John and the expressions which are used more frequently than the other sacred writers. Most distinctive is John’s grammatical use of particles, pronouns, prepositions, verbs, etc. Overall John displays a comfortable intimacy with the Greek speech of the first century which he treats in many ways with a clearly Hebrew spin. His literary style is deservedly applauded for its effective simplicity. John capably combines the traditional narrative literary style of the age, as represented in the other three Gospels, with the more cosmopolitan flair of Paul the great evangelist to the Gentiles.

What stands out is the confinement of the record primarily to the events which occurred in Judea and Jerusalem. Of Yeshua’s labors and ministry in Galilee John relates little and is scant on details. Also noteworthy is how John deals with his selected subject matter. While the other evangelists focus on events and miracles, John recounts fewer and devotes his attention on Yeshua’s discourses and teachings. With John the events seem to serve as a backdrop for the words, conversations, and teachings of Messiah. Still further John hones in on the debates Yeshua has with his primary antagonists, the Jewish religious establishment at Jerusalem. As detailed in John’s narrative in quite dramatic fashion, this battle tends to be of a highly theological nature.

There are great foundational truths which John constantly hammers home in his Gospel: truths which define his governing theological mind set! These truths are made manifest through expressions such as: “the Word,” “the Light of the World,” “the Truth,” “the Life,” “the Resurrection,” “the Lamb of G_D,” etc. In some ways many of John’s literary strings seem to be constructed around these truths as opposed to these truths surfacing naturally in the course of the Gospel narrative. In John’s narrative the theological content seems to be just as important as the historical record.

Much more so than the three Synoptic Gospels, the whole narrative of John centers on the person of Messiah rather than the events. In essence the fourth Gospel is more of a personal biography of Yeshua as opposed to a historical epic.

At the very start of John's Gospel, where Yeshua is declared to be the divine Word of G_D, we see in John an inward almost mystical view of Yeshua. John's approach by connecting Yeshua directly to Genesis 1:1 provides us great insights regarding his Hebraic view and understanding of the continuity of Holy Scripture. Undoubtedly John is cognizant that the crux of all Holy Scripture is G_D's restoration plan for humanity which results in a complete revelation (Bible) that is Messianic or Yeshua centric. In essence Yeshua can be found everywhere.

John never grows tired of exposing the eternal and divine nature of Yeshua, who descended to Earth in the form of a man to undertake his divine role as mediator between man and G_D. Although John relates in detail those instances where the divinity and glory of Yeshua are made manifest to him and others, it is apparent by the manner in which John presents the divine Word that Yeshua's true glory is most readily found in the eternal wisdom and truth of his teachings and how Yeshua's sacrifice redeems people to G_D. (14)

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Basic Observations & Insights

The background materials provided are admittedly small in quantity but should prove succinct enough to provide a reasonable basis for formulating insights; insights which will be used to develop deductive contextual presumptions; contextual presumptions which will be used later in this work to interpret the messages from Messiah to the seven Churches.

Asia Minor Observations

- At the time this Revelation was delivered, one would be hard pressed to argue against the fact that Asia Minor was right in the center of the “civilized” world.
- Asia Minor, as history has proven, is simply a very unique place on Earth where vestiges of all the major imperial civilizations can be found.
- Asia Minor represents the most clearly defined connection/transition point between Asia and Europe—both culturally and geographically.
- Asia Minor’s uniquely positioned geography placed it squarely in the cross hairs of both the East and the West. Both sides desired to use Asia Minor as a fulcrum for expansion and imperialism.
- Asia Minor played host in a unique manner to three religions: Judaism, Paganism and Christianity at a critical point in world history.

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Seven Communities Observations

- These Church communities no longer exist from a historical perspective!
- There were certainly more than the “Seven Churches of Asia” which could have received this message. Certainly Colossae and Patara were thriving Christian communities and Antioch was the cornerstone of the early Church in Asia. Still further yet Hierapolis, Tralleis and Magnesia were thriving communities and on the delivery route itself. But these and other communities were excluded.
- There was a known and traveled route regarding the delivery of this Revelatory message.
- The subject matter contained in the individual Church messages assuredly represented concerns and issues shared by all of the Churches of Asia Minor. The battle against false

prophets was waged by all Churches! The evil influences of Paganism threatened all Churches! Persecution would have been suffered by all Church communities.

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John the Apostle Observations

- The Apostle John was a disciple of John the Immerser/Baptist.
- John was of elevated stock within the community of apostles as attested to by the record of events he was blessed to have seen.
- The Apostle John was arguably the most beloved of all Yeshua's apostles.
- Yeshua himself entrusted the care of his own earthly mother into the hands of the Apostle John.
- The Apostle John's writings, which earned him the respect as the early Church's "theologian," reveal a depth of blessed inspiration matched perhaps only by Paul of Tarsus.
- The Apostle John was blessed with a "long life" which extended the length of the "Apostolic Age" during a critical developmental phase of the Church of Messiah. In his waning years he was the last direct apostolic witness to Yeshua. He was the only one of the twelve apostles purportedly not martyred in the name of Yeshua.

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These observations are fairly simplistic and rooted in basic historical evidence which can be readily validated with minimal investigative research. These observations should not prove contentious to the reader. If these basic and historically supported observations are denied, then the subsequent deductive presumptions drawn from these observations would be rendered "invalid." On the other hand if these basic observations are valid then we should look to develop from these observations insightful context relative to the Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah.

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Contextual Synthesis

Simply speaking the development and subsequent synthesis of ideas surrounding prophetic discernment is a product of asking some questions in the hopes the answers lead to a better understanding of the subject matter. In the case of Revelations we are dealing with a few basic questions:

- What relevance is there regarding the address of this blessed Revelation to not all the Churches within Asia Minor? Essentially is “Asia Minor” meaningful or meaningless?
- What relevance is there regarding the “Seven Churches?” Are these messages just for them at their time or is there symbolic significance from a present time perspective?
- What relevance is there regarding Yeshua’s selection of John the Apostle to receive and relay this grand and awesome Revelation?

The syntheses which will be developed in the following topical discourses represent a search for these answers. A search for answers in a manner which only requires one to open up their mind and think beyond the obvious!

* * * * *

Asia Minor-Synthesis

In looking at the observations regarding “Asia Minor” what are the reasonable inferences and deductions which can be drawn from the listed observations that would be relevant to the Revelation of Messiah?

1) When visualizing the geographical prominence of Asia Minor within ancient times, it seems apparent that Asia Minor symbolically should be viewed as representing the center of the civilized world from which the light of G_D’s Salvation, Yeshua the Messiah, will spread throughout.

Certainly we cannot dismiss the historic centrality of Asia Minor in the development of early Christianity. In fact this “Asia Minor Centricity” would continue for centuries as attested to by the historical record. The first Lateran ecumenical council of the Church held in Rome was not until Council IX in the year 1123 Ce whereas previous general ecumenical councils were held in Asia Minor.

Subsequently the author will contend the very seed of G_D’s Light was re-planted in Asia Minor. The importance of this symbolism should not be understated by any means. Given the nature of this “planted seed” it becomes quite clear why G_D himself would provide divine Revelation pertinent to the substance of the “planted seed.” G_D provided for us critical information regarding the very nature of the truths which constitute our faith as believers in Yeshua. Essentially this writing is the Last Word of G_D to us and thus the last scripturally inspired instructional teaching. As the reader will see later this inference is critical to properly understanding the Revelation contained within the first three chapters of this writing.

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2) Presumably readers understand something of the Hebraic roots of Christian beliefs and the basic differences between “Jew” and “Gentile.” In light of basic observations Asia Minor historically is representative not of the Hebrew but of the Gentile.

Isaiah 9:1 says, the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

The Gospel of Luke says, And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon . . . And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Yeshua, to do for him (circumcision) after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed G_D, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. (Luke 2:25–32).

With this Revelation being addressed to the Churches of “Asia,” this message signals the inclusion of the “Gentiles” into G_D’s master plan for humanity. This last comment maintains no exclusionary allusions regarding the Jews. Though the Jews are certainly targeted to receive this message, in historical context the Church of Messiah is designed to be both a Jew and Gentile Church; a single believing body comprising all peoples. Thus a very real and purposeful allusion of Asia Minor, with all of its historical vestiges of the world’s great Gentile empires, representing inclusion of the Goim to the faith and body of Messiah is unquestionable.

This is by no means a complex inference, but it is significant. A critical component of the “Renewed Covenant” is the delivery of salvation through G_D’s grace to all people. Grace even unto the heathen Gentiles!

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3) When one views Asia Minor as that place where cultures clashed and struggled for dominance, it is not coincidental that the roots of the Church of Messiah were established there! G_D is declaring that, although man's cultures attempted to use this land mass as their imperial fulcrum and failed, it would be his culture which would rise to prominence. While the cultures of man's empires desired to use Asia Minor to expand beyond their "borders", it would be the culture of his only begotten Son, Yeshua the Messiah, which would successfully spread to the entire Earth.

The Gospel of Matthew says, Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Daniel 2:44 says, And in the days of those kings shall the G_D of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; nor shall the kingdom be left to another people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, but it shall stand for ever.

The symbolic view is that G_D is essentially declaring the inherent human cultural clash can only be overcome and mediated through his singular and perfect culture. Only his culture will unify mankind in a manner consistent with his plan.

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4) Next to be exposed is the connection between the Church of The Messiah and Western Civilization.

The rooting of Christianity within Western Culture, and then abroad during the colonization of the globe by European powers, is an absolutely phenomenal historical reality which defies all logical probability when viewed from a time of Yeshua's perspective. There also is no historical

doubt that the imbuing of Christianity within modern Western Civilization was a direct result of the Church of Messiah becoming inextricably linked with the Roman Empire, and then subsequently the Holy Roman Empire, and then of course modern national Europe.

From a strictly historical perspective the influence by the Church of Messiah upon Western Civilization and consequently the entire planet has been most profound. In many ways the Church of Messiah has indeed shaped the very world we live in today.

This contextual deduction has a direct link to the previous exposed point. How would the culture of G_D become centric to the modern history? The answer of course lies in the spread of the Church of Messiah to the Gentiles and throughout Europe and then Western Civilization's rise to global dominance and the missionary work which accompanied this colonial imperialism.

One must really view this development either from a coincidence or destiny perspective. Although many historical and cultural academic works have been undertaken attempting to explain the rise of Western culture, one should not lose sight of the reality that the rise of Western culture is not a coincidence and just as importantly the culture of Messiah could not be subdued therein.

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5) The next major point to shed light on is the East vs. West nature of this land mass and what contextual implications may be extracted. It appears that the East/West prophetic implication contained in the Revelation is nothing short of stunning.

Prior to Yeshua's Earthly ministry, Asia Minor was that place where East and West traditionally met and clashed. After the ministry of Yeshua, The East/West dynamic surfaced first within the confines of the Roman Empire as the incredible scope of the vast empire ultimately led to the gradual formation of both Western and Eastern Empires under Diocletian c. 300 Ce.

The East/West dynamic surfaced next in the form of the ongoing discord and schism within the Church of Messiah. Though this split may have culminated in a political struggle, the differences were rooted in religious practice and doctrine which played a major role in the developing Church. The differences between these two variant sectors of the Church of Messiah were prevalent from early times and evolved to multiple schisms between Church factions; the most notable being the great East-West Schism in 1054 Ce. So even within the one Church culture of Messiah did this East vs. West paradigm hold true.

The East/West perspective can be seen in the continuing struggle between the Church of Messiah and the Muslims of the East; ultimately resulting in the “Crusades” which began in 1096 Ce and lasted nearly 250 years. Of course this East vs. West struggle was not contained to Asia Minor, but the area was not devoid of warfare.

East vs. West was again to come to the forefront during the colonization efforts of the Western Christian Empires. Certainly the author will not even allude to Asia Minor being the critical impact zone regarding these colonization activities. Still the East vs. West dynamic that was so centric to Asia Minor for more than a millennia cannot be viewed as being irrelevant to this broader East vs. West clash.

The East vs. West dynamic was again at the forefront of news and history during the early twentieth century when the Asia Minor land mass itself was under duress during the strife between the Greeks and the Turks and certainly representative of a broader cultural struggle.

In a broad context we of course can then not ignore the obvious East vs. West nature of the Cold War and the epic cultural struggle which engulfed the entire planet for a significant portion of the twentieth century.

And of course we should certainly not overlook the reality of this modern era, where in the wake of growing Islamic fundamentalism and radicalism, the lines of East vs. West have taken shape once more. Ironically enough this time the battle is brewing against a religious backdrop in

which Western Civilization is being billed as morally destitute Satanists. Quite ironic to say the least!

One simply cannot ignore the cultural dynamic existing between the East and the West. History paints a clear picture of this continuing struggle. Furthermore Asia Minor more than symbolically represents the one place that encapsulates this cultural dynamic.

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6) The last significant implication which should be drawn from these collective observations is the obvious transition of the evangelical seat of authority from Israel to the “Gentiles” with respect to the greater Church body of G_D. This transition is historical fact and cannot be refuted regardless of the consequences that spawned from said transition. This transition also represents the inevitable fulfillment of scripture!

Isaiah 28:16 says, “Therefore thus saith the Lord G_D: Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a costly corner-stone of sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste.”

Psalms says, “The stone which the builders rejected is become the chief corner-stone. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes” (Psalms 118:22–23).

Matthew says, Yeshua saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of G_D shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. (Matthew 21:42–45)

Because this transition of evangelical authority can be quite contentious, if misunderstood, further explanation is in order and it is important to make a couple of critical points regarding these passages from the Gospel of Matthew.

Yeshua was certainly feared by the Jewish religious establishment or more accurately he was feared by a powerful segment of said Jewish religious establishment. There is historical evidence indicating Yeshua was beloved, accepted and revered by much of Israeli Jewry. Indeed Yeshua had supporters within the Jewish religious establishment as well. This is noted so clarity can be brought to this issue of “removed evangelical authority.”

It is critical to understand in what context Yeshua spoke when he warned the Jewish Establishment that the kingdom of G_D would be taken away from them. Could it mean that the Jews were no longer G_D's people and were essentially disinherited forever? Scripture rebuffs this notion. What does make sense is that the Jewish Religious Establishment would relinquish its seat of evangelical and leadership authority to a priesthood that would spread the good news gospel of the Hebrew Messiah.

In light of this removed evangelical authority and the destruction of the Temple Jerusalem in 70 Ce it has been erroneously concluded by many people that the Jews themselves have been replaced as the heirs of the covenant with G_D. There are even contentions that the Catholic Church among others is essentially the "New Israel. This “replacement theology” however is false and the author will make a case against this misperception given its relevance to the Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah.

The primary role of the Hebrew in G_D's plan always was “to be the light to the nations;” “a glory to the one true G_D of Israel and all peoples!” This was a special role reserved for Israel through the auspices of the everlasting covenant with G_D. It is critical to understand the New Covenant is the completion of the original Hebrew Covenant. These two so called “old” and “new” covenants are not disconnected in any way shape or form.

A thorough reading of the Book of Isaiah sheds much light on the issue and is highly recommended. In summary, the original covenant was not upheld by Israel which transgressed G_D's Holy Law: the Torah. This resulted in punishment upon Israel. G_D in his supreme mercy forgave Israel of their covenant breach thereby freeing Israel from their "covenant with death." In renewing of this agreement with Israel, G_D brought forth a perfected covenant modification which could not be spoiled for he himself would be the intercessor on behalf of the peoples.

Below are some key Scriptural excerpts from Isaiah pertinent to this issue:

The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statute, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath a curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are found guilty; therefore the inhabitants of the earth waste away, and men are left few. (Isaiah 24:5–6)

Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scoffers, the ballad mongers of this people which is in Jerusalem: Because ye have said: 'We have made a covenant with death, and with the nether-world are we at agreement; when the scouring scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood have we hid ourselves. Therefore thus saith The Lord G_D: Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a costly corner-stone of sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste. And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled and your agreement with the nether-world shall not stand . . . (Isaiah 28:14–18)

Thus saith G_D the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them forth, he that spread forth the earth and that which cometh out of it, he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I The Lord have called thee in righteousness, and have taken hold of thy hand, and kept thee, and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am the Lord, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither

my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them. (Isaiah 42:5–9)

Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to him who is despised of men, to him who is abhorred of nations, to a servant of rulers: kings shall see and arise, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the Lord that is faithful, even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee. Thus saith the Lord: In an acceptable time have I answered thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. (Isaiah 49:7–8)

As can be seen this new and perfect Hebrew Covenant represents the covenant for all peoples and nations, but the Hebrew role in this “deal” with G_D has not been changed. The covenant is still between G_D of Israel and the people. The responsibility of the Hebrew is to spread the light to all peoples and nations and be the “oracles” of G_D. It should not be inferred that the original covenant is part of the “former things that are passed.” The former things that will pass are Israel’s transgressions and covenant with death. As Scripture clearly points out the covenant is everlasting. So to what then is the “covenant with death” in Isaiah referring? What are these things of old that will pass away?

Although we will be covering G_D’s Torah in further detail later in this work, it must be noted herein the “covenant with death” in Isaiah is a direct reference to Israel's unfaithfulness and the “Judaic Rabbinical Tradition” which spouted up in Israel and ultimately evolved into legalism: a rigorous code of obedience to minutiae. Though obedience to G_D’s will is certainly critical, the key aspects of faith and spirit filled love which result in just and righteous behavior were overlooked. The result was a system where perfect obedience was the standard of righteousness. Since perfection is outside the scope of human performance there could be no individual righteousness. Hence one lives by the law and dies by the law. Or as Isaiah declared Israel was under a “covenant of death.”

Within this context the Jewish religious establishment failed to recognize Yeshua as Messiah and there was no way they could fulfill their destined evangelical role. Subsequently the role of

spreading the good news of salvation, the covenant of faith and grace, to all mankind had to be handed off to a willing substitute. This hand off is what Yeshua was prophesying to the Jewish religious establishment.

As previously stated, the destruction of Jerusalem is often misperceived as a permanent disinheritance of the Jews. When one looks objectively at this evangelical hand-off it is clear that the apostles of Yeshua were all Jews. The same people always designated to be the oracles of G_D. Further yet, even after the hand-off, the center of the Messiah Movement was still in fact the Jewish Synagogue. Consequently it must be concluded that the Apostolic Church of Messiah was in effect a Hebraic Institution at its very roots. The hand-off had taken place but essentially had transferred from Jew to Jew, from the Hebrew Religious Establishment to the Hebrew Apostolate.

At first glance this may seem to support the idea of “replacement theology.” Upon closer inspection however we can see G_D’s chosen people in a divided state. We also know what Yeshua told us about a divided house in Matthew 12:25: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” We saw this truth come to fruition when Israel split into two kingdoms after the reign of Solomon. So in proper context there was no practical way for this divided Kingdom of G_D to survive. So the author views the destruction of Jerusalem, the seat of the Kingdom of G_D, as a necessary event to keep Israel, G-D's Kingdom from destroying itself.

This transition became necessary but by no means is to be viewed as a permanent “transfer” from Jew to Gentile. The ultimate establishment of the Gentile seat of evangelical authority, representative of the Church of Messiah, is of course independent from the nation of Israel and should never be construed as a permanent disinheritance of G_D’s Chosen People. Nor should it be viewed that the Church of Messiah is the replacement inheritor of the promises made to national Israel. It was not G_D’s plan to have his chosen people replaced! G_D’s merciful plan simply expanded the covenant with mankind thereby bringing into the fold peoples of all ethnicities united in the body of Yeshua the Messiah. The Church of Messiah, originally Hebraic then Gentilized, is not a new Israel! Israel is Israel, and the Church of Messiah was established to fulfill the plan of

G_D and spread the gospel of Yeshua. Since there is no permanent disinheritance of Israel it must be argued Messiah's Church will have evangelical authority for a temporary time frame.

Now the reader may ask "How can it be construed that this is only temporary?" Simply refer to what Yeshua said about Jerusalem and the temple. The Gospel of Luke states, And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. . . . But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Luke 21:5–24)

There should be no doubts this last verse implies that Jerusalem will be restored after the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled. The author also presumes the temple will be restored as well given the context in which Messiah revealed this prophecy. Furthermore we should note that against all odds and certainly of miraculous nature, the return of national Israel after such a long time. Ironically the influence of the western nations regarding the recovery of national Israel to the international fold of nations was prominent. Still further yet it is the West, most notably the United States of America, that has traditionally supported Israel in the face of never ending hatred and opposition emanating from their Arab neighbors and global antagonists.

From a historic perspective it seems we have an unacknowledged "quid pro quo" going on. On one hand it was the actions of the Jews/Israel that in effect gave rise to modern Western Civilization and on the other hand it is that same Western Civilization's actions which have led to the reemergence of national Israel. How strange these things are indeed. It would seem perhaps the end of the time of the Gentiles may be looming.

In light of Scripture, considerable objections to the erroneous belief that this transition of evangelical authority was a condemnation of Hebrew Scripture or the Hebrew people must be made. This transition is simply the natural unfolding of G_D's will and the result of the prophesied "unbelief" of most Jewish leaders regarding their own Messiah as manifested in Yeshua of Nazareth. Undoubtedly through Israel would the light of the saving grace of G_D be gifted to the Gentiles; this is an element of the renewed and everlasting covenant! Consequently any notions implying the assumption of national Israel's covenantal inheritance by the Gentilized Church of Messiah must be deemed to be false. As declared in Isaiah, the original covenant is "everlasting."

There are not two covenants, so all elements of the covenant between G_D and man remain intact.

So what then shall we say? That the Christian seat of evangelical authority has been divinely established? And that Israel's national inheritance and the Hebrew Covenant are still in effect? The answer to both is YES!

Ultimately Hebrew evangelical authority will be re-established upon the acceptance by the Jewish people of Yeshua the Messiah as "The Lord of David" in Psalms: The Lord saith unto my Lord: "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The rod of thy strength the Lord will send out of Zion: "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy warfare; in adornments of holiness, from the womb of the dawn, thine is the dew of thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: "Thou art a priest for ever after the manner of Melchizedek." The Lord at thy right hand doth crush kings in the day of his wrath. He will judge among the nations; he filleth it with dead bodies, he crusheth the head over a wide land. He will drink of the brook in the way; therefore will he lift up the head. Hallelujah. I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart, in the council of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have delight therein. His work is glory and majesty; and his righteousness endureth forever. He hath made a memorial for his wonderful works; the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given food unto them that fear him; he will ever be mindful of his covenant. He hath declared to his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations. The works of his hands

are truth and justice; all his precepts are sure. They are established forever and ever, they are done in truth and uprightness. He hath sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant forever; holy and awful is his name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do thereafter; his praise endureth forever. (Psalms 110:1-111:10)

And the LORD said unto me: 'Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend an adulteress even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn unto other gods, and love cakes of raisins. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver and an omer of barley, and a half-omer of barley; and I said unto her: 'Thou shalt sit solitary for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be any man's wife; nor will I be thine.' For the children of Israel shall sit solitary many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim; afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their G_D, and David their king; and shall come trembling unto the LORD and to his goodness in the end of days. (Hosea 3:1-5)

So the reader may ask—presuming for a moment the seemingly improbable acceptance of Yeshua by Israel and the Jewish people—will there be two rightful evangelical seats of authority when this comes about? The answer to this according to the words of Yeshua is a definite no. There will not be conflicting houses!

In the meantime ... please refer to the revised previous figure seen below which visually depicts this transition. Not only does it show a clear transition from Israel to Rome but Asia Minor can easily be viewed as the pivot for the temporary transition of evangelical authority.



* * * * *

Synthesis of Asia Minor Conclusion

At this point the reader may be wondering what to make of all these contextual deductions? The author would counter that these significant implications should stand meritoriously on their own and do provide significant insight into understanding G_D's Plan. Regarding the Revelation of Yeshua, however, it is prudent to translate this developed context into a defined framework which helps us interpret the blessed Revelation.

Looking at these major contextual perspectives the reader should be instilled with the following impressions:

* That Asia Minor forever should be viewed in the context as being not the spark but the proverbial “flash point” for the fire that was the Church of Messiah; which in turn played the largest role of any single factor in the shaping of modern Western Civilization and thus modern history!

* That Asia Minor played host to one of the most important hand offs in human history. This hand off was from G_D to himself in the form of Yeshua the Messiah; this handoff was in effect from Hebrew to Hebrew. The handoff, in light of a Gentilized Church of Messiah, basically resulted in the temporary transition of Biblical and future historical prominence from Israel to the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church and subsequently Western Civilization. This evangelical authority will not be handed back to Israel until after the season of the Church of Messiah, and the time of the Gentiles has run its course which occurs during the end days.

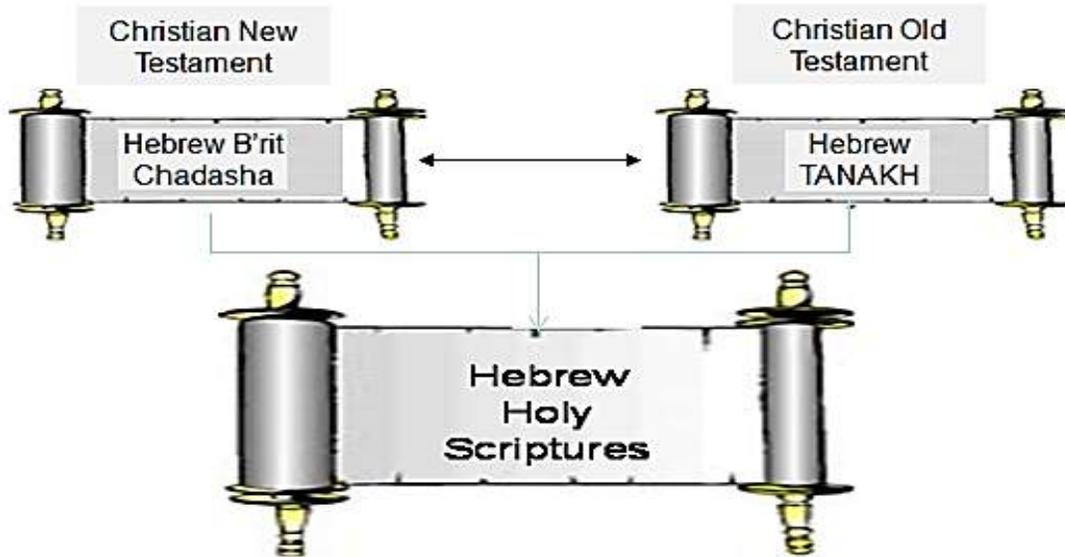
* That Asia Minor, more than symbolically, represents the very struggle between East vs. West which summarily defines the broad history of the human race since time immemorial. From a scriptural perspective the jump could be made to declare that over the last two millennia this East vs. West struggle can be declared as being the battle of good (Messiah's Gospel) against evil (The Gospel's enemy). Please do not bemoan the fact the author did not qualify this statement by mentioning that all wrongs perpetrated by the Earthly Church of Messiah, or the West to a greater extent, need be overlooked. Or do not view this mistakenly as an “en-masse” condemnation that all people from the East are evil. This good vs. evil context is strictly representative as “chosen people culture” vs. “non-chosen people culture.” Certainly within the framework of Biblical history many people would chagrin the fact that the Israelites, on command from G_D, basically decimated the indigenous inhabitants of the Promised Land on the way to their conquest thereof. Most assuredly “chosen people” transgress G_D’s commands and act in an evil manner, at times frequently. As a believer in G_D, however, one needs to view things in context of his plan and not man’s. One needs to view things in context of his authority and not man’s. This perplexing dynamic is best described in Isaiah 55:8: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

We should ultimately view these implications in a clearly prophetic light. What our blessed Messiah was revealing to us through the symbolic address of this writing to the Churches of Asia Minor, when taken in proper context, represents the very unfolding of the modern history of man. A history which would be sculpted and most influenced by the Church of Yeshua the Messiah or more specifically the culture of the chosen people ... those that carry the message of the Kingdom!

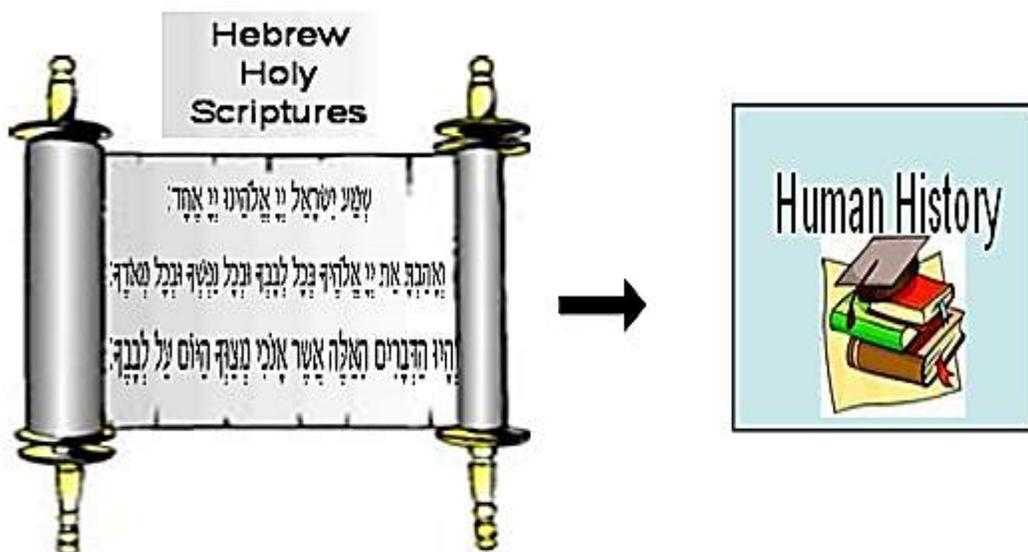
Ultimately this construct can be better defined in terms of adopting a “Holy Scripture World View.” It is a simple view accepting the validity of G_D’s inspired Word, handed down to us through Holy Scripture, as the only means of understanding his great plan. A plan which can never be separated from human history! This means it is incumbent upon believers to accept the “Messiah World View” where the Church of Yeshua is centric to the existence of all peoples though they believe or not. Centric to the history of man because the Church of Messiah represents the Renewed Covenant which has been extended through Israel to all the nations! This means as well that we accept the “pre-Messiah Hebrew Scripture World View,” premised upon the covenant between G_D and the chosen people Israel, as real and as such explaining transpired pre-Messiah human history.

It is important to note the B’rit Chadasha (New) Covenant has been extended through Israel to all the nations. This point is stressed because the relationship between G_D and man unfolds in the Holy Scripture as a relationship between G_D and his chosen people. Of great significance then is Yeshua himself is a Jew, the greatest of all, from the royal house of David. The importance of why the B’rit Chadasha was delivered to Hebrews should not be ignored. The fact the early Church of Messiah was Hebrew rooted should not be ignored. Ultimately as time and events unfold we cannot overlook the obvious fact that history is what it is because of the relationship between G_D and his chosen people Israel. Subsequently all of Holy Scripture should be viewed in the context of being “Hebrew.” As such the author will contend Holy Scripture should be viewed in one contiguous frame work as consisting of pre-Messiah and post-Messiah Testaments. It is imperative these two testaments be viewed as one corpus and acknowledged that the only means of properly understanding Holy Scripture is to approach them in a Hebraic context. Either testament by itself is incomplete! Only as one cohesive “Word” does it explain the mysteries of faith, the plan G_D has designed for mankind and the unfolding of human history.

Following is a visual representation of the reality which is the Hebrew Holy Scripture.



And once we have understood this corrected reality then we can get an accurate view of human history. This history being defined by Holy Scripture wherein all things are a result of G_D's plan for us as determined by the choices made and actions taken by his chosen peoples.



If the reader believes the author is a Jewish apologist then it should be pointed out that scriptural and historical facts are self-evident when viewed outside the constraints of cultural and educational upbringing. The simple fact remains that a proper understanding of the Hebraic roots of Christianity is paramount to proper interpretation of Holy Scripture and ultimately paramount to proper implementation of one's faith in daily life. This aspect is stressed because we will see upon detailed review that failure by the developing Church of Messiah to maintain this imperative is the very basis for the doctrinal discord which has caused so much havoc within the body of believers throughout the ages.

Conversely please do not take this last passage to be a complete condemnation of the Christian Church of Messiah. The record of this Apostolic Church regarding the spread of the NAME of Yeshua the Messiah and his redemptive works to all nations of the Earth cannot be challenged. The significant role the Church of Messiah played in the unfolding of modern history cannot be challenged. The Church of Messiah has fulfilled its role thus far as ordained in the plan of G_D.

In concluding this discourse on Asia Minor the author will contend, in light of unfolding history, that the deliverance of this Revelation to the Churches in Asia Minor is indeed meaningful. This singular land mass is the only place on Earth which could support such a deductive synthesis. The addressing of this message to Asia Minor implies a clear knowledge of past, present and future human history, human cultural inclinations and influences, and finally G_D's Plan for humanity. It must therefore be concluded that the addressing of this Revelation to Asia Minor is purposeful. The purpose being that G_D wanted people to know irrefutably this last inspired writing to mankind represents the conclusive chapter of the great book of life; the Hebrew Scriptures or the Bible. As such, G_D in keeping with past practice would of course declare historical events before they occur.

Isaiah states: The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying: Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand, That I will break Asshur in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot; then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulder. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the

hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? (Isaiah 14:24–27)

As history is proving most clearly, G_D's purpose and plan will not be turned back!

* * * * *

John the Apostle-Synthesis

When thinking in terms of the Revelation, the selection of John the Apostle is quite an intriguing proposition. Why not deliver this Revelation through another apostle or some other prophet? Why not Paul the greatest evangelist and apostle to the Gentiles? What about Peter, the so called Prince of the Apostles and the designated leader of the Apostolic Church of Messiah? What were Messiah's motives for selecting John the Apostle for receiving and relaying the last scriptural Word of G_D to mankind? Is there any significance to the selection of John for this purpose?

Holy Scripture and historical records more than imply John was originally a disciple of John the Immerser otherwise known as the Baptist. The time frame associated with this discipleship unfortunately is unknown. But would there be any relevance to this relationship regardless of any time span spent together?

The author will initially deal with the very tangible impact this relationship would have had on John's understanding of the Messiah of Israel. To do so we must first develop at least a high level picture of the Immerser to understand what influences there may have been on John.

We know "The Immerser" was set aside from birth to be the voice of one in the wilderness who would prepare the way for G_D. He would come in spirit and power of the Prophet Elijah and be filled with the Holy Spirit. He was a descendant of Aaron, brother of Moses and High Priest, and was probably in the desert, and not a priest of Israel, because the Romans had taken control of the office of the Priesthood by mandating they approve the appointment of the High Priest and not the Jews. Essentially the Jewish Priesthood had become politicized while the real Priests had become marginalized.

Considering these factors we can assuredly recognize The Baptist as a very dynamic individual who would logically have been extremely influential. The success of the Immerser's own ministry historically supports this conclusion. But what does this have to do with John the Apostle?

It is presumable that anyone spending time with the Immerser would have naturally had their concept of Messiah influenced. Additionally they would also have received a firm understanding of the problems facing Israel in light of the politicizing of the priesthood.

Given the role and ministry of the Immerser it is clear his preparation was for the G_D who would come to conquer sin and provide Y'SHUAH (salvation) for the people of Israel. The author must inject at this point, that not coincidentally, Jesus' Hebrew/Aramaic name is "Yeshua" with Jesus being an English via Greek derivation. Only in the Hebrew NAME "Yeshua" does Messiah's essence literally manifest.

In effect Messiah would not be the conquering warrior who would come for justice and the destruction of Israel's enemies. Messiah would come for the salvation of souls and the glory of Israel! This is extremely important to understand since most of Israel anticipated the "warrior" Messiah who would come and destroy their enemies. With the Immerser preparing the way, G_D was in effect paving the road for Yeshua of Nazareth to be recognized. The Immerser after all was a much anticipated figure within the context of Scripture. Ironically it would be a rightful hereditary Kohen/Priest, not of the Jewish Religious Establishment, who was championing the correct context of Messiah's mission while conversely Annas and Caiaphas rejected Yeshua as Messiah in their ill begotten positions of religious authority.

So again what does this have to do with John the Apostle? The Immerser would have provided for John the correct context by which Messiah could be recognized. We can go even further than this because we know the Immerser pointed out Yeshua as Messiah to his own disciples when they encountered each other. It was the Immerser who in effect invited his disciples to go and follow Yeshua. John the Apostle and others did just this!

It is within the context of this relationship with the Immerser where we can see how the early "theological rooting" of John the Apostle was seeded. The theological rooting which ultimately manifested itself in all the inspired Writings of John!

We should not lose sight that the ministry of the Immerser in effect represents the beginnings of the ministry of Yeshua the Messiah. After all the Immerser did nothing but tell all of Israel that Messiah was coming! Relevant to John the Apostle then he was himself present at the very beginnings of the ministry of Yeshua.

* * * * *

John the Apostle was a personal eye witness to the most spectacular miracles associated with Yeshua and would have been impacted profoundly by these events. John also was in close company with the Master and as proven by his deep theological writings he really grasped the deep issues relative to the mission, spiritual/physical essence and love that is Yeshua the Messiah.

John's gospel, more so than all others, was centric to the public discourses and teachings of Yeshua. John as well authored a gospel whereby the focus of activities centers upon the Jewish festival season where we encounter the life and death struggle between the Jewish religious establishment and Yeshua. Although some camps of thought attribute this construct of the gospel to John's own desire to introduce a proper historical chronology, it is the conclusion of this author that this was not the only or most important reason. Let us investigate why!

John's primary focus upon the activities of Messiah in Judea and Jerusalem was fostered by his own understanding of Hebrew religion and how inseparable were Yeshua the Messiah and Israel. Although the sacrificial self-offering, which was central to the role of Messiah, is for the sin atonement of all peoples, it must be accepted that Yeshua was here first for the chosen people of G_D and secondly for the rest of the world. On numerous occasions did Yeshua instruct his apostles to forego spreading the news to the Gentiles and target the lost sheep of Israel!

Matthew states, Then Yeshua went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he

answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matthew 15:21:24)

We can see from this excerpt, despite that we know Messiah's salvation is for all people, the personal Earthly ministry of Yeshua was strictly for the chosen people of Israel. So without going into a more significant amount of scriptural support in this area the author will point out that the relationship between Messiah and Israel is quite special and unique from a Hebraic context.

In a similar Hebraic centric fashion John's gospel pays sharp attention to the theological war which was being waged by Yeshua and the Jewish religious establishment. It is this author's conclusion that John's focus upon this struggle was done specifically to bring to light this battle so all would understand in depth the nature of Yeshua's rebuking of the Jewish religious establishment. So what can we see from Scripture about this rebuking?

a) Yeshua rebuked the Jewish religious establishment for not understanding, within the context of Torah, the nature of the renewed covenant or the real mission of Messiah.

The renewed covenant represents a permanent salvation for peoples of all nations and not just Israel. A salvation founded upon the blood atoning sacrifice of Messiah so the transgressions of all people could be covered up. A salvation founded upon the righteousness of true faith in Yeshua the Messiah. A salvation forged by the grace of G_D whereby true faith in Messiah results in personal and communal transformation producing loving obedience to G_D's commandments. A salvation concluding with eternal life in G_D! Whereas before Messiah was to come the covenant resulted in blessings to Israel for faithful observance of G_D's Torah which we know was usurped by the Jewish religious establishment.

The Gospel of John states: And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For G_D so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in

him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For G_D sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:14–17)

The Book of Isaiah says, Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him, he shall make the right to go forth to the nations. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the dimly burning wick shall he not quench; he shall make the right to go forth according to the truth. He shall not fail nor be crushed, till he have set the right in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his teaching. ... I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and have taken hold of thy hand, and kept thee, and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am the Lord, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them. (Isaiah 42:1–9)

The Book of Isaiah states: And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him—for I am honorable in the eyes of the Lord, and my G_D is become my strength—Yea, he saith: “It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the offspring of Israel; I will also give thee for a light of the nations, that my salvation may be unto the end of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:5–6)

The Book of Isaiah also states: Yet it pleased the Lord to crush him by disease; to see if his soul would offer itself in restitution, that he might see his seed, prolong his days, and that the purpose of the Lord might prosper by his hand: of the travail of his soul he shall see to the full, even my servant, who by his knowledge did justify the Righteous One to the many, and their iniquities he did bear. (Isaiah 53:10–11)

Hebrew Scripture of course had foretold the coming of Messiah just as it foretold the religious establishment's covenant with death. If the Jewish religious establishment had been immersed within the Word and Spirit they most certainly would have recognized Israel's need for

"redemption" and seen Yeshua as the promised Messiah. They would have recognized that Messiah would have been here not as Ruler of the World but as Healer of the World. As prophesied they would look but not see and listen but not hear.

b) Yeshua rebuked the Jewish religious establishment for not believing in him as Messiah.

The Gospel of John states:

“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” (John 1:10–11)

But I have greater witness than that of John (the Immerser): for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. (John 5:36–38)

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? (John 5:45–47)

But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Messiah cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? (John 7:29–31)

Yeshua undoubtedly did absolutely everything possible within the context of Scripture to give proof he was indeed the promised Messiah. Most assuredly the miraculous works performed by Yeshua were not overlooked but sadly ignored.

c) Yeshua rebuked the Jewish religious establishment for not representing and living Torah in Spirit but crafting extraneous doctrine and practice in keeping with man's tradition thereby leading his people Israel astray.

At the heart of the discord between Yeshua and the Jewish religious establishment was their usurping of G_D's blessed Torah which is traditionally translated as law and statutes. Although this translation is culturally applicable given the Jewish societal structure in which the Torah served, it must be noted from a purely religious perspective this translation is not really accurate.

The Hebrew word Torah comes from the Hebrew root word "yarah." Yarah means "to throw, to shoot or to aim at." Yarah then is the directional process taken by an object going from "point A" to "point B." Yarah then implies a starting point, a traveling process, and an ending point. As a derivative of the word yarah, Torah means much more than a "legal code" or "set of rules." Torah implies: a starting point, a progression in a specific direction and a final ending point; or essentially a "life path." The ending point of course is being one (echad) with G_D!

Torah more appropriately means guidance or instruction and must not be only interpreted in a legalistic sense; it is a way of life derived from the covenant-relationship. Torah is not only laws and statutes but is equally well prophetic discourse (i.e. Isaiah and the counseling of the wise, i.e. Proverbs or Psalms). (15) In fact the author would contend all of Hebrew Scripture represents G_D's Torah; both the pre and post Messiah Testaments.

So the reader may ask; how did the Jewish religious establishment go wrong with interpreting and living Torah? In short there was a fundamental failure by the Jewish religious establishment to understand that joyful obedience to G_D in faith and performance of the justice and righteousness of Torah as a function of spiritual indwelling is G_D's design. Torah, when viewed properly, can be condensed to love of G_D and love of man as Yeshua declared. This is why Torah is the only absolute moral code valid for mankind.

Instead an evolved rigorous compliance to each and every regulation was instituted in Judea in the hopes of making the chosen people a holy people. Rather than producing righteousness, the

net result was that Israel became an isolated and elitist people wherein the religious establishment's legalistic conventions actually moved the sheep of Israel away from the fertile grazing area of faith and spiritual development.

In effect the religious establishment had created and fostered a society of zealous compliance to regulations and conventional traditions of minutiae wherein the purpose was to be visibly holier than thou so one could secure prominence and stature in society. Still further it was deemed this regulatory compliance was paramount to righteousness and hence salvation. This legalism was the primary flaw of Jewish religious practice.

To support the author's last declarations we need to review what Yeshua revealed about the religious establishment regarding this practice:

The Gospel of Matthew states: Then spake Yeshua to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Messiah; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Messiah. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain

at a gnat, and swallow a camel. . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. . . . Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matthew 23:1–33)

Although this discourse of Yeshua is most scathing to say the least we must understand this rabbinical legalism was the primary wall which separated the people from true Torah and of course G_D. Subsequently the rebuking by Yeshua was consistent with this most grievous transgression. Within the Gospel of John a similar theological construct takes shape but in a very different light: There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Yeshua by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from G_D: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except G_D be with him. Yeshua answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of G_D. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Yeshua answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of G_D. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Yeshua answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? (John 3:1–10)

Ultimately Yeshua's ministry aimed not to just return Israel to proper Torah but to provide the chosen people with a flesh and blood example of the Living Torah, up close and personal. So yes, Messiah was indeed here to crush the rabbinical legalism which usurped Torah and had led the sheep of Israel astray. So is it then true as well that Jesus came to do away with Judaism or Torah practice?

d) Jesus did not rebuke G_D's Torah.

Although we clearly see where Yeshua rebuked the Jewish religious establishment for their corruption of G_D's Torah, the author would contend John's Gospel speaks loudly to the point of Messiah upholding the Torah.

John's Gospel is rife with details regarding the festival season because of the critical nature this festival season has in Scripture and ultimately with every individual's relationship with G_D. Throughout the Gospel of John we see where Messiah in fact validated the Biblical appointed times. Messiah was faithful to this and all aspects of G_D's commandments and statutes. Messiah was here to be joyfully obedient to G_D's divine will. This Biblical festival season merits some further review given the relationship these festivals have with G_D's Torah and as we will see Yeshua the Messiah.

The reader should know the festival cycle has its roots in the Sabbath. So important is this to G_D that he made it one of his primary commandments for people to keep. Apparently from G_D's perspective the periods of rest in him and with him are extremely important and necessary for peoples' well-being.

* * * * *

The Biblically Ordained Festivals of G_D

Passover (Pesach)

It begins at sundown on the fourteenth of Nissan and lasts for twenty-four hours. It is a full Sabbath. It was commanded by G_D to be kept for all times. Passover is a recognition and celebration of the day in which G_D "passed over" the firstborn children of Israel when he killed all the firstborn children of Egypt and delivered the curse unto Pharaoh. This began Israel's

miraculous release from the cruel bondage of Egyptian slavery. The core of the celebration centers on redemption by G_D through the sacrificial blood of the spotless lamb.

As it pertains to all people operating under the perfected covenant it should be realized Yeshua the Messiah is in fact the perfect Passover Lamb. By his blood atoning sacrifice all true believers are “passed over” and freed from the bondage and death of sin. With faith and spirit believers are not enslaved to their sinful old selves ... they are redeemed and adopted into G_D’s family/seed through Messiah.

It certainly should not be viewed as a coincidence that Yeshua was delivered up on Passover. We recall Messiah talking to his disciples about “his appointed hour.” So we know this was no coincidence. Passover was to be his hour! Let us also recall it was The Immerser, who when referring to Yeshua, called out, “Behold the Lamb of G_D which taketh away the sin of the world.”

This obvious and indisputable connection between Messiah and the feast of Passover should not be ignored. It would seem clear Passover is a feast for all times, and in light of Messiah’s mission of redemption, it is now a festival relevant to all peoples and nations and not just the Hebrews.

In keeping with the eternal covenant of G_D and man Yeshua instructed his disciples at the Passover Feast to “do this in memory of me.” In doing this Yeshua was completing and perfecting the Pesach Festival! From hence forth Pesach was designed to be a Festival of remembrance commemorating not just the deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt but through the sacrifice of the perfect lamb, Yeshua the Messiah, redemption for all people from the slavery of sin and death.

Unleavened Bread (Chag HaMatzot)

The Festival of Unleavened Bread is connected to Passover. It begins the day after Passover and continues for seven days. Leviticus states: In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the

month at dusk, is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord; seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work. And ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days; in the seventh day is a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work. (Leviticus 23:5–8)

Again this is a festival ordained by G_D for all time. Perhaps known to the reader "leaven or yeast" in the Bible symbolizes sin and evil. Unleavened bread, eaten over a period of time, symbolized a holy walk, as with G_D. The Festival of Unleavened Bread symbolizes two things: It symbolizes the purity of Yeshua; he is without spot or blemish (sinless) and also the separation from this temporal world that comes upon redemption. Since the Lamb of G_D has paid the price for peoples' redemption (through the Passover Sacrifice), people need to purify themselves from all unrighteousness (leaven being a symbol of sin). People need to sacrifice and be obedient in discipline. People need to separate themselves from this temporal world

First Fruits (Yom Habikkurim)

"On the morrow after the Sabbath" (Sunday) following Unleavened Bread, Leviticus schedules First Fruits, the Feast for acknowledging the early Spring renewal of the land G_D gave the Israelites. They were to bring the early crops (barley harvest) of their spring planting and the High Priest would "wave the sheaf before the Lord." The celebration symbolizes G_D's replanting of the earth in the spring, or in essence a physical re-birth of the land.

The reader should see a definitive and unmistakable pattern emerge herein. Yeshua the Messiah was resurrected on this very same Feast. The symbolic connection of the "First Fruits" yield of the Earth and Yeshua the Messiah, as the "First Fruits" of the resurrected living, is irrefutable.

We must recall how Messiah declared that the wheat must die so that more can regenerate in a new harvest. This is exactly what transpired by Yeshua's death and resurrection.

First Fruits ... Messiah's Resurrection is the temporal renewal of the "old man" to a fully adopted "new man" wherein the believer is fully extricated from this temporal world.

Pentecost (Shavu'ot)

Leviticus 23:16 says, "Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days (from the feast of First Fruits); and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord." In late May or early June, Shavu'ot marked the late Spring wheat harvest.

There is strong evidence within the Jewish tradition to conclude that G_D through Moses actually gave the Torah at Mount Sinai to the chosen people of Israel on the feast of Shavu'ot. Once again we see the clear and unmistakable connection between an ordained Biblical Festival and Yeshua the Messiah. In one instance the children of Israel were given the physical written Law of G_D. In the second instance the chosen people were given the gift of the Holy Spirit on Shavu'ot. This gift was not the written physical law but the spiritual law of G_D to be written on the hearts of the chosen people as revealed to us by Paul. Certainly within the context of the perfected covenant this significance cannot be lost. The gift of the Holy Spirit from G_D to Messiah's called out group would provide the means through which the body of G_D would be re-born and indwelt by his Holy Spirit.

Ultimately it should be stressed that the intrinsic nature of the festival is properly viewed in the context of the Torah. It still is a Festival of Torah. First it was a gift of written Torah to man and then made perfect by becoming a gift of Spiritual Torah to man through belief in Yeshua the Messiah.

Trumpets (Yom Teru'ah)

In modern times known as Rosh HaShannah and translated as “head of the year.” Today it is celebrated as the Jewish New Year.

Leviticus 23:24 requires that, “in the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets.” This blast signaled the beginning of the High Holy Days of the fall. It is a day calling G_D’s people to repentance. It serves as a warning that the onset of “Yamim Nora'im” (Days of Awe) is approaching. The intent is to warn believers to repent of sins while there is still time before judgment. This day should be a solemn day in which we bring to mind what we need to do to make teshuvah/repentance. In practice the high priest actually sounded the trumpet so the faithful would stop harvesting to worship.

Relative to the perfected covenant, “when the trumpet sounds” has been viewed in multiple contexts. Most notably in accordance with 1 Corinthians 15:51–3, it is Yeshua the High Priest who calls living believers to his Temple. In this context the true believing and practicing body of the Church of Messiah, those who remain in tribulation, will be saved upon Messiah’s return signaling the beginning of the end of the age and the start of the Millennial Reign

Atonements (Yom HaKippurim)

Leviticus 23:27 calls for a day of confession, a high holy day. “Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a Day of Atonements: it shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.”

Yom Kippur comes ten days after Yom Teru'ah. The blast on Yom Teru'ah should function as a warning to believers that the Day of G_D’s reckoning is approaching—like the blast of a train whistle before it crosses a roadway. A believer takes heed to the shofar/trumpet blast on Yom Teru'ah and purifies himself during the ten day period leading up to Yom Kippur at which time a believer can present oneself to G_D in a state worthy of atonement. If one is not ready, meaning unrepentant and unprepared, then the judgment of G_D will be dreadful. One figuratively will get run over by the train. (16)

Relevant to the perfected covenant and Yeshua the Messiah, it should be noted this fulfillment is definitely slated for the future. During the course of judgments (tribulation) our merciful G_D still provides a window of opportunity between the sounding of the shofar/trumpet and atonement day for people to repent. Under the auspices of the perfected covenant however people must call upon the name of Yeshua in genuine faith to provide sin atonement. If not then be prepared to be quite unhappy at the White Throne Judgment.

This Festival will be fulfilled upon event that is the White Throne Judgment. At this time there will be no more warnings; just judgment! People should be aware the offering made by fire at this time for unbelievers will be a sacrificial offering of their own bodies. The elect will be perfected during this great act of “salvation”.

Tabernacles (Sukkot)

Leviticus 23:34 reads, “The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord.” G_D wanted to celebrate the fact he provided shelter for the Israelites in the wilderness. During this Festival the Jews were commanded to live in “huts” (or tabernacles) as a sign that G_D dwelt among them when they lived in the wilderness. Each year on Tabernacles, devout believers build little shelters or “booths” (sukkot) outside their houses and worship in them. Sukkot teaches us that G_D continually dwells in the midst of his people—even when they are in the “wilderness.” he will never leave us or forsake us.

Relative to the perfected covenant, Sukkot represents the time at which G_D will dwell physically with us in the New Jerusalem when The Earth and Heavens are renewed.

The author would like to conclude this topical discourse on the High Biblical Festivals by pointing out the deeply rooted connection of these Festivals to Yeshua the Messiah is neither coincidental nor accidental. In essence acknowledging the Hebraic context of the Biblical Festivals

is absolutely critical to fully understanding the nature of G_D's plans and the role of Yeshua the Messiah.

Beyond the seven annual Festivals it is noteworthy to point out that G_D's festival cycle is actually part of a generational and never ending life cycle. The author will just mention without covering in detail the following festivals:

The Sabbatical Year (Shmittah) — Leviticus states: But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath unto the Lord; thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of itself of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, and the grapes of thy undressed vine thou shalt not gather; it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land and the sabbath-produce of the land shall be for food for you: for thee, and for thy servant and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant and for the settler by thy side that sojourn with thee; and for thy cattle, and for the beasts that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be for food. (Leviticus 25:4–7)

The Jubilee Year (Yovel) — Leviticus states: And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and there shall be unto thee the days of seven sabbaths of years, even forty and nine years. Then shalt thou make proclamation with the blast of the horn on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make proclamation with the horn throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you; ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of the undressed vines. (Leviticus 25:8–11)

The reader may or may not have been aware of this deep and intrinsic relationship between Yeshua the Messiah and the Hebrew Holy Festivals! As even this cursory review depicts however this relationship is valid and simply undeniable.

The author has concluded the understanding of this connection by John the Apostle is evident by his method of presenting the gospel in a manner which exposes the critical nature of the Biblical Festival season. In the author's opinion it is naïve and incorrect to presume that John's recording of the Hebrew Festivals was done to primarily depict a chronological framework.

Beyond the keeping of the appointed times however there is even more compelling evidence as to why Yeshua held up Torah rather than bring it down. Following is a brief review of key Scriptural passages which provide insight regarding Messiah's stance on Torah.

* * * * *

Key Torah Comments of Yeshua

The Gospel of Matthew states: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17–19)

The Gospel of Luke says, The law and the prophets were until John (The Immerser): since that time the kingdom of G_D is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. (Luke 16:16–17)

The Gospel of Matthew says, Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:12–14)

The Gospel of Matthew says, And, behold, one came and said unto him, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” And he said unto him, “Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, G_D: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:16–17)

When one looks at these Scriptural passages what can be deduced? Does Messiah in any way shape or form indicate that Torah is invalidated? The only objective conclusion is a definitive “No.” Instead of invalidating Torah Yeshua, through his perfect observance and obedience of G_D’s commandments and statutes, provided us the divine example of how Torah really works. How Torah works when it is practiced through faith and spirit and not the conventions of what man’s idea of Torah practice was.

Yeshua best described proper Torah with his sermon on the mount. From Matthew we learn: And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see G_D. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of G_D. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. (Matthew 5:1–11)

What Yeshua the Messiah came to deliver was not just the atonement of sins through faith but the living example of how Torah represents the “the way” or the “narrow path” to G_D. It is clear that keeping the commandments and statutes of G_D is critical to entering his Kingdom. If salvation from G_D was strictly a function of faith, and not coupled with the works of living Torah as defined by Yeshua himself, then one must conclude that the path to G_D would be wide and much of Scripture would be invalidated as would G_D’s plan for mankind.

From a strictly theological perspective it seems apparent that:

- 1) Works alone or observance of regulations cannot save a person for Romans 3:10 declares:
“There is none righteous, no, not one.”
- 2) Only through repentance and faith in Yeshua the Messiah will G_D’s saving grace be bestowed.
- 3) A belief in Yeshua which does not yield obedience to the commandments and statutes of G_D as well as the “good works” of faith is a false faith and puts people on the “broad path.”

As the Apostle Paul made clear in exquisite fashion, the grafting into the root of Messiah is premised upon circumcision of one’s heart. A circumcision wherein Torah is imbued inside a person because of a spiritual re-birth through faith in Yeshua. As Paul correctly states “we do not refute the law we establish the law!” What law? Not legalism but the law of faith and love within Torah as designed by G_D! The law of justice and righteousness relayed to us in Holy Scripture!

Lest the reader infer the wrong idea regarding Judaism it should be noted herein that it would seem Yeshua made no attempt whatsoever to challenge the existence of the Rabbinical Ecclesiastical Society either directly or indirectly. It would seem a safe presumption that Yeshua’s problems were more on the lines of doctrine, culture and practice as opposed to ecclesiastical organization.

Still further in light of the negative slant the Rabbinic Ecclesiastical Society endured within the last few discourses it is only fair to point out that this same Rabbinic Culture was responsible for maintaining and passing down the Holy Hebrew Scriptures. This responsibility was successfully undertaken often under dire conditions and personal risk throughout the ages. Subsequently all believers should acknowledge the phenomenal efforts and immeasurable gifts provided to the entire world by this same Rabbinic Culture. As had previously been pointed out how the Church of Messiah would influence tremendously both Western Civilization and modern history, so should it be noted that the impact of the Hebrew Ecclesia throughout time is no less significant.

Certainly much effort was placed upon this dynamic which existed between Yeshua and the Jewish religious establishment. One must admit however the “shepherding of the lost sheep of Israel” is a crucial element of Yeshua’s ministry. As such this struggle with the Jewish religious establishment was inevitable. It seems that although in some respects Yeshua was indeed rightfully contemptuous of the practices and politics of the Jewish religious establishment, he made all attempts to correct them as opposed to destroy them.

Throughout history this contentious struggle between Yeshua and the Jewish religious establishment has resulted in a misperception that Yeshua rebuked Israel en-masse. As we have seen through this review the rebuking was not a condemnation of Torah or the Hebrew people or even the Hebrew Ecclesiastical Society but rather a rebuking of Rabbinic Legalism which had taken root and the Jewish religious establishment that so preciously held onto their covenant of death as foretold by the prophet Isaiah.

It seems apparent that John’s gospel narrative stands as a testimonial to what really was going on between Yeshua and Israel. Thanks to John we gain insight into this dynamic which just cannot be acquired through any other writing. The reader will see just how important John’s contribution is when we view the first three chapters of the Revelation in detail.

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Admittedly the last topical discourse may have taken a theological turn, but it is Messiah’s Church that deemed John the Apostle to be the early theologian. In this light the author felt compelled to put the Gospel of John into a perspective which would have been in keeping with the Hebraic roots that so exemplified his life and gospel narrative. The author will now examine some other observations pertinent to John in the hopes of gleaning even more contextual insights.

The scenario where Yeshua the Messiah entrusted and commanded John the Apostle to take upon his yoke the care of Yeshua's own earthly mother is a quite fascinating and often overlooked aspect of the relationship between Yeshua and John.

We know Yeshua and of course his mother Mary had other family. Scripture indicates Yeshua had multiple younger brothers and sisters! Why would Yeshua command such an arrangement with John given the circumstances? From a simple "matter of fact" perspective one could argue, by virtue of John being the only apostle to stay with Yeshua during his execution, that he simply happened to be there and Yeshua had no choice but to pass this responsibility on to John. Then again we should discount this because we know the way G_D works is not coincidental.

From a purely relational perspective this arrangement certainly must be viewed as an incredible display of deep trust and confidence in John by Yeshua. Certainly this display of trust and confidence supports the historical view that John was indeed the "disciple whom Yeshua loved." If Yeshua wanted anyone other than John to care for Mary, all he needed to do was direct John accordingly or simply let the Jewish culture kick in wherein the next oldest son of the family would become Mary's primary provider. So we should seriously consider that G_D wanted this arrangement as part of his plan. But what could this have to do with his plan?

In looking at this arrangement it is the author's contention this was done not only for the benefit of Mary but also for the benefit of John. This was a benefit to John not just because of the honor of being designated Mary's son but because of the esteem accompanied with this illustrious relationship. Certainly the community of believers in Messiah would have looked upon this relationship as being quite significant and extraordinary. Certainly this arrangement would have fostered even more so John's position as a leader within the early Church of Messiah, and certainly this arrangement would have given John much opportunity to get to know Yeshua better through the interaction with Yeshua's own earthly Mother.

All of these insights are of course by no means esoteric or tremendously difficult in deducing. On the other hand we should not lose sight that John was also blessed among all apostles; he

outlived them all, and he was the only one not martyred. Now the reader may ask: what could this have to do with Yeshua's mother?

Perhaps it has to do with the blessing associated with keeping of the fifth commandment. Exodus depicts, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy G_D giveth thee" (20:11). This one of the ten primary commandments does indeed carry a blessing with keeping it. John's longevity and the keeping of this commandment should not be viewed as a coincidence. John's longevity should be viewed in the context of a Biblical blessing. It was a blessing bestowed upon John by G_D for keeping this commandment, particularly in light of John keeping this commandment while honoring Mary the mother of Yeshua.

The last issue the author would like to address with regard to John the Apostle deals with fulfillment of a specific prophecy made by Yeshua and mandates a review of a few related Scriptural passages.

The Gospel of John states: Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Yeshua loved following; the same who also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Yeshua; Lord, and what shall this man do? Yeshua saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that John should not die: yet Yeshua said not unto him, he shall not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifies of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. (John 21:20-24)

The Gospel of Matthew states: Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye

know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Matthew 24:29–35)

In looking at these passages we clearly see one context, in Matthew, where Yeshua specifically tells his apostles someone within their generation would be alive to see the end of days. In John's gospel, as the evangelist points out, the implication made by Yeshua indicates that if Yeshua wants John to be alive when he comes back it would not be Peter's business.

It should be realized this prophecy of Yeshua has traditionally been left alone by most apologists because it would seem it did not come true. In looking at this issue from a purely human context we could deduce perhaps one or more of "that generation" had not died and were "taken up." We have no scriptural indication of this but this could be the case. On the other hand we perhaps could look at this prophecy in a different light.

Given the passages above, it would seem apparent there was anticipation regarding the imminent return of Messiah and even more so it would seem there was prevalent thought that John would be "the one" of their generation alive to see the glorious return of Messiah? We could also surmise, as John remained alive while all the other apostles passed on, this anticipation must have grown even more. The net result in John's waning years, in light of this prevalent idea of Messiah's imminent return during John's lifetime, would have put John in the spotlight. Messiah did not disappoint!

It should seem obvious that Yeshua had actually foretold of the pending gift of the Revelation while he was with his disciples and even indicated that John would be the recipient of this gift. The generation did not pass until these things had been fulfilled!

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John the Apostle Deductive Synthesis Conclusion

The role established for John the Apostle is not mere chance but ordained within the plan of G_D. In John we see doctrinal truths standing since the creation of mankind. In John we see the early and definitive theologian of the Church of Messiah. Is it any wonder at all why John the Apostle would be so blessed? Is it any wonder why John the Apostle would be the logical choice of Yeshua to receive the blessed Revelation? Of course not! It is John whose faithful witness to Yeshua provides us the clearest and most concise understanding of Messiah. It is within this context that we understand why John was the caretaker of doctrine and why John was blessed to be the human messenger of the future.

When we view John the Apostle in the context of tradition and culture we see foremost a faithful Hebrew. With John there certainly does not seem to be any disconnects regarding Yeshua the Messiah and Israel. It seems apparent the Hebraic rooting of Yeshua the Messiah is not something to be glossed over as “Old Testament” symbolism. The unique aspects of John’s gospel narrative cry out for understanding of this truth through close inspection. Through John we get to peer deeply into the intricacies of the mission of Yeshua the Messiah. More so than any witness to Yeshua does John set out to provide humanity with the proper context by which we should view the fulfillment of the covenant between G_D and Israel!

By establishing this Hebraic centrality John ensures that future generations would see the eternal truth being Yeshua the Messiah as G_D’s Word. G_D’s Word as given to and handed down by the chosen Hebrew oracles. G_D’s Word as represented in Hebrew Scripture. G_D’s Word as represented in his instructions on holiness and works. G_D’s Word as real life application in Yeshua’s faithful obedience to G_D’s commands and statutes!

Ultimately through insightful review of John the Apostle we see Yeshua the Messiah came not only to provide atonement of sins but to lead people to salvation by upholding the blessed Torah and completing it in a manner which could only be done by G_D himself. But this should

come as no surprise given Yeshua is the Word of G_D and Torah is the Word of G_D thereby making Torah an integral part of Yeshua the Messiah!

If one honestly believes Yeshua came to do away with Torah life then one believes he came to work counter to G_D and himself. This of course would negate Yeshua as Messiah. So it must be logically concluded that Torah lives!

Finally when viewing the relationship between G_D and man, from a John the Apostle Hebraic perspective, it is important to note the covenant which exists always was and always will be everlasting. Believers in the body of Yeshua should view traditional Hebraic Judaism in terms of the “birth right.” This “birth right” has not been sold or been given away willfully. It is a “birth right” which awaits Jews upon accepting the terms that the issuer, G_D, has set forth. Scripture is very clear this “birth right” will never be taken away and ultimately there will be a time when this inheritance will be accepted. In fact this birth right is the same proverbial “birth right” the Gentile has come to share in; all honor and praise to G_D for his endless mercy.

By careful examination of John the Apostle we see the clear emergence of the story within the story. Understanding John is the only way of really understanding the Revelation. As the reader will soon see when we begin the review of the Revelation of Messiah, the only proper context in which to clearly discern the messages to the Churches is in a Hebraic context. The same Hebraic context which is clearly evident throughout the life and work of John the Apostle who showed us the connections to Messiah from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21.

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Seven Churches-Synthesis

Unlike the previous syntheses of Asia Minor and John the Apostle, the review of the seven Church communities will neither be lengthy or complex. In looking at the observations regarding the “Seven Churches” what are the reasonable inferences that can be drawn from the listed observations which would be relevant to the Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah?

We will start with a basic question. If these Churches are no longer viable as we approach the end times then it must be accepted that these Church messages are:

- a) Meant for either another audience; or
- b) These messages have no pertinence with respect to the future Church body or Church communities of Yeshua the Messiah.

The author is careful here to point out that it would make perfect sense for these messages to be applicable for the respective Church communities at the time of the writing as well as for a future Church. Throughout Holy Scripture the use of double or multiple meanings for one prophetic passage is not extraordinary and should even be expected. Consequently if these messages did in fact convey a specific message, applicable to a specific Church community, this fact would in no manner negate the potential of the messages having a meaning for a different future Church.

To really come to a determination if these messages were in fact prophetic for a future Church body of Messiah, which is the primary focus of this topical discourse, we should pay attention to what we do know. It has been established that other Church communities existed within Asia Minor at the time Revelations was authored, Church communities such as Patara, Troas, Antioch, Colossae, Hierapolis, Tralleis and Magnesia. An important point to be made is that the seven cities were not selected simply because they were situated on the circular route described previously because they were not even the only or the most important cities on the route. On this circular postal route the messenger would naturally pass through Hierapolis, Tralleis and Magnesia on the circular journey. Each of these cities were known seats of the Church at the time, yet none of the

three found a place among the representative cities even though both Tralleis and Magnesia were much more prominent than Philadelphia or Thyatira.

It should also be presumed the topical concerns addressed to the Church communities would have in effect been somewhat universal to all of the Church communities given their geographic proximity and semblance of issues. Persecution, false apostles, etc. would have most certainly been concerns for all members of the faith.

Still further it should be viewed that the combination of these individual Church messages into such an apocalyptic end times Revelation would be most peculiar indeed. Although the “Epistle” or “Letter” format had, by the time of the inspirational authoring of Revelations, become the standard mode of instructional discourse within the early Church, the Revelation is first and foremost a “universal” discourse.

Revelations, as already discussed, essentially represents G_D’s summary of his Plan. To believers it is understood that the canonical works are inspired by the Holy Spirit. As such it would have to be concluded that individual Church messages, if not designed to be consistent with the rest of the inspired work, would simply not be included within this last work.

So from what other relevant context can we view these seven Church communities? The first context which we need to look at is the “roadway” context. At the time of this Revelation there were no broadcast or delivery modes that would have resulted in all Churches receiving this message at the same time. Consequently the delivery of the Revelation and individual Church messages contained therein would have been both incremental and chronological.

As past archeological discoveries have proven, the seven Churches would have taken delivery of the Revelation in the same order as they were addressed. At first glance one might just pass this off to the fact that John would have known this postal route would have been followed. To contradict this notion however we should also understand this Revelation from Yeshua would in no way have been subject to editorial license by John, certainly given the fact that we are dealing

with the Word of G_D! We should therefore rule out John as influencing the identification of the Churches or the delivery order of the messages.

Perhaps then it could be explained that Messiah would of course have known about this delivery route? It would be amusingly conjectured that Yeshua would have had knowledge of such matters, but if this is the case then why would Yeshua have not provided a personal message to each and every Church community along the route? Could it be these omitted Churches were not in need of a message from the Master? Or these omitted Church communities were without difficulties of their own? Or these omitted Church communities were unimportant? The author would hope the reader views these questions as intended. These questions are of course leading and only serve to have one desire an answer which makes sense.

The symbolic nature of sending seven messages to specific Churches which would receive the Revelation in a concise order over a segmented period of time is a clear indication of structured purpose. Still further the omission of specific Church communities along this same route indicates that something about these communities is pertinent to the entire Revelations subject matter. This context should resonate with all readers as being in complete unity with our understanding of G_D. Relative to our universe and very existence, structure and order are in fact the fundamental aspects which can be attributed to G_D by humans. Purpose is paramount to our understanding of G_D.

So what then could the purpose of this symbolism mean in relation to Revelations? It is clear the purpose of the messages is definitely prophetic and that the messages depict an incremental and chronological path to be followed by the Church of Messiah. A path which begins with the birth of the Church and culminates with the coming of Yeshua the Messiah!

When looking at the seven Churches again we encounter a number thoroughly associated with our Lord G_D. The significance of “seven” as it pertains to the Biblical festival cycle is self-evident. Within the festival cycle we see “seven” used in the function of “time” or “seasons.” We see an orderly progression with a beginning and an end. We must also not forget the significance of “seven” as it pertains to our own creation. Once again “seven” is used in the context of “time” and “events.” And then again we have the sacred Shabbat on the seventh day; the day on which

G_D rested and the day that serves as the anchor in G_D's cycle of rest and reflection, the day that makes all things complete and signals the end of the weekly cycle.

When we view these "seven" constructs we should not lose sight that the Sabbath construct represents an ascent or aliyah of creation while the collective Festival Cycle represents an ascent or aliyah of restoration/recreation.

Additionally the construct of "seven" and this ascent works within the confines of the Sacrificial System as well ... one just needs to view the Holy Service to notice: The Altar; The Laver; The Showbread; The Menorah; The incense Table; The Ark and of course the LORD's Presence.

So when we look in a Hebraic perspective we consistently see in Holy Scripture the connection between "seven" and "time" and "movement" as well as "events." But we should also discuss the inference of "seven" within the overall context of Torah. Certainly it must be acknowledged that the Festivals, Shabbat and the Holy Service are integral to G_D's Torah. Therefore "seven" and Torah are most assuredly connected.

Recalling the brief discourse on Torah we see where it is more appropriate to view Torah as a directional path or "road" having a starting point, a progression in a specific direction and a final ending point. Furthermore we should not overlook within the context of Torah that the path or road at hand is a spiritual endeavor wherein the individual and communal efforts are centered upon becoming holy as G_D commanded. In essence the Torah itself represents a spiritual path or aliyah!

Ultimately the author sees these not overly complex connections as clear validation that the messages to the seven Churches represent a chronological path to be followed. Furthermore it would seem most likely the prophetic path depicted will be done so within a "spiritual" context given the apparent symbolism just addressed.

We should also not lose sight of the "Asia Minor" contextual issues which were exposed. With Asia Minor being representative of the high level or macro view of G_D's Plan for humanity,

the author would contend that the Seven Church communities, being a sub-set of Asia Minor, represent a micro view of G_D's Plan. Still further since this sub-set is reflective of the Earthly Church of Messiah and not all of humanity, it should be viewed that the revelations detailed in the Seven Church messages will be directly related to the specific history of the Earthly Church of Messiah as well.

Thus far the author has not engaged in any wild or unsupported speculation in pursuing applicable context. The author has not introduced any secret codes or bizarre numerology methods, nor does the author have any detailed knowledge of such alleged Bible decoding systems. The author has made all attempts to confine the respective topical discourses to known historical facts and Holy Scripture. But in the course of basic research, regarding the seven communities, the author did indeed come across some materials which for lack of a better phrase could be dubbed "twilight zone" material.

Although the divulgence of this material is not necessary to promote the position of the "Church Era Messages," it should be noted that the materials uncovered are interesting as well as troubling. While undertaking rudimentary attempts to establish additional inferential context and meaning, these seven communities were looked at from an "acronym" perspective.

ac-ro-nym: A word formed from the initial letters of a name, such as PAC for Political Action Committee, or by combining initial letters or parts of a series of words, such as radar for radio detecting and ranging. (17)

So when looking at the seven Churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea we derive the following acronym: "ESPTSPL". The author performed a simple internet search only on these letters and nothing of value was uncovered. Staying on the acronym review mode the author thought perhaps it would make sense to investigate the acronym formed from the current Turkish communities which have supplanted the traditional Churches of Revelations.

Following is a listing of the modern day Turkish city to the applicable Church of Revelations:

Turkish City	Church
Selcuk	Ephesus
Izmir	Smyrna
Bergama	Pergamon
Akhisar	Thyatira
Sart	Sardis
Alasehir	Philadelphia
Dienzli	Laodicea

The subsequent acronym yields “SIBASAD”. Internet searches were performed in attempt to find basically anything and then review the findings for any pertinence. The search yielded nothing at all. So this is the end of this endeavor correct? Not so fast!

The author decided to approach this short lived exercise from a different perspective. A Hebraic perspective, which as the reader might know, would dictate reading from right to left. In this instance the acronym above inverts to “DASABIS.”

When looking at this string of letters it immediately dawned on the author the construct certainly had an inkling of “Latin” to it. It made sense to view this in a Latin perspective as well in as much that the Roman Catholic Church and “Latin” are indisputably connected and essentially synonymous. Subsequently a quick search was done to find a Latin translation service online. The author found a University of Notre Dame sponsored site ⁽¹⁸⁾ which had a link to another free site ⁽¹⁹⁾ with more diction capacity. Upon entering the “dasabis” string the site provided the following:

“May be 2 words combined (das+abis) If not obvious, probably incorrect.”

The author then placed a space in between “das” and “abis” and the following was returned:

d.as V 1 1 PRES ACTIVE IND 2 S
do, dare, dedi, datus V TRANS [XXXAO]

give; dedicate; sell; pay; grant/bestow/impart/offer/lend; devote;
allow; make; surrender/give over; send to die; ascribe/attribute; give
birth/produce; utter

abi.s V 6 1 PRES ACTIVE IND 2 S

abeo, abire, abivi(ii), abitus V INTRANS [XXXAO]

depart, go away; go off, go forth; pass away, die, disappear; be changed

The author will declare by no means is there a contention that an expertise exists in the linguistic field; the author is no authority in this professional field by any stretch. This fact however should in no way reduce the intrigue prevalent with the result. When we look at this result and first of all find a legitimate translation from Latin instead of unrecognizable garble it must be admitted minimally this is interesting and certainly extremely coincidental.

Upon further review, and especially in light of the subject matter being dealt with herein, it must be further admitted the resultant translation is tremendously astonishing and outside the auspices of mere coincidence in the author's opinion.

In looking at the "das" portion of the translation there should be no doubt that it is indeed consistent and descriptive of the giving to the Church the gift that is "Revelation." In so many ways do these variant definitions fit in with the contextual review that has been conducted thus far. The message is a gift. The Church has been imparted with the wisdom of the ages. The Church of Messiah represents the birth of a new creation. The role of evangelical authority has been surrendered over to the Church of Messiah. The Revelation is itself the greatest of all prophetic utterances. The Church from its very creation is essentially sent forth to run its course and die as the figure head of the Gentile Age.

In looking at the "abis" portion of the translation there can be no doubt, that when viewed in context of the companion "das" element, that there is direct correlation. When the first portion of the translation is viewed as the imparted gifts of G_D, the prophetic messages, the wisdom, the evangelical charter and the spiritual authority of the Church, etc. ... then the "abis" portion can

really only translate logically to mean that these things will progress from the source and change to the point where the Church will ultimately be unrecognizable or just plain die out.

In light of these linguistic coincidences the author can only ask the reader to answer a simple question; at what point does incredible coincidence turn into something which just cannot be explained away as chance?

* * * * *

Seven Communities Deductive Synthesis Conclusion

In concluding this synthesis dealing with the seven Churches addressed in the Revelation of Yeshua, a solid argument, as well as the rare “smoking gun,” has been presented with respect to establishing that these Church messages were definitely intended to be meaningful beyond the immediate days in which the Revelations were delivered.

When we consider the sum total of the circumstantial body of evidence touched upon herein the reader hopefully is left with the following impressions:

1) The inclusion of the messages to the Seven Churches within this universal prophetic Revelation makes the most sense in a Hebraic perspective when these messages are viewed in a prophetic context. Limiting the intent of these messages, as instructions and exhortations relevant only to those specific Churches at the time, is simply not in keeping with the prophetic and apocalyptic nature of the Revelation of Messiah. Furthermore it would seem the selection of these specific seven Churches will be meaningful in some way to the content of the prophetic messages.

2) The addressing of the Seven Churches, when viewed in the context of a delivery route with chronological message receipt, is symbolic of an extant historical path to be followed by the Church of Messiah. An argument indicating the messages are meant for seven diverse Churches

of Messiah at one specific time does not really make sense in light of the review of G_D's Torah. So the clear implication is that the messages are intended for one recognizable Church body over a period of time.

3) The synthesis suggests the nature of the Church messages to be both historically and spiritually related. Historically from an identifiable "progressive era" context and spiritually from a "theological" context!

4) Finally the circumstantial evidence presented indicates that the ultimate fate of the Earthly Gentile Church of Messiah is to disappear, die out or just become ineffective. This last conclusion is by no means contrary to what Holy Scripture predicts about the end of days.

In closing it must be noted that the "Church Era" mode developed herein has been utilized before. It will be asserted however that what is different about this specific work is the method of developing supportive contextual synthesis which has resulted in a completely different perspective and a significantly bolstered argument.

Because of this unique contextual perspective and robust body of evidence the reader can be assured the subsequent interpretive results of the prophetic Church messages will be more insightful and better supported by the developed body of evidence.

* * * * *

Contextual Framework Summary

The search for insights and contextual understanding began by simply asking if there could be significance relative to the land mass of Asia Minor, the addressing of the messages to the Seven Church communities, and the selection of John the Apostle to receive this blessed revelation?

The author will strongly contend, while exploring these three simple questions, that significant and useful insight and context were uncovered which can best be described as being of a “historical,” “cultural” and “theological” nature.

Historical Perspective

When one objectively looks at history from a Biblical perspective it is impossible to not see history as being defined in a “pre-Messiah” and “post-Messiah” construct. Clearly the “pre-Messiah” age can be defined as being “Hebrew” and “the promised land of Israel” centric and recognize Jerusalem as the center of this historical age. Essentially this age is of a national and even ethnic Jewish dynamic. Conversely it is just as clear the “post-Messiah” age can be defined as being not as national but as “Earthly” in perspective and comprising not just Jews but all people groups.

It would seem apparent, after our review of Asia Minor, that we should be viewing the Revelation in a broad historical context in which the Church of Messiah and modern world history are deeply connected. We should view this historical correlation still further in a “Western Civilization” context wherein we can see the centrality of the Church of Yeshua inextricably embedded within “Western Civilization” and recognize modern world history as being predominantly influenced by that “Western Civilization.”

We should also maintain a historical perspective regarding the messages to the Seven Churches. Unlike the broader historical context previously discussed, the seven messages are to be viewed in a “historical era” or “historical path” mode relevant to the Church of Messiah. A

contextual view which implies that each message to a specific Church of Revelation will correspond to an identifiable Church of Messiah historical period over the past 2,000 years!

Finally from a historical perspective it is critical to view the Revelation within a “Scriptural World View” context. This context holds that Holy Scripture is a real and accurate depiction of human history relative to activities by and of G_D’s “chosen people” and subsequent interaction with these “chosen people” by the rest of the World’s population.

Within this “Scriptural World View” context we should also understand that, like “pre-Messiah” history which was of course centric to the Israelites, not all actions and events applicable to the Earthly Church of Messiah are necessarily what we people would generally consider “good” or “favorable.” In many cases the actions of “chosen people” are just plain horrific.

When the prophetic nature of these seven Church messages is realized, the Revelation most certainly takes on a different light. Rather than just being the quintessential guide to the “end days’ events,” Revelations should be considered the quintessential guide to all of modern or post-Messiah human history. A modern history which Revelations depicts through the perspective of Yeshua’s Church on Earth; just as the Hebrew Tanakh depicts pre-Messiah history through the perspective of the Israelites. In simpler terms a historical view which is centric to G_D!

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Cultural Perspective

Not surprisingly the cultural aspects of Revelations mirror that of the world view reality in which we have Hebraic Culture, Gentile Culture and a definitive split between Western and Eastern Cultures. Our review clearly indicates how well Asia Minor perfectly embodies this incredible dynamic and the seemingly incongruent collective nature of them. So what then can we

ultimately determine to be useful context in which to view the Revelation? How do we discern balance in this seemingly unfathomable equation?

From this author's perspective it is imperative to look closely at John the Apostle for this answer. Although we know the Church of Messiah to be fundamentally a Gentile as well as "Western" cultured entity, the very nature of G_D's relationship with man is more appropriately described as being Biblically or Hebraically rooted. This declaration is supported by the fact that the very foundation of the Gentile Church of Messiah rests on Yeshua, the greatest of all Hebrews and Holy Scripture which was given to and handed down by the Hebrews, a.k.a. the oracles of G_D.

In the works and life of John the Apostle we see this Hebraic centrality clearly revealed. The selection of John the Apostle by Yeshua to receive the blessed revelation should in no way be considered unimportant or without meaning.

Since the Hebraic cultural foundation of Christianity is undeniable, we must also keep in mind that we of course have a natural Hebrew and Gentile cultural dynamic which must be viewed as real and meaningful. Regarding the developing Church of Messiah, this dynamic then results in the need to view Holy Scripture and religious practice as Hebraic in nature but recognize that the Church's actual application of same to be greatly influenced by Gentile culture. The importance of this cultural dynamic will become very clear to the reader when we review the Churches of Revelation messages.

Regarding the cultural dynamic existing between "East" and "West" there must be a contextual mind set which recognizes and accepts this continual struggle for supremacy. This continuing cultural struggle, which we know to be historically validated and true even to this very day, was in effect revealed to us in millennia past within this very Book of Revelation. It appears prophetically that G_D has revealed to us the great cultural dynamic that would shape the temporal world until the end of days.

Important to note is even within the Church of Messiah itself this “East” and “West” struggle manifests itself. Ultimately what we learn is that cultural context is important in understanding peoples’ behavior. When applied to history we can use cultural context to identify and explain how things happened as they did. Subsequently, as we will see history unfold through the Revelation it will be important to keep in mind this cultural dynamic.

Ultimately the cultural perspective which must be considered paramount however is the culture of G_D’s own Son, Yeshua of Nazareth, and by proxy the culture of G_D! As we proceed with this work and review of the first three chapters of the Revelation it will be critical to ascertain what G_D is revealing to us about his planned culture for us. We should not lose sight as well, that the Culture of G_D, being expressed in human terms, is fundamentally Hebraic and as such any review of Revelations or Holy Scripture as a unified corpus must account for this cultural view.

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Theological Perspective

Premised upon a correct contention of scriptural unity (where pre-Messiah and post-Messiah Testaments constitute one Scriptural Continuum), theological exegesis logically must be viewed in a Hebraic context. It is simply counter-productive to apply non-Hebraic context to something which is in all ways Hebraic. This is a critical contextual aspect when attempting to view “theological doctrinal concepts” in a fair and equitable manner.

One may argue this contention is by its very nature “biased” and this author would agree; it is a biased approach. The reader should understand however that because there is an inherent bias one should not conclude this is necessarily unfair or incorrect. The fact remains the Gentile peoples in G_D’s plan are “second act” players who are in effect being adopted into the chosen people’s root which is Messiah himself. Subsequently the very nature and root of the Gentile relationship with G_D is through Israel. It then makes perfect logic to view this as reality and deal with it.

On the other hand it must be realized the Church of Messiah would in fact be tremendously influenced by the various Gentile cultural environments. This “Gentile Cultural” context is another issue which is a key in discerning the meaning within Revelations. Subsequently we will see important theological variances which are contextually developed between these two thought spectrums.

Another major theological aspect to consider is the idea of a Covenantal Continuum. G_D does not have multiple covenants with multiple chosen peoples. Nor did G_D do away with the everlasting elements of the Hebrew covenant; his promises, commands and statutes. The renewed covenant is a perfected agreement in which all peoples can be brought to G_D through Yeshua and Israel. G_D’s covenant with mankind is for all people premised upon belief in Yeshua with all the details of the covenant being held over from the original and everlasting covenant as defined in G_D’s Sacred Torah.

Of critical importance to note is the Book of Revelation represents the last Scriptural Word from G_D to mankind. As such, in light of the developing stage of the Church of Yeshua the Messiah, a context of “Doctrinal Instruction” should be adopted.

We know that G_D, from a human perspective, is best defined as love, order and structure. As such we must view Revelations keeping in mind that G_D would not complete Holy Scriptures without providing us a conclusive summary. Obviously all people who have ever read the Bible can grasp the apocalyptic end time's conclusive nature of Revelations. This is a given! What is being stressed herein is that G_D in his infinite mercy has also provided us with a “meaning of life” conclusion as well.

Thus contained within this blessed Revelation is a detailed doctrinal guide for the Church leadership and individual believers. Even with a very limited knowledge of G_D the author asks: “How could it not be so?”

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Part 1 - Conclusion

If the reader has approached this work thus far with an open mind there should be no question the background information is basic and consists of non-leading materials. There should be no question the ensuing observations are fairly simplistic as well and not worthy of serious argument. Furthermore there should be no question the synthesis was performed in a manner which was consistent with the body of background information and general observations.

Admittedly the developing syntheses, unlike the basic observations presented, are of course premised upon the belief that G_D does not work in coincidental fashion. Consequently we should look to glean valuable insights and context associated with the land mass of Asia Minor, the Seven Church communities and John the Apostle, inspired human author of the last Scriptural Word from G_D.

Ultimately it is each reader who determines if the author has put forth a workable contextual framework. In light of 2,000 years of modern history is it a fair assessment to declare that the Earthly Church of Yeshua has been the singular most influential component of modern history? Is it a fair assessment to declare that human society can be broad brushed as representing a cultural struggle between East and West? Is it a fair assessment to declare that theologically the Church of Yeshua, originally a Hebraically rooted institution, has undergone a dramatic change due to the influence of a predominantly Gentile world?

The author knows modern history mandates an affirmative response to these questions but also points out amazingly this is just what Revelations predicts. Predictions made well before the occurrence of events and the historical record! Coincidence ... or prophecy provided by G_D?

At some point logical reasoning must prevail. At what point does a person look at the Hebrew Scripture and simply say “enough already?” At what point does the endless stream of coincidence

become too much to ignore? At what point in time does it become apparent the Bible represents the perfect and truthful Word of G_D and all knowledge pertaining to human existence and meaning is contained therein?

Before answering this last question each reader should first determine if he or she actually knows and understands both so called Biblical Testaments, or as the author prefers, the unified Hebrew Scripture. This author knows many people of Christian persuasion who would answer “Yes” but turn around a few minutes later and argue that the story of creation told in Genesis is just a “myth” used to explain the beginnings of all things Earthly. Or in similar fashion that the “Old Testament” has been done away with!

Conversely there are numerous Jewish acquaintances who will not even address the issue of Yeshua the Messiah within the framework of today’s Orthodox Judaism because it would be considered heretical.

The point to be made is that accepting both Scriptural Testaments as the true and valid Word of G_D means one must accept connectivity of the two Testaments as well. This means that obvious implications prevalent in the auspices of the pre-Messiah Testament must be recognized as valid and considered when addressing post-Messiah Testament materials.

Far too often we have believers in various Church communities who realize when investigating and immersing oneself in Holy Scripture that in many instances there seems to be doctrinal components of their “faith” which just do not jive with the complete corpus of G_D's Word. Like celebrating The Lord’s Day on Sunday rather than the scripturally ordained Shabbat for instance! This of course can lead to a crisis within one’s psyche. A crisis that has significant implications in one’s world view and one’s relationship with G_D!

The only way to deal with one’s faith is to deal with it honestly and in a reasonable manner. If one’s position is that understanding Scripture is not a relevant or necessary endeavor, the author would advise that this is a perilous position to take. People have been gifted by G_D with a complete historical, cultural and theological guide to find our way home to him.

Within Revelations G_D has provided us the final chapter and summary of this complete epic. Thus far within this work we have explored thoughts and ideas to help us approach the Revelation in the right mindset using the correct context. Let us now proceed to the first three chapters of this awesome Revelation and use this developed context to more accurately discern and understand the final Words of G_D to mankind!

End Part 1

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Part 2 -The Salutatory Address

The adopted approach in dealing with these first three chapters of the Revelation will segment these passages into three distinct components. The first component consists of Chapter 1 verses 1 through 8 and will be referred to as the “Salutatory Address.” The second component consisting of Chapter 1 verses 9 through 20 will be referred to as the “Vision.” The third component consists of Chapters 2 and 3 and will be referred to herein as the “The Church Messages.” Not only does this segmentation seem to make literary sense, but individual components merit detailed review because of the rich eschatological, theological and historical nature of the content within these components.

As indicated, the overwhelming amount of previous reviews of the Revelation of Messiah focus on the apocalyptic events of the end days. Though understandable this typically results in the absence of the detailed theological exegesis associated with the content contained within the first three chapters. In our haste to get to the bottom line we overlook the path which was taken and fail to benefit from the lessons learned along the way. More important than understanding the end time events or the destiny of the Earthly Church of Messiah, is to understand the deal between G_D and people. What is most important is getting right with G_D before the end of days so we do not have to worry about such matters.

The reader will recall numerous contextual vantage points were developed previously within this work to facilitate proper interpretation. The primary contextual keys to remember throughout these discourses regarding the first three chapters of Revelations will be:

- 1) Reviewing the Scriptural passages ... from a “Hebraic” context
- 2) Reviewing the Scriptural passages ... in a “Scriptural Continuum” context
- 3) Reviewing the Scriptural passages ... in a “Covenantal Continuum” context
- 4) Reviewing the Scriptural passages ... in a “Church of Messiah” historical era context
- 5) Reviewing the Scriptural passages ... in a “Doctrinal Seeding” context.

Ultimately the Revelation is structured in a unique manner which, from a theological perspective, an individual cannot help but see the passages as being extremely leading and crying out for review and interpretation. As will be seen these leading passages are not a result of prophetic ambiguity or symbolic utterances but represent a mandate from G_D to pursue the leads provided within Scripture until such time there are no more answers to be ascertained.

As the reader will see upon detailed review these scriptural passages can be viewed as being puzzle like. Typically straightforward literary strings are utilized to describe a specific fact, description or scenario ... however the detailed explanations as to what these passages really mean are not provided. With the assistance of the developed contextual framework however the reader will soon see these passages translated in meaningful fashion.

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The Salutatory Address

(1) The Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah, which G_D gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: (2) Who bare record of the word of G_D, and of the testimony of Yeshua the Messiah, and of all things that he saw. (3) Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (4) John to the seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; (5) And from Yeshua the Messiah, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, (6) And hath made us kings and priests unto G_D and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (7) Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even

so, Amen. (8) I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. (Revelation 1:1–8)

The Salutatory Address Commentary

When viewing the salutatory address with a mindset that the content is by nature designed to be leading, it becomes apparent that certain thematic propositions readily surface. For instance, in verses one and two there is an inter-relational dynamic between G_D and Yeshua. In verse four we see distinct greetings from G_D as well as from the “Seven Spirits” before his throne. In verse six we see the work of Messiah making us kings and priests unto G_D and his Father. Finally in verse eight we see once again the declared eternal omnipotence of G_D.

Perhaps these passages may not resonate within the reader but it would seem clear that within this opening salutation is the most complete framework anywhere in Holy Scripture for mankind to appropriately explore the mystery of the eternal G_D. If one really looks at these passages in a “doctrinal context” how could we not have many questions? What is the relationship between Father, Son and Spirit? Subsequently the author will dub this collective content as the “Nature of G_D” theme.

There are other “themes” which surface within this salutatory address as well and merit attention. When viewing collectively verses two, five, six and seven we see clear indications that the content deals specifically with Yeshua as Messiah. Subsequently the author will dub this collective content as the “Yeshua the Messiah” theme.

Additionally we can see in verses three and seven both prophetic and eschatological content. Subsequently the author will dub this collective content as the “Future Times” theme.

The great question is why would the eternal G_D want these scriptural leads pursued? In looking at the nature of the themes one might think these classifications to be of a rudimentary or basic nature and to not even be of any significance. These seemingly basic aspects of modern

believers' faith however are still even to this day a major point of contention for scores of Christians and other belief systems. The author would also contend this concluding chapter of the great literary epic, that is Hebrew Scripture, would most certainly contain a summary review of primary theological truths and precepts revealed to humanity.

So when considering this doctrinal foundation from an infantile Church perspective one initially thinks that this should have been easy enough; just pull out the Bible and go to work, right? Wrong! 1,900 years ago there were not convenient public libraries, there were not printing presses, there were not Barnes & Noble book stores, there were not "Bibles" as we understand, and a vast majority of the population would have been marginally literate—including a significant portion of believers! In fact the vast majority of Gentiles being witnessed to would not even have had a basic understanding of the Hebrew Religion at all.

Still further at the end of the first century Ce, with the exception of the Hebrew Religion - Judaism, there was no singular accepted "doctrine" from which believers could determine correct from incorrect beliefs. Although the apostolic fathers would have served as the pillars of faith one must not lose sight that these brave souls were under extreme duress to:

- 1) Get the gospel message of salvation out to all peoples,
- 2) Wrestle with issues relating to witnessing to both Jews as well as Gentiles,
- 3) Stay alive while suffering persecution from both Jews and the empire's authorities,
- 4) Establish and maintain control over a quickly developing and expanding ecclesia, and of course
- 5) Deal with ongoing issues related to false teachings and beliefs.

Rarely do modern believers ponder the enormous burden shouldered by the earliest elders and the continually developing ecclesia. They had to deal with the reality that the "Gospel of Yeshua" movement literally exploded across the civilized world of the day.

The author is not implying that the spread of the gospel message was done haphazardly or without conscientious efforts, but it must be understood from an ecclesiastical and doctrinal perspective that the time period must have been incredibly challenging and quite disconcerting.

There were however no technological supports available to early Church fathers from a travel and communications perspective. The Apostles of Yeshua could not broadcast an email, make a phone call or go on television to get their messages across to the population. The point is that while the Church of Messiah was essentially in its infantile stages, and spreading quickly far and wide, there were really minimal opportunities to assimilate new members to the faith in a manner whereby they could be provided a solid religious foundation. Of course there would have been some of the Epistles and even the Gospel narratives available but what about all the material on which these writings were resting? In essence there weren't any Christian manuals or robust doctrinal exegetical works in the early stages of the developing Church of Messiah and there would not be for quite some time.

If the reader thinks the author might be taking liberties and making broad and sweeping assumptions, without support, to make a case of “delayed doctrinal development,” please consider the following information pertinent to the early Church of Messiah. Information relevant to:

- Persecutions suffered;
- Heresies battled;
- The Church's relationship with the Jews;
- Early Church Synods

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Early Persecutions

- c. 81–96 Ce, Persecution of Christians in Rome under Domitian took place.

- c.107–117 Ce, Martyrdom of Ignatius of Antioch, Church leader and bishop. He was a disciple of John the Apostle, along with Polycarp; Ignatius was martyred in Rome under Emperor Trajan's rule.
- c. 111 Ce, Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, wrote in a letter that to his surprise, the Christians were not guilty of any of the vices they were rumored to engage in while continuing to execute Christians who would not apostatize.
- c. 117 Ce, Persecution of Christians under Hadrian.
- c. 156 Ce, Martyrdom of Polycarp, disciple of John the Apostle.
- c. 161–180 Ce, Persecution under Marcus Aurelius.
- c. 177 Ce, Athenagoras wrote "Embassy for the Christians" a work addressed to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus that showed the reasonableness of the Christian faith and the absurdity of the charges made against Christians.
- c. 202–210 Ce, Emperor Septimius Severus severely persecuted Christians with the aim of eliminating the Church of Messiah while establishing one common religion in the Empire (Paganism).
- c. 222 Ce, Alexander Severus became emperor. He lifted some harsh laws against the Christians, and essentially gave them the right to exist as a religion.
- c. 235 Ce, the Emperor Maximian launched persecution against the heads of the Church. Numerous Church leaders perished in this time period.
- c. 250–251 Ce, The Decian Persecution. The Emperor Decius required all citizens of the Empire to perform acts of worship to the gods of the State. People suspected of Christianity are brought before a commission and required to sacrifice. Refusal meant a long prison

stay and subjection to torture so that the accused would apostatize. Failing that, they are put to death.

- c. 257–259 Ce, The Emperor Valerian launched a persecution against Christians. The clergy was summoned to sacrifice to the pagan gods. If they refused, the Church property they legally held in the Church's name was to be confiscated and they were to be exiled (a year later, the penalty would be immediate execution). All faithful Christians who met in religious assemblies were punishable by death.
- c. 259 Ce, Peace of Gallienus. Emperor Gallienus succeeded to the throne, ended much persecution of Christians and legally recognized their existence. Church property was restored. Churches were again built. Christianity still remained a target for hostility however and was viewed as a threat to the established pagan religion.
- c. 270–275 Ce, Emperor Aurelian ruled that the bishop of a city was whomever the bishops of Italy and Rome acknowledged as such. This way the secular arm made it possible for Rome to effectively depose bishops.
- c. 302 Ce, Growing intolerance of Christians led to the army and the imperial service being closed to professed Christians.
- c. 303 Ce, “The Great Persecution” of Christians began under Diocletian through a series of devastating edicts. All people were to worship pagan state gods. Churches were to be destroyed; Christian books were to be burned. The first act of the persecution was to burn down the cathedral at Nicomedia.
- c. 304 Ce, Christians faithful to their religion were now subject to the death penalty. The government committed massacres to terrify the faithful.
- c. 310 Ce, Sapor II became king of the Persian Empire. Until the third century, the Church grew in Persia without persecution. However, with the accession of the Sassanid Dynasty

(227 Ce) the Church became suspect and was eventually persecuted. Under Sapor II, Christians were subject to a persecution worse than any undertaken by the Roman Emperors. Christianity was considered the religion of the Roman Empire, with whom the Persians were constantly at war.

- c. 313 Ce, Edict of Milan. Toleration of Christians in the Western Roman Empire. All people, not only Christians, had freedom of religion so long as they rendered honour to “the divinity.” Emperor Constantine returned Church property. In the Eastern Empire, Maximinus continued to persecute Christians until he granted them toleration in a last-ditch effort to gain their favor and keep alive his struggle against his enemy Licinius
- c. 313 Ce, The Lateran palace made its first appearance in Catholic history as it was the scene of an appeal of the Donatists in the matter of Cecillian’s election as Bishop of Carthage. Emperor Constantine chose the bishops to sit on the tribunal, but the Vicar of Rome presided over it. It ruled in favor of Cecillian.
- c. 323 Ce, Licinius, Emperor of the East, launched a persecution against Christians.
- c. 323 Ce, Constantine and Licinius battled at Chrysopolis. Licinius died six months later. Constantine had no rival and was the sole ruler of the Empire. Constantine preserved freedom of religion, but his attitude towards paganism became contemptuous. Paganism and Christianity enjoyed equal status before the law.

As the reader can see from this listing of primary persecutions, and in some cases intervention to stop or relax persecutions of the early Church, the environment was often not conducive to survival, let alone development of a governing doctrinal base. But the reader may ask: why is this doctrinal base the author keeps harping on so important? This issue will become very clear as we proceed with the review.

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Early Heresies

Within the early Church of Messiah there were numerous and often very dangerous beliefs which emerged. Often these diverse beliefs split the Church not only along doctrinal but cultural and geopolitical lines as well. Following is a brief summary of just the “major” doctrinal beliefs eventually deemed “heretical” by the Church.

- Antinomianism: or lawlessness, is the idea that members of a particular religious group are under no obligation to obey the laws of ethics or morality as presented by religious authorities.
- Apollinarism or Apollinarianism: was a view that Yeshua had a human body but a divine mind.
- Arianism: a Christological view that G_D the Father and the Son were not co-eternal. The doctrine held that the pre-incarnate Yeshua was a divine being but nonetheless created by, and consequently then inferior to, the Father at some point before which the Son did not exist.
- Docetism: is the belief that Yeshua did not have a physical body; rather, that his body was an illusion, as was his execution on the stake.
- Gnosticism: is a historical term for various mystical initiatory religions, cults and knowledge schools which were most active in the first few centuries Ce around the Mediterranean and extending into central Asia. These systems typically recommend the pursuit of special knowledge (gnosis) as the central goal of life. They also commonly depict creation as a battle between competing forces of light and dark and believe in a marked division between the material realm, which is typically depicted as under the governance of evil forces, and the higher spiritual realm from which it is divided. It should be further noted that Gnosticism maintains its roots in Oriental/Chaldean/Egyptian mysticism.

- **Marcionism:** is the dualist belief system that originated in the teachings of Marcion of Sinope at Rome around the year 144 Ce. Marcionism reflects a different understanding of the roots of Christian belief than that commonly held today. To the early Church, the source of the most persistent persecution of Christians was from Judaism. An ordained bishop of Sinope, Asia Minor, Marcion declared that Christianity was distinct from and in opposition to Judaism. This was nothing new to the Church of his contemporaries. Indeed, a great number of early Church fathers attacked Judaism; for example, John Chrysostom believed that Jews “worship the devil.” Marcion went much further. First, he rejected the whole Bible other than the Gospel of Luke. Second, he adopted a belief in two gods. One was good; the other was the Jewish god who was evil, but somehow created the universe.
- **Modalism:** considers G_D to be one person appearing and working in the different “modes” of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- **Monophysitism:** (from the Greek monos meaning “one, alone” and physis meaning “nature”) is the Christological position that Messiah has only one nature, as opposed to the Chalcedonian Council position which holds that Yeshua has two natures, one divine and one human.
- **Montanism:** was an early Christian sectarian movement of the mid-second century Ce, named after its founder Montanus. The most widely known Montanist was undoubtedly Tertullian, who was called the “Father of the Latin Church” before his defection to Montanism. Shortly after Montanus’ conversion to Christianity, he began traveling among the rural settlements of Asia Minor, preaching and testifying. Montanus was accompanied by two women, Prisca, sometimes called Priscilla, and Maximilla, who also purported to be the embodiments of the Holy Spirit that moved and inspired them. He claimed to have received a series of direct revelations from the Holy Spirit and to be the paraclete of the Gospel of John 14:16. As they went, “the Three” as they were called, spoke in ecstatic visions and urged their followers to fast and pray, so that they might share these personal revelations. His preaching spread from his native Phrygia, where he proclaimed the village

of Pepuza as the site of the New Jerusalem, across the contemporary Christian world, to Africa and Gaul.

- Nestorianism: is the Christian doctrine that Yeshua existed as two persons, the man Yeshua and the divine Son of G_D, rather than as a unified person. This doctrine is identified with Nestorius (c.386–c.451), Patriarch of Constantinople. This view of Yeshua was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431 Ce, and the conflict over this view led to the Nestorian schism, separating the Assyrian Church of the East from the Byzantine Church.
- The Ophites: is more or less a broad term for numerous gnostic sects in Syria and Egypt about 100 Ce. The common trait was that these sects would give great importance to the serpent of the Biblical tale of Adam and Eve, connecting the Tree of Knowledge (of good and evil) to gnosis. In contrast to Christian interpretations of the Serpent as Satan, Ophites viewed the serpent as the hero and regarded the figure that the Bible identifies as G_D as being the evil lesser god.
- Psilanthropism: or Socinianism, is a Christological view that denies the divine nature of Yeshua. The presumed etymology of “psilanthropism” stems from the Greek psilo (merely, only) and anthropos (man, human being). Psilanthropism was rejected by the ecumenical councils [Heresies Source Material]⁽²⁰⁾

As can be seen unfortunately there was no shortage of variant doctrines developed after the Kingdom of G_D began being preached to the masses. This abbreviated summary of divergent doctrines, coupled with the review of the persecutions suffered, provides the reader with a better idea as to what was going on within the early Church. It was the development and spread of a number of these heretical doctrines which ultimately led the Church hierarchy to finally energize and establish an official doctrinal base in response to these numerous emerging heresies.

In spite of many diverse doctrinal contentions being put forth within the early Church however “doctrinal order” would not come officially until a long time after the gift of the Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah. Although it should be presumed the early Church had some means of

establishing control and communications between various believing communities, it should be noted that records of such “centralized” control are scant. Furthermore, although some early post apostolic Church writings do exist which support some doctrinal development and indicate certain emerging practices and traditions, these writings are also short in number and certainly do not convey any true organizational unity or standardized practices throughout the entire Church body.

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Early Jewish Relationship

At this point in time the reader may be accepting of the notion that the development of the official doctrinal base by the early Church was significantly delayed. It would seem apparent this was the case! The reader may also add: "so what?" Truths do not change, and we know the Bible had been intact for thousands of years. What is the problem if the doctrinal development in earnest was delayed for such a long time?

The reader will recall much effort was spent herein developing certain contextual points. If the reader is satisfied that Christianity is in fact “Hebraically rooted” then it would make sense if the early Church’s doctrinal development efforts would have been undertaken with this in mind. At this point the reader may be thinking that modern Christian doctrine is reflective of both the Old Testament and of Yeshua’s role as The Messiah of Israel. This then of course must mean the early Church did account for this “Hebraic rooting!” So what is the author driving at?

Although we have explored the dynamic of the early Church environment in terms of persecutions and variant emergent heresies, we really have not yet explored the last major aspect of the early Church cultural dynamic. This aspect being the relationship between the Jews and the early Church Gentiles! Since we are in effect discussing the development of doctrinal exegesis in terms of Hebraic rooting we should look to see if this relationship might in some way have affected the early Church in some manner.

What do we know about this Jewish and early Church relationship? We know the early Church had a heavy Jewish contingent and was of course “Jewish” centric through the Apostolic Age. We also know the relationship between the greater community of Jews, which did not accept Yeshua as Messiah, and the early Church was not a good relationship. In fact there is solid supporting evidence to indicate the early believers were persecuted, with indirect and often direct support, by the Jewish communities.

Ultimately however we know that sometime between the end of the Apostolic Age (death of John the Apostle) and the time frame of Marcion (see previous heresy—Marcionism) circa 145 CE that there was already a belief that the new Church was absolutely distinct from and separate from Judaism or from a broader extent the Hebrew Religion. Prior to Marcion there is evidence from other early writings within the Church exhorting congregations to break away from Jewish fables and religious practices! Marcion was in no way alone in the anti-Jewish mind set. But it should be made clear there were different early Church camps that were opposed to elements of Judaism for very distinct reasons.

It should be understood within the early Church there would understandably not have been tolerance for anyone preaching any brand of Judaism which did not include the conviction that Yeshua was The Messiah and even more so the Son of G_D! So we know on the grounds of refuting Yeshua as Messiah alone there could be no mingling of the two groups of believers.

Another significant point of contention within the Judeo-Christian relationship that is often overlooked is the aspect of Jewish Mysticism. This is a topic worthy of its own distinct work but at the same time regarding the present discussion it cannot be totally ignored. This Jewish Mysticism, which has nothing to do with proper Hebraic Religious practices, is a movement of “enlightenment” and “inner spiritual” development which is rooted in Oriental/Chaldean Mysticism. Today most readers may recognize this Jewish Mysticism as Kabbalah! Around the time of Yeshua this Jewish Mysticism was undergoing another transformation via the influx of Greek philosophy. Within the Jewish culture the practitioners would have been elitist and conducted their practices in a secretive manner for they would have been “initiated.”

Why this is mentioned here is because a major by-product of this false religion was and still is Gnostic doctrine. The author would contend that more than a little of the Gnostic heresies and onslaught encountered by the early Church of Messiah came as a direct result of Jewish Mystical influences. Historical records indicate more than a few early Church fathers were aware of these dangerous influences and vigorously attempted to stave off these negative forces. This “anti-Jewish” or more appropriately “anti-Jewish Mysticism” perspective would have served to promote a separation between the early Church and their Hebrew roots. More on this issue will be exposed later in this work.

Returning focus back to Marcion; what we know of him comes mostly through his detractors. The first mention of Marcion was in Justin Martyr’s *Apologia*, written mid-second century, which finds Marcion yet alive and his followers dispersed among many nations.

Marcion was the wealthy son of the bishop of Sinope. He is described as a ship owner, by Rhodon and Tertullian, who wrote about a generation after Marcion’s death. The hostile confrontation of Marcion described in *Adversus haereses* of Polycarp’s pupil Irenaeus was expanded in a more detailed and more furious polemic written by Tertullian, “*Adversus Marcionem*.” Marcion had found his way to Rome about 142 Ce. In the next few years after his arrival in Rome, Marcion refined his theological system and attracted a large following. When conflicts with the bishops of Rome arose, Marcion organized his followers into a separate community. He was excommunicated by the See of Rome around Ce 144, which returned his previous donation of 200,000 sesterces, a very large sum of money.

Marcion apparently then used Rome as a base of operations, devoting his considerable wealth to the propagation of his teachings and the establishment of communities throughout the Roman Empire, making converts of every age, rank and background. He created a strong ecclesiastical organization, parallel to that of the Church of Rome, with himself as bishop. Tertullian and Irenaeus report Marcion attempted to use his money to influence the Church to adopt his teaching, which they rejected. He also came face to face at Rome with Polycarp, who claimed to have known John the Apostle personally—Polycarp called Marcion “the first born of Satan.” his numerous critics included the aforementioned, along with Ephraim of Syria, Dionysius of Corinth,

Theophilus of Antioch, Philip of Gortyna, Hippolytus and Rhodo in Rome, Bardesanes at Edessa, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. Such a battery of opponents suggests a very real and widespread teaching running counter to what would later be called Catholic.

So what did Marcion spew forth that upset so many? Marcion declared Christianity was distinct from and in opposition to Judaism. This was nothing new to the Church of his contemporaries. Indeed, a great number of early Church fathers attacked Judaism; for example, John Chrysostom (347–407 Ce) believed that Jews “worship the devil.” Marcion before Chrysostom went much further. First, he rejected all of Scripture other than the Gospel of Luke. Second, he adopted a belief in two gods. One was good; the other was the Jewish god who was evil, but somehow created the universe. [Marcion Source Material] (21)

What we see from this Marcion controversy is that he was not alone in anti-Judaic thought. The group of Marcion’s detractors apparently put to rest this heretical doctrine but still it must be recognized, given the scope of these detractors, that this doctrine was indeed widespread and in many cases acceptable throughout the Empire.

We must also consider, in light of the widespread acceptance of the Marcion doctrine, the theological propensity of many early Church communities’ leadership. The author would contend that in spite of best efforts there must have been the appointment of numerous Church leaders who were in effect not scripturally grounded. How could it be otherwise in light of the widespread acceptance of Marcion’s doctrine as well as the emergence of numerous other divergent beliefs?

So what can we say about this? Were the early Church fathers of the understanding their faith was rooted in the Hebrew Religion? Apparently some were, and apparently some were not! On the other hand we would have to dig a bit deeper to see what this actually translated to in terms of practice and core beliefs.

* * * * *

Early Church Synods

Apparently in the mid-second century there arose a problem in the early Church regarding the celebration of the Christian Passover/Easter. Within the Church it was admitted by both sides of the debate that the Lord's Supper was the practice of the disciples and the tradition passed down. The Last Supper was naturally believed by most to be a Passover Seder. Apparently the Western Churches however had developed a tradition of celebrating the feast of Easter after the first full moon after the spring equinox and not by setting the Easter Feast according to alignment with the Hebrew "Passover" date. Conversely there were numerous Churches that continued the tradition of celebrating the feast in line with the Jewish Passover. These communities became known as the Quartodecimans and tended to be in the Empire's Eastern sector.

The Nisan 14 practice, which was strong among the earliest Church communities located in Asia Minor, was becoming less common throughout the Church as it grew and took on a more Gentile flavor. On the side of the Quartodecimans the leading Church elder was Polycarp of Smyrna, who being a direct disciple of John the Apostle held fast to the keeping of this festival in line with the Hebrew Passover as did the apostles. Polycarp went to Rome in circa 155 Ce to present his case with bishop Anicetus of Rome, but the two could not agree and they parted in peace per historical records. The issue officially remained on the back burner until the Synod of Ephesus. Our best historical evidence comes from this first recorded Episcopal synod held in 190 Ce. The purpose of this synod was to have the bishops of Proconsular Asia submit to the Roman practice of celebrating the feast of Easter after the first full moon after the spring equinox and not by setting the Easter Feast according to alignment with the Hebrew "Passover" date. Those who continued to keep Easter with the Jews after the synod, the so called Quartodecimans (14 Nisan), were excluded/ excommunicated from the Church.

There is no historical doubt a significant component of the Church of Messiah as late as 190 Ce was celebrating the Hebrew Passover and as such deductively Messiah's Resurrection three days hence. The record is clear that many as well kept the Festivals of Unleavened Bread and First Fruits. Apparently these practices which were Hebraically rooted did not sit well with the Western

segment of the Church, primarily the “Sees/Regions” of Rome and Alexandria, which did not like the idea that the Feast date of Easter could fall outside of a Sunday! The author would further make an educated presumption that this issue was probably indicative of an even larger issue which, as the reader can surmise, had to deal with Hebraic rooted practices in general.

In defending the position of keeping Passover Eusebius the historian records of Polycrates: “We observe the exact day; neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord’s coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep in Hierapolis; and his two aged virgin daughters, and another daughter, who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus; and, moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and, being a priest, wore the sacerdotal plate. He fell asleep at Ephesus. And Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr; and Thraseas, bishop and martyr from Eumenia, who fell asleep in Smyrna. . . . All these observed the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, do according to the tradition of my relatives, some of whom I have closely followed. For seven of my relatives were bishops; and I am the eighth. And my relatives always observed the day when the people put away the leaven. I, therefore, brethren, who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord, and have met with the brethren throughout the world, and have gone through every Holy Scripture, am not affrighted by terrifying words. For those greater than I have said ‘We ought to obey G_D rather than man.’” (22)

The reader should begin to get the message pretty clearly by now. It would seem that shortly after the Apostolic Age (the death of John the Apostle) and the emergence of the Western element of the Church, in particular the emergence of the Roman See, coupled with the Church becoming quickly Gentile in nature, that there was a genuine movement dating back to Marcion to distance the young Church of Messiah from the vestiges of Judaism all together.

The next really clear record we see on this issue comes to us by way of the first ecumenical council held in Nicaea in 325 Ce. At which time the primary topics of note were: Arianism, again the Celebration of Passover, now called Easter, Miletian Schism, Validity of baptism by heretics,

and lapsed Christians. Additionally at this council was established the original Nicene Creed or Trinitarian doctrine! Finally, the council promulgated twenty new Church laws, called canons, (though the exact number is subject to debate), representing unchanging rules of discipline. The twenty are listed as follows:

1. Prohibition of self-castration
2. Establishment of a minimum term for catechism
3. Prohibition of the presence in the house of a cleric of a younger woman who might bring him under suspicion
4. Ordination of a bishop in the presence of at least three provincial bishops and confirmation by the metropolitan
5. Provision for two provincial synods to be held annually
6. Exceptional authority acknowledged for the bishops of Alexandria and Rome, for their respective regions
7. Recognition of the honorary rights of the see of Jerusalem
8. Provision for agreement with the Novatians
- 9–14. Provisions for mild procedure against the lapsed during the persecution under Licinius
- 15–16. Prohibitions of the removal of priests
17. Prohibition of usury among the clergy
18. Precedence of bishops and presbyters before deacons in receiving Holy Communion, the Eucharist
19. Declaration of the invalidity of baptism by heretics
20. Prohibition of kneeling during the liturgy, on Sundays and in the fifty days of Eastertide [“the pentecost”]. Standing was the normative posture for prayer at this time, as it still is among the Eastern Orthodox. (In time, Western Christianity adopted the term Pentecost to refer to the last Sunday of Eastertide, the fiftieth day.)

Regarding the Passover/Easter decision a Sunday date was selected, instead of Nisan 14 which can fall on any day of the week. Eusebius’ Life of Constantine, Book 3 chapter 18 records Constantine the Great as writing: “It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands

with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul. . . . Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way”.

Theodoret’s Ecclesiastical History 1.9 records The Epistle of the Emperor Constantine, concerning the matters transacted at the Council, addressed to those Bishops who were not present: “It was, in the first place, declared improper to follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration of this holy festival, because, their hands having been stained with crime, the minds of these wretched men are necessarily blinded. . . . Let us, then, have nothing in common with the Jews, who are our adversaries. . . . Avoiding all contact with that evil way. . . . Who, after having compassed the death of the Lord, being out of their minds, are guided not by sound reason, but by an unrestrained passion, wherever their innate madness carries them. . . . A people so utterly depraved. . . . Therefore, this irregularity must be corrected, in order that we may no more have any thing in common with those parricides and the murderers of our Lord. . . . No single point in common with the perjury of the Jews. (23)

On July 25, 325 Ce, in conclusion, the fathers of the council celebrated the emperor’s twentieth anniversary. In his valedictory address, Constantine again informed his hearers how averse he was to dogmatic controversy; he wanted the Church to live in harmony and peace. In a circular letter, he announced the accomplished unity of practice by the whole Church in the date of the celebration of Christian Passover (now called Easter).

The Council of Nicaea was historically significant because it was the first effort to attain consensus in the Church through an assembly representing all of Christendom. Needless to say the establishment of the original Nicene Creed in response to Arianism and generally other similar heresies cannot be deemed unimportant by any stretch. Obviously this council’s activities depict major disagreements within the Church on issues seemingly as basic as the nature of Yeshua.

What we should also see from the list of enacted ordinances from the Nicaea in 325 Ce is that the governing structure of the Church was obviously not conducting rules by way of G_D's Sacred

Torah ... apparently not for the Priesthood or any other matters based on those issues needing to be dealt with at the time.

Regarding the issue of Christianity recognizing and retaining its Hebraic Roots, the results of the council, as well as Constantine's anti-Judaic commentary, essentially need no further embellishment from the author.

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Historical Deductions

Given the environment and circumstances pervasive in the early years of the Church of Messiah, we can understand why the first record of an "Episcopal council" in the post-Apostolic Age was the Synod of Ephesus, not held until 190 Ce. Worse yet is that the first ever Church wide ecumenical council would not be held until the year 325 Ce in Nicaea; just about three hundred years after the Earthly ministry of Yeshua the Messiah.

So it is for these reasons the author is convinced that G_D provided, for the nursling Church of Messiah, these leads in Revelations so that the "seeds," which had been planted, could be watered and take firm root. A last "remembrance" so to speak of what was generally important to present and future believers.

What we see in the historical record however is a concerted effort to de-Judaize the Church for nearly two centuries leading up to the Council of Nicaea, in effect shaking off the vestiges of the Hebrew Religion. It would seem the efforts of those parties to separate the Church from their Hebraic roots were successful, at least from a doctrinal and basic practice perspective. One might ask how this could be and why did the apostolic fathers not provide a stronger Hebraic foundation in the beginning if this was G_D's intent? The answer to this is surprisingly simple.

According to traditional accounts Andrew was crucified by order of the Roman Governor, Aegeas or Aegeates, at Patrae in Achaia, Greece on a decussate (i.e., X-shaped) cross; hence, Andrew's Cross. His martyrdom took place during the reign of Nero, on November 30th, in the year 60 Ce.

Although not one of the original twelve apostles, Barnabas is numbered among the first of the faithful at Jerusalem. He is noted for preaching at Antioch and for being a companion of Paul and accompanying him on his first journey. He was martyred c. 61 Ce at Salamis.

Bartholomew was always mentioned in the Gospels in connection with Philip. He is said to have preached in India, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, Armenia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, and on the shores of the Black Sea. According to traditional accounts, he was flayed alive and crucified, head downward, at Albanopolis, Armenia, as punishment for having converted the King of Armenia to the Christian faith; the date is uncertain.

James the son of Zebedee and Salome and brother of John the Apostle is said to have preached in Samaria, Judea, and Spain. He was the first apostle to be martyred when he was put to death in Jerusalem by the sword at the command of Herod, c. 44 Ce (Acts 12:2).

James the Lesser: He was the brother of Yeshua; brother of Jude Thaddeus and the first Bishop of Jerusalem. Known as James the Righteous, he was martyred in c. 62 Ce at Jerusalem by being thrown from a pinnacle of the Temple, then stoned and beaten with clubs and fuller's mallets, all the while he prayed for his attackers.

Matthew: Some traditions say that Matthew was martyred in Ethiopia while others say that he was martyred in Hierapolis of Parthia. According to Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, Matthew the Evangelist was martyred in Hierapolis, Asia Minor.

Matthias chosen to replace Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:21–26) is said to have preached the Gospel for more than thirty years in Judea, Cappadocia, Egypt, and Ethiopia. According to traditional accounts, he was stoned to death at Colchis c. 80 Ce.

Paul, also known as the Apostle to the Gentiles, as a Roman citizen he was exempt from crucifixion, so he was beheaded with a sword, in Rome c. 64 Ce.

Peter (Simon) was the brother of Andrew, who led him to Yeshua. Peter was considered to be the Prince of the Apostles. Traditionally, he has always been considered the first bishop of Rome (Pope). He was crucified upside down because he claimed he was not worthy to die in the same manner as Yeshua in Rome c. 64 Ce.

Philip: Originally a disciple of John the Baptist, he brought Bartholomew to Yeshua. He is said to have preached in Asia Minor. According to traditional accounts he was martyred c. 80 Ce at Hierapolis, Phrygia.

Simon the Zealot: Not much is known about him; he is said to have preached on the Black Sea, in Egypt, Northern Africa, Britain, and Persia. He was martyred, but the location is uncertain; some claim that he was crucified in Samaria, others claim that he was sawn in half at Suanir, Persia, still others claim that he was martyred at Weriosphora in Iberia.

Thomas, also known as Didymus, “Doubting Thomas,” is best remembered for doubting the resurrection until he was allowed to touch Messiah’s wounds. He is said to have preached in Parthia, Persia, and India. According to traditional accounts, he was pierced through with spears by four soldiers, c. 72 Ce in India.

As we can see the early Church fathers were pretty much busy spreading the gospel and witnessing about Yeshua the Messiah and for the most part being martyred for their glorious efforts. The same can be said for a significant number of immediate post Apostolic Age Church fathers. The reader must also bear in mind that there was a consensus belief among the early Church that Yeshua would imminently return. Subsequently we can logically conclude there would not be any pressing need to contemplate developing doctrinal collateral for the “long term.”

We must consider the real possibility that the apostles would not have considered creating significant doctrinal materials for another reason. The reason being the vast majority of the

foundational doctrines and guide to religious practices already existed within the Hebrew Religion and Holy Scripture! The apostles knew that Yeshua was the prophesied Hebrew Messiah. The apostles knew the foundation of the faith was to be found in Holy Scripture. The apostles knew that Yeshua did not come to do away with the Hebrew Religion or but to complete it in a way that could only be done by G_D himself.

So in light of the historical review of “persecutions,” “doctrinal heresies” and the “early Church and Jewish” relationship is it possible to better understand why the eternal G_D would provide a “last inspired testament” to the community of believers? What we know from history and the records of the ensuing six ecumenical councils held by the Church between 381 Ce and 787 Ce is that notable doctrinal problems continued to surface relative to: the nature of Yeshua the Messiah, the nature of the Holy Spirit, Mary the mother of Yeshua, veneration and worship of icons, the preeminence of the See of Rome and numerous issues surrounding the “ecclesiastical organization” or priesthood.

Unfortunately for all mankind much serious doctrinal development within the Church would come at a time when the Church had already divested itself of its Hebraic Roots as can be seen through a simple review of historical records. Without viewing doctrinal development within a Hebraic context the author would contend that a complete and correct doctrinal exegesis is quite frankly not plausible.

The author wants to make clear to the reader that the previous review regarding the difficulties of the early Church of Messiah is in no way intended to imply any open antagonism toward the developing Church. In light of the circumstances reviewed, the movement away from basic “Hebraic Roots” was inevitable even if not tacitly planned or desired. Nonetheless highlighting this split from the Church’s Hebraic Roots is a valid conclusion that must be exposed to adequately discern the Revelations of Yeshua the Messiah.

There should be no doubts the early Church, and most assuredly even today’s Church, could benefit by the gift of Revelations. The leads provided within Revelations though seemingly

rudimentary from a theological perspective, are in fact not rudimentary or obvious as history proved.

The author hopes the reader's interest is not broken but rather increased. Although the author would have preferred to pursue the intricacies of the Revelation of Messiah immediately; the objective of the tangential history review is to educate first so that the dynamic, impacting early Church "doctrinal development," will not be taken for granted. In light of the historical review of the early Church it would seem we have answered the initial question: Why would the eternal G_D want these scriptural leads provided within Revelations pursued? In light of history it would seem apparent the omnipotent G_D knew quite well where the choices of people would lead the early Church of Messiah. In fact the leads provided within the Salutatory Address of Revelations serve as prophetic omens as we will soon see.

* * * * *

Salutatory Address - Nature of G_D

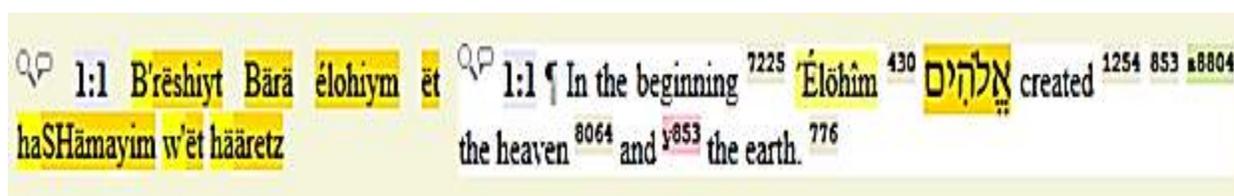
When we look at verses one, two, four, and eight of this blessed Revelation collectively we see, as previously indicated, passages that make one ponder the very nature of G_D. Within these passages we see intriguing indications of distinctiveness relative to G_D: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(1) The Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah, which G_D gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: (2) Who bare record of the word of G_D, and of the testimony of Yeshua the Messiah, and of all things that he saw. (3) Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (4) John to the seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; (5) And from

Yeshua the Messiah, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, (6) and hath made us kings and priests unto G_D and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (7) Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. (8) *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* (Revelations 1:1–8)

Within Christianity, the doctrine of the Trinity states: G_D is a single “Being” who exists, simultaneously and eternally, as a communion of three persons (personae, prosopa): Father (the Source, the Eternal Majesty), the Son (the eternal Logos or Word, incarnate as Yeshua of Nazareth), and the Holy Spirit. Traditionally, in both Eastern and Western Christianity, this doctrine has been stated as “One G_D in Three Persons,” all three of whom, as distinct and co-eternal “persons” or “hypostases,” share a single Divine essence, being, or nature.

From a traditional mainline Jewish perspective it is clear that G_D is extremely complex but he is also "echad" ... as in "singular" ... as in "one" despite the very fact that within the first passage of Hebrew Scriptures G_D reveals himself as a plurality "ELOHIM" which is plural for G_D!



Just as interesting we see in verse 2 below herein where G_D revealed how his Spirit moved over the Earth. The interesting part of course being that G_D revealed this information at all and the implication that the Spirit could somehow be acting in accordance to and with ELOHIM... but metaphysically independent ... and the author uses the term metaphysically quite loosely!

1:2 w'hääretz häy'täh tohû wävohû
 w'choshekh' al-P'nëy t'hôm w'rû'ch
 élohiym m'rachefet al-P'nëy haMâyim

1:2 And the earth ⁷⁷⁶ was ^{1961 #8804} without form, ⁸⁴¹⁴ and void, ⁹²² and
 darkness ²⁸²² [was] upon ^{#5921} the face ⁶⁴⁴⁰ of the deep. ⁸⁴¹⁵ And the Spirit
 of ⁷³⁰⁷ 'Élohîm ⁴³⁰ אֱלֹהִים moved ^{7363 #8764} upon ⁵⁹²¹ the face ⁶⁴⁴⁰ of the
 waters. ⁴³²⁵

Still further we see in verse 26 where G_D determines to make humanity in "our" image and after our likeness ... Hmmm!

1:26 waYomer élohiym naáseh ädäm
 B'tzal'mënû Kid'mûtënû

1:26 ¶ And 'Élohîm ⁴³⁰ אֱלֹהִים said, ^{559 #8799} Let us make ^{6213 #8799}
 man ¹²⁰ in our image, ⁶⁷⁵⁴ after our likeness:

For the record we must note that the Hebraic perspective (unlike the Greek-Hellenistic framework) does not mandate an answer to everything ... does not mandate an answer to the great questions most of humanity may raise about G_D and his creation. In the Hebraic perspective what G_D has revealed to us is enough and we need look no further than the Holy Revelation of the Torah to understand what we need to know.

Conversely it is apparent that the collective Hellenized/Greek mind set of this early church was naturally compelled to fashion and then implement an orthodox understanding of something that quite frankly may be beyond comprehension. This is simply the way the "Greek" mindset operates and another driving factor behind such motives to produce a rigid understanding of G_D was the onslaught of continual heretical philosophical theories being promulgated across the faith ... most notably heresies that implied Yeshua was not integrally part of G_D and various other philosophies dealing with G_D's nature. It was clear that "inquiring minds had to know"!

In any event it would appear that we do indeed have a bit of a conundrum. On one hand the Christian church at a time when they can be seen to be thoroughly divested of the faith's Hebraic roots fashioned an understanding of G_D that is influenced by their "Gentile" Hellenized thought

framework and conversely we have a traditional mainline Jewish perspective that we can only conclude cannot accept the possibility that Messiah was more than a man ... like unto Moses.

Fortunately however there is a host of numerous revelations provided to us in the Tanakh which should help us clarify the fundamental Nature of G_D ... or at least his nature that he deems we are capable of comprehending, and in need of, given our limited mortal capacities.

We'll begin by looking at those Messianic prophecies contained within the Tanakh:

* * * * *

Messiah is destined to be the KING OF KINGS:

- Messiah will wait to return as KING (Isa. 30:8-18)
- Israel will return to G_D ... seeking Messiah (Hosea 3:3-5)
- Israel in their time of distress will mourn their rejection of Messiah and G_D will be gracious unto Israel (Zech. 12:8-10)
- The nations shall rebel against G_D and his Anointed King (Psa. 2:1-3)
- Messiah will be given his inheritance (Psa. 2:6-12)
- Messiah will set up his Kingdom (Hag. 2:5-9)
- Messiah will crush rebellion upon the Earth (Isa. 63:2-6)
- Messiah will build the temple, bear the glory and sit upon the throne as HE rules (Zech. 6:12-13; 2 Sam. 7:13-14)
- Messiah rules with the eternal scepter of Judah (Gen. 49:10)
- Messiah stands as an ensign of the peoples and him the nations shall seek (Isa. 11:10)
- Messiah will rule all the nations ... his rightful inheritance as the Eternal Anointed ONE (Psa. 110:1-7; Dan. 7:13-14)
- Messiah will reign with justice and righteousness ... he shall prosper ... when Judah is saved and Israel dwells safely (Jer. 23:5-6)

- Messiah will restore the glory of Israel (Psa. 45:14-18)
- Messiah will reign for eternity (Dan. 7:14; 2 Sam. 7:13)

The Tanakh clearly depicts the destiny of Messiah through numerous prophetic passages. Undoubtedly Messiah as declared in the Tanakh is destined for eternal Lordship sitting upon the throne of the Kingdom Israel in glory and splendor.

It should be noted that this is contemporary Judaism's primary view of Messiah ... at the time of Yeshua and even now. Mainline Judaism looks for Messiah ... the conquering King to arrive and save Israel from its plight and dispense justice out to the Nations.

* * * * *

Knowledge of Messiah's Redemptive Mission:

- Bring good tidings unto the humble (Isa. 61:1; Nah. 2:1)
- Bind up the broken-hearted (Isa. 61:1)
- Comfort those that mourn (Isa. 61:1)
- Open the of the eyes to them that are blind (Isa. 61:1; Isa. 35:5)
- Open the ears of the deaf (Isa. 35:5)
- Free the tongue of the dumb (Isa. 35:5)
- Heal the lame (Isa. 35:5)
- Free the captives/possessed/unclean/infirm/ed/dead (Isa. 61:1)
- Strengthen the weak and fearful (Isa. 35:3)
- Proclaim Jubilee (Isa. 61:1; Isa. 35:3)
- Disavow the curse of Israel's covenant with death (Isa. 28:16)
- Serve as the foundation stone for the renewed covenant (Isa. 28:16; Mal. 3:1; Jer. 31:30-33; Psa. 118:22)
- Build G_D's eternal place of dwelling (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 28:16; Mal. 3:1; Jer. 31:30-33)
- Circumcise the remnant and put Torah upon their hearts (Jer. 31:30-33; Isa. 42:3)

- Guarantee the seed of Israel forever (Jer. 31:36; Isa. 49:5-6)
- Restore the pride of Jacob, as the pride of Israel (Nah. 2:1)
- Cut off the wicked one (hasatan) (Nah. 2:1)
- Minister Mercy in humility and meekness (Isa. 42:2-3)
- Bear the iniquities of the transgressors (Isa. 53:11)
- Make intercession for the transgressors (Psa. 110:4; Isa. 53:12)
- Bring light to the darkness (Jer. 31:33; Isa. 9:1; Isa. 42:4)
- Teach the knowledge of G_D (Isa. 2:3-4; Isa. 42:3; Isa. 42:18-21; Hab. 2:14)
- Fill the Earth with the knowledge of G_D (Isa. 7:14; Isa. 42:4; Hab. 2:14)
- Deliver salvation to Israel (Psa. 14:7; Isa. 49:5-6)
- Deliver salvation to the ends of the Earth (Isa. 49:6;
- Bless all the families of the Earth (Isa. 49:6; Gen. 22:18; Gen 28:14)
- Restore justice and righteousness (Isa. 9:6; Isa. 28:17; Isa. 42:4)
- Set things right in the Earth (Isa. 9:6; Isa. 42:4)
- Proclaim the day of the LORD's vengeance (Isa. 6:1; (Isa. 35:3)
- Proclaim judgment upon those without faith in him (Isa. 28:22; Isa. 40:10; Deut. 18:19)
- Fill up the Torah as the prophet to come (Deut.18:15-19; Isa. 42:4; Nah: 2:1)
- Reconcile the transgressors to G_D (Jer. 31:33; Isa. 53:11)
- *Sacrifice his righteous self for the transgressors (Isa. 53:10)*

The Tanakh paints a clear prophetic picture of Messiah's mission which is focused upon healing, redemption, reconciliation, transformation and salvation. Most assuredly this mission is consistent with Israel's expectation of Messiah given the: Covenantal, Holy Service, Temple and Torah centric focus of the mission.

And everything looks pretty straight forward and pointing back directly to G_D until we reach the last Messianic prophecy listed herein. This prophecy gives traditional mainline Judaism problems because it clearly implies that Messiah now needs to be looked at a bit differently than their historical perspective of G_D! This prophecy clearly points to Messiah doing something that does not fit their expectation of Messiah.

* * * * *

The life of Messiah ... the suffering servant:

- Born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:1)
- Descended from the stock of Jesse (Isa. 1:1-2)
- Descended from the line of King David (Jer. 23:5; 2 Sam. 7:12-16)
- Miraculously birthed of a virgin girl (Isa. 7:14)
- Honored and Blessed by Kings bearing gifts (Psa. 72:10-11)
- Foreshadowed by the messenger ... a voice in the wilderness ... having a spirit of Elijah (Mal. 3:1; Mal. 3:23; Isa. 58)
- Imbued with unmeasured Spirit of G_D (Isa. 42:1; Isa. 61:1)
- A loving delight to the soul of G_D MOST HIGH (Isa. 42:1)
- Humble, meek, merciful and loving (Isa. 42:2-3)
- A most wondrous healer of ailments and torments (Isa. 35:5-6; Isa. 61:1)
- Ridden into Jerusalem triumphantly ... victoriously but lowly in humility upon a donkey (Zech. 9:9)
- Rejected by the leaders of Israel (Psa. 118:22-23)
- Betrayed by his own people (Psa. 41:6-10)
- Betrayed for thirty pieces of silver out of the Temple treasury (Zech. 11:12-13)
- Alienated from his people (Psa. 69:9)
- Abandoned when HE as the shepherd is smitten (Zech. 13:7)
- Beaten, spat upon and shamed by his tormentors (Isa. 50:5-7)
- Tested by his tormentors (Psa. 22:8-9)
- A reproach ... despised of the people (Psa. 22:7-9; Isa. 53:3; Psa. 69:20)
- Allowed to suffer without rescue (Psa. 22:2-3; Isa. 53:4-5)
- Robbed of his garments by way of the casting of lots (Psa. 22:19)
- Allowed to be offered up for slaughter (Isa. 53:7-8; Dan. 9:26)
- Sacrificed for Israel (Isa. 53:8-9)

- Wounded in the hands and feet (Psa. 22:17)
- Suffering no broken bones (Psa. 22:18)
- Given vinegar to drink (Psa. 69:22)
- Obedient unto death (Isa. 53:1-9)
- Die broken hearted (Psa. 69:21)
- Poured out like water (Psa. 22:15)
- Buried with the sinners (Isa. 53:9)
- Not be abandoned to the nether-world ... be raised from the dead (Psa. 16:9-10; Hosea 5:15-6:2; Jon. 2:3-10)
- Questioned about the wounds on his hands (Zech. 13:6)
- Remembered by Name forever (Psa. 72:17)

Although mainline Judaism will accept "certain" prophetic pointers to Messiah it is certainly conclusive that there are many others which they do not accept. Regardless of their acceptance of these portents of Messiah's life it must be noted that it would seem inconceivable to this author that G_D would not provide Israel with all of the necessary credentials which Messiah would need to fulfill to be qualified as "The Hebrew Messiah".

We should keep in mind that the Tanakh is the revelation of the promise that G_D will redeem and restore Israel and all creation. As such the knowledge of Messiah is fundamentally critical to Israel for in these Tanakh revelations will we ultimately see and confirm the identity of Messiah.

It would seem that mainline Judaism remains blind to the "Messianic suffering servant" depicted in Isaiah and the person of Joseph - the son of Jacob ... whose life story as revealed within Scriptures is a portrait of the Messiah to come!

Regardless of mainline Jewish beliefs it would appear that the Tanakh points to a twofold manifestation of Messiah. One as the suffering servant (Messiah Ben Yosef) and the other as King of Kings (Messiah Ben David).

* * * * *

Knowledge of Messiah's Divine Nature:

- To know that G_D will come as Messiah ... his ruling ARM (Isa. 40:10)
- To know that Messiah will be from ancient days ... everlasting and eternal (Micah 4:14-5:2)
- To know that Messiah will be ImmanuEl ... G_D with us (Isa. 7:13-14)
- To know that Messiah will come to his temple and deliver the covenant (Mal. 3:1)
- To know that Messiah will be like unto the eternal but as a "Son of Man" coming in the clouds of Heaven (Dan. 7:13-14)
- To know that Messiah will be "Pele-Joez-El-Gibbor-Abi-Ad-Sar-Shalom" - Wonderful; Counselor; Mighty; G_D; Eternal; Father; Prince; and Peace ... Messiah will be the exact image and likeness of G_D ... a perfect unity (Isa. 9:5-6)
- A Psalm of David. The LORD says unto my lord: 'Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' The rod of thy strength the LORD will send out of Zion: 'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.' Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy warfare; in adornments of holiness, from the womb of the dawn, thine is the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent: 'Thou art a priest for ever after the manner of Melchizedek.' (Psalms 110:1:4)

It would appear the Tanakh clearly declares the awesome and divine nature of Messiah, despite contemporary Judaism's insistence that these passages are simply references to G_D Most High.

Quite frankly the Scripture passages, though confirming G_D as Israel's Messiah can be seen just as well to point to: "the Son of Man" ... "David's Lord" and the unique nature of "the Child"!

So here we have it ... full frontal truth and confrontation. We see within the Tanakh itself the revelation that Messiah will clearly be something much more than any "man" and provide

redemption and salvation for humanity within the auspices of that same created humanity. ... Simply ASTOUNDING when we consume by faith the B'rit Chadasha Hebrew Scriptures wherein we see the fulfillment of the promise of the beloved Messiah ... Yeshua!

But the mainline Jewish thought, which understands these prophecies pointing to Messiah coming to them as "a man" ... as the prophet to come ... are essentially segregated from the "divine" prophecies previously listed within their sphere of understanding. ... It would appear that historical mainline Jewish rabbinical thought sees Messiah as doing G_D's bidding (like unto Moses) and setting the stage for G_D to take up his Kingship and Glory.

So is the author simply siding with traditional Christian Trinitarian doctrine and claiming mainline Judaism to be wrong?

To one extent it would appear that mainline Judaism remains wrong regarding the portents and identity of Messiah. On the other hand ... at least within the auspices of the Tanakh it would appear that Messiah is both G_D and man!

But the Messianic prophecies are not the only indicators of Messiah within the Tanakh. As indicated so many of the Biblical characters are portraits/promises of Messiah to come.

For instance ... we know that Moses is a portrait of Messiah and Israel is commanded to await the "prophet to come"!

We should realize that King David, whose heart G_D loved and who is an integral component of the everlasting covenant in that through his own natural seed will the Messiah "spring forth" ... offers us much portent of Messiah.

We should realize that Solomon the wise son and builder of the Temple gives us pointers to Messiah.

We should realize that within the "miraculous barren birth" depictions within Holy Scriptures there are many portents and promises of Messiah!

We should realize that the enigmatic references to "Jeshurun" in Deuteronomy and Isaiah are specifically Messiah related and depict the unique representation of Messiah as Israel!

We should realize that specific references and depictions of Zerubbabel also paint a Messianic portrait!

We should realize that the appearance of the LORD and the Angel of the LORD are significant in regards to Messiah. (More to come on this matter later)

The point to be made is that virtually the entire corpus of the Tanakh represents a portent/promise of Messiah to come. Simply because we have been able to establish the divine unity between Messiah and G_D via Biblical revelation, does not mean that we can jump to any immediate conclusions regarding exactly what is going on respective to the "nature of G_D" ... as it pertains to affirming or contending any form of Trinitarian philosophy.

Despite the complexity of this issue and keeping in mind some core contextual points: a Scriptural Continuum and a Covenantal Continuum, let us take a look at what the Hebrew Scriptures has to say about the nature of G_D ... specifically let us look at what is revealed about G_D's "Spirit"!

Initially it must be pointed out that there are hundreds and hundreds of references to "spirit" within the Tanakh and assuredly the vast amount of these passages are not a direct reference to G_D's Spirit or the Holy Spirit.

What we find are myriad references to the spirit of men and beasts. We find spirits apparently for good just as we find spirits that are not so good: anger, evil, destruction, pride, guile, confusion, unclean, etc.

So initially we must admit that there are indeed "spirits" at work throughout the Tanakh for either "good" or "not so good" and these "spirits" ultimately appear to be subject to the authority of G_D and it also appears that these "spirits" represent a temporary/temporal condition for individual(s)..

But the Tanakh also has twenty three distinct passages related to the "Spirit of the LORD" and thirteen references to "my spirit" which are revealed to be "G_D's own SPIRIT ... as well as ... three and only three specific references to the "Holy Spirit".

It would appear that the Tanakh can provide us some badly needed clues on our quest for understanding and the author will attempt to put these specific passages within a common framework of understanding based upon the context in which the "Spirit of the LORD" is operating.

The SPIRIT of the LORD References

Judges:

3,9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a saviour to the children of Israel, who saved them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 3,10 And the spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel; and he went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-rishathaim king of Aram into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Cushan-rishathaim. 3,11 And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died. (*Spirit of Counsel and Might / Spirit of Rest/Shalom*)

6,31 And Joash said unto all that stood against him: 'Will ye contend for Baal? Or will ye save him? He that will contend for him, shall be put to death before morning; if he be a god, let him contend for himself, because one hath broken down his altar.' 6,32 Therefore on that day he was called Jerubbaal, saying: 'Let Baal contend against him, because he hath broken down his altar.' 6,33 Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east assembled themselves

together; and they passed over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. 6,34 But the spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon; and he blew a horn; and Abiezer was gathered together after him. 6,35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; and they also were gathered together after him; and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. *(Spirit of Counsel and Might)*

11,29 Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. 11,30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said: 'If thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, 11,31 then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, it shall be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.' *(Spirit of Counsel and Might / Spirit of Rest/Shalom)*

13,21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah or to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of the LORD. 13,22 And Manoah said unto his wife: 'We shall surely die, because we have seen G_D.' 13,23 But his wife said unto him: 'If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meal-offering at our hand, neither would he have shown us all these things, nor would at this time have told such things as these.' 13,24 And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. 13,25 And the spirit of the LORD began to move him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. *(Spirit of Knowledge & Fear of the LORD)*

14,5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnah, and came to the vineyards of Timnah; and, behold, a young lion roared against him. 14,6 And the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as one would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand; but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. *(Spirit of Counsel and Might)*

15,12 And they said unto him: 'We are come down to bind thee that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines.' And Samson said unto them: 'Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.' 15,13 And they spoke unto him, saying: 'No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver

thee into their hand; but surely we will not kill thee.' And they bound him with two new ropes, and brought him up from the rock. 15,14 When he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the ropes that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands dropped from off his hands. 15,15 And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and smote a thousand men therewith. *(Spirit of Counsel and Might)*

Samuel

1 10,1 Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said: 'Is it not that the LORD hath anointed thee to be prince over His inheritance? 1 10,2 When thou art departed from me to-day, then thou shalt find two men by the tomb of Rachel, in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee: The asses which thou wentest to seek are found; and, lo, thy father hath left off caring for the asses, and is anxious concerning you, saying: What shall I do for my son? 1 10,3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the terebinth of Tabor, and there shall meet thee there three men going up to G_D to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine. 1 10,4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two cakes of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hand. 1 10,5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of G_D, where is the garrison of the Philistines; and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they will be prophesying. 1 10,6 And the spirit of the LORD will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. *(Spirit of Anointing/Election | Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation | Spirit of Life/Transformation)*

1 16,11 And Samuel said unto Jesse: 'Are here all thy children?' And he said: 'There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep.' And Samuel said unto Jesse: 'Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither.' 1 16,12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of beautiful eyes, and goodly to look upon. {P} And the LORD said: 'Arise, anoint him; for this is he.' 1 16,13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in

the midst of his brethren; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. 1 16,14 Now the spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrified him. (*Spirit of Anointing/Election*)

2 23,1 Now these are the last words of David: The saying of David the son of Jesse, and the saying of the man raised on high, the anointed of the G_D of Jacob, and the sweet singer of Israel: 2 23,2 The spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was upon my tongue. 2 23,3 The G_D of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me: 'Ruler over men shall be the righteous, even he that ruleth in the fear of G_D, 2 23,4 And as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds; when through clear shining after rain, the tender grass springeth out of the earth.' 2 23,5 For is not my house established with G_D? For an everlasting covenant he hath made with me, ordered in all things, and sure; for all my salvation, and all my desire, will he not make it to grow? (*Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding / Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation / Spirit of Knowledge and Fear of the LORD / Spirit of Counsel and Might / Spirit of Rest/Shalom*)

Kings

1 18,8 And he answered him: 'It is I; go, tell thy lord: Behold, Elijah is here.' 1 18,9 And he said: 'Wherein have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? 1 18,10 As the LORD thy G_D liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; and when they said: He is not here, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. 1 18,11 And now thou sayest: Go, tell thy lord: Behold, Elijah is here. 1 18,12 And it will come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the spirit of the LORD will carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he will slay me; but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth. (*Spirit of Life/Transformation*)

1 22,20 (& 2nd Chronicles) And the LORD said: Who shall entice Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead. And one said: On this manner; and another said: On that manner. 1 22,21 And there came forth the spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said: I will entice him. 1 22,22 And the LORD said unto him: Wherewith? And he said: I will go forth, and will be a lying

spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said: Thou shalt entice him, and shalt prevail also; go forth, and do so. 1 22,23 Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets; and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.' 1 22,24 Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near, and smote Micaiah on the check, and said: 'Which way went the spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?' 1 22,25 And Micaiah said: 'Behold, thou shalt see on that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.' 1 22,26 And the king of Israel said: 'Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; 1 22,27 and say: Thus saith the king: Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with scant bread and with scant water, until I come in peace.' (*Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation*)

2 2,15 And when the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho some way off saw him, they said: 'The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha.' And they came to meet him, and bowed down to the ground before him. 2 2,16 And they said unto him: 'Behold now, there are with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master; lest peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley.' And he said: 'Ye shall not send.' (*Spirit of Life/Transformation*)

Chronicles

2 20,12 O our G_D, wilt thou not execute judgment on them? For we have no might against this great multitude that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee.' 2 20,13 And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. 2 20,14 Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite, of the sons of Asaph, came the spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation; 2 20,15 and he said: 'Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat: thus saith the LORD unto you: Fear not ye, neither be dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but G_D's. 2 20,16 To-morrow go ye down against them; behold, they come up by the ascent of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the valley, before the wilderness of Jeruel. 2 20,17 Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem;

fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them; for the LORD is with you.' *Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation / Spirit of Rest/Shalom*)

Ezekiel

11,2 And he said unto me: 'Son of man, these are the men that devise iniquity, and that give wicked counsel in this city; 11,3 that say: The time is not near to build houses! This city is the caldron, and we are the flesh. 11,4 Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.' 11,5 And the spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and he said unto me: 'Speak: Thus saith the LORD: Thus have ye said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind. 11,6 Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain. (*Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation*)

Micah

2,3 Therefore thus saith the LORD: Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks, neither shall ye walk upright; for it shall be an evil time. 2,4 In that day shall they take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say: 'We are utterly ruined; he changeth the portion of my people; how doth he remove it from me! Instead of restoring our fields, he divideth them.' 2,5 Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast the line by lot in the congregation of the LORD. 2,6 'Preach ye not', they preach; 'They shall not preach of these things, that they shall not take shame.' 2,7 Do I change, O house of Jacob? Is the spirit of the LORD straitened? Are these His doings? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? 2,8 But of late My people is risen up as an enemy; with the garment ye strip also the mantle from them that pass by securely, so that they are as men returning from war. (*Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation*)

3,5 Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people to err; that cry: 'Peace', when their teeth have anything to bite; and whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare

war against him: 3,6 Therefore it shall be night unto you, that ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them. 3,7 And the seers shall be put to shame, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their upper lips; for there shall be no answer of G_D. 3,8 But I truly am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of justice, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin. (*Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation / Spirit of Counsel and Might*)

Isaiah

10,33 Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the boughs with terror; and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the lofty shall be laid low. 10,34 And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one. 11,1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a twig shall grow forth out of his roots. 11,2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. 11,3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; 11,4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the land; and he shall smite the land with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. (*Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding / Spirit of Counsel and Might / Spirit of Knowledge and Fear of the LORD*)

40,6 Hark! One saith: 'Proclaim!' And he saith: 'What shall I proclaim?' 'All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; 40,7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the breath of the LORD bloweth upon it--surely the people is grass. 40,8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our G_D shall stand for ever.' 40,9 O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: 'Behold your G_D!' 40,10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come as a Mighty One, and His arm will rule for him; behold, His reward is with him, and His recompense before him. 40,11 Even as a shepherd that feedeth his flock, that gathereth the lambs in his arm, and carrieth them in his bosom,

and gently leadeth those that give suck. 40,12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? 40,13 Who hath meted out the spirit of the LORD? Or who was His counsellor that he might instruct him? 40,14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of right, and taught him knowledge, and made him to know the way of discernment? 40,15 Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold the isles are as a mote in weight. 40,16 And Lebanon is not sufficient fuel, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for burnt-offerings. 40,17 All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as things of nought, and vanity. (*Full - Un-meted Spiritual Endowment*)

59,20 And a redeemer will come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. 59,21 And as for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and forever. 60,1 Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 60,2 For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but upon thee the LORD will arise, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. 60,3 And nations shall walk at thy light, and kings at the brightness of thy rising. 60,4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: they all are gathered together, and come to thee; thy sons come from far, and thy daughters are borne on the side. 60,5 Then thou shalt see and be radiant, and thy heart shall throb and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee. 60,6 The caravan of camels shall cover thee, and of the young camels of Midian and Ephah, all coming from Sheba; they shall bring gold and incense, and shall proclaim the praises of the LORD. 60,7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee; they shall come up with acceptance on Mine altar, and I will glorify my glorious house. 60,8 Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their cotes? 60,9 Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, for the name of the LORD thy G_D, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. 60,10 And aliens shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had compassion on

thee. 60,11 Thy gates also shall be open continually, day and night, they shall not be shut; that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations, and their kings in procession. 60,12 For that nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. 60,13 The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the cypress, the plane-tree and the larch together; to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious. 60,14 And the sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee The city of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. 60,15 Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man passed through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. 60,16 Thou shalt also suck the milk of the nations, and shalt suck the breast of kings; and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour, and I, the Mighty One of Jacob, thy Redeemer. 60,17 For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron; I will also make thy officers peace, and righteousness thy magistrates. 60,18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, desolation nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. 60,19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy G_D thy glory. 60,20 Thy sun shall no more go down, Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. 60,21 Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, wherein I glory. 60,22 The smallest shall become a thousand, and the least a mighty nation; I the LORD will hasten it in its time. 61,1 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to bring good tidings unto the humble; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the eyes to them that are bound; 61,2 To proclaim the year of the LORD'S good pleasure, and the day of vengeance of our G_D; to comfort all that mourn; 61,3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the mantle of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called terebinths of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, wherein he might glory. 61,4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall renew the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. 61,5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and aliens shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. 61,6 But ye shall be named the priests of the LORD, men shall call you the ministers of our G_D; ye shall eat the

wealth of the nations, and in their splendour shall ye revel. 61,7 For your shame which was double, and for that they rejoiced: 'Confusion is their portion'; therefore in their land they shall possess double, everlasting joy shall be unto them. 61,8 For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery with iniquity; and I will give them their recompense in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. 61,9 And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed. (*Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding | Spirit of Anointing/Election | Spirit of Life/Transformation*)

63,12 That caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses? That divided the water before them, to make Himself an everlasting name? 63,13 That led them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, without stumbling? 63,14 As the cattle that go down into the valley, the spirit of the LORD caused them to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.' 63,15 Look down from heaven, and see, even from thy holy and glorious habitation (*Spirit of Rest/Shalom*)

Summary

Seven References: Judges - 3:7-11 | 6:31-35 | 11:29-31 | 13:21-25 | 14:5-6 | 14:17-20 | 15:12-15

Context: Intervention

Revealed Spirit(s): Counsel and Might | Knowledge & Fear of the LORD

Four References: Samuel - (1) 10:1-6 | (1) 16:11-13 | 16:14 | (2) 23:1-5

Context: Prophetic

Revealed Spirit(s): Prophecy | Life/Transformation | Anointing/Election | Knowledge & Fear of the LORD | Wisdom & Understanding | Counsel and Might | Rest/Shalom

Three References: Kings - (1) 18:8-12 | (1) 22:27 | (2) 2:15-16

Context: Prophetic

Revealed Spirit(s): Life/Transformation | Prophecy/Revelation

Two References: Chronicles - (2) 2:18-23 | (2) 20:12-17

Context: Prophetic

Revealed Spirit(s): Prophecy/Revelation

Four References: Isaiah - 10:33-11:4 | 40:6-1 | 59:20-61:9 | 63:12-15

Context: Messianic Prophecy

Revealed Spirit(s): Wisdom & Understanding | Counsel & Might | Knowledge & Fear of the LORD | Full - Un-meted Spiritual Endowment| Anointing/Election | Rest/Shalom

Two References: Micah 2:3-8 | 3:5-8

Context: Messianic Prophecy | Prophetic

Revealed Spirit(s): Wisdom and Understanding | Counsel and Might | Prophecy/Revelation

Reference: Ezekiel 11:2-6

Context: Prophetic

Revealed Spirit(s): Prophecy/Revelation

When we look at these twenty three groups of passages it appears that the outpouring from The LORD reveals seven very discrete "Spirits" that fall upon the recipients and once again an eighth that appears to represent a full outpouring of all Spirits:

1. Spirit of Knowledge & Fear of the LORD
2. Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding
3. Spirit of Counsel & Might
4. Spirit of Anointing/Election
5. Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation
6. Spirit of Life/Transformation
7. Spirit of Rest/Shalom
8. Full - Un-meted Spiritual Endowment (Messiah Alone)

Let us now proceed to the thirteen specific passages that refer to "My Spirit" regarding the LORD:

Genesis:

6,3 And the LORD said: 'My spirit shall not abide in man forever, for that he also is flesh; therefore shall his days be a hundred and twenty years.' (*Spirit of Life/Transformation*)

Proverbs:

1,20 Wisdom crieth aloud in the streets, she uttereth her voice in the broad places; 1,21 She calleth at the head of the noisy streets, at the entrances of the gates, in the city, she uttereth her words: 1,22 'How long, ye thoughtless, will ye love thoughtlessness? And how long will scorers delight them in scorning, and fools hate knowledge? 1,23 Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. (*Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding*)

Ezekiel

36,22 Therefore say unto the house of Israel: Thus saith the Lord GOD: I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name, which ye have profaned among the nations, whither ye came. 36,23 And I will sanctify my great name, which hath been profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. 36,24 For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. 36,25 And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 36,26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit

will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. 36,27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep Mine ordinances, and do them (*Spirit of Knowledge and Fear of the LORD*)

37,9 Then said he unto me: 'Prophesy unto the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath: Thus saith the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' 37,10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great host. 37,11 Then he said unto me: 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say: Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off. 37,12 Therefore prophesy, and say unto them: Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. 37,13 And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. 37,14 And I will put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land; and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken, and performed it, saith the LORD.' (*Spirit of Life/Transformation | Spirit of Rest/Shalom*)

39,25 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Now will I bring back the captivity of Jacob, and have compassion upon the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for my holy name. 39,26 And they shall bear their shame, and all their breach of faith which they have committed against Me, when they shall dwell safely in their land, and none shall make them afraid; 39,27 when I have brought them back from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations. 39,28 And they shall know that I am the LORD their G_D, in that I caused them to go into captivity among the nations, and have gathered them unto their own land; and I will leave none of them anymore there; 39,29 neither will I hide My face any more from them; for I have poured out My spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.' (*Spirit of Knowledge and Fear of the LORD*)

3,1 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; 3,2 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My spirit. 3,3 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 3,4 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come. (*Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation / Spirit of Anointing/Election*)

Zechariah

3,6 And the angel of the LORD forewarned Joshua, saying: 3,7 'Thus saith the LORD of hosts: If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, and wilt also judge My house, and wilt also keep My courts, then I will give thee free access among these that stand by. 3,8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men that are a sign; for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Shoot. 3,9 For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone are seven facets; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts: And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. 3,10 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree. 4,1 And the angel that spoke with me returned, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. 4,2 And he said unto me: 'What seest thou?' And I said: 'I have seen, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps thereon; there are seven pipes, yea, seven, to the lamps, which are upon the top thereof; 4,3 and two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.' 4,4 And I answered and spoke to the angel that spoke with me, saying: 'What are these, my lord?' 4,5 Then the angel that spoke with me answered and said unto me: 'Knowest thou not what these are?' And I said: 'No, my lord.' 4,6 Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying: 'This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying: Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. 4,7 Who art thou, O great mountain before Zerubbabel? Thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it.' 4,8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying: 4,9 'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. 4,10

For who hath despised the day of small things? Even they shall see with joy the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, even these seven, which are the eyes of the LORD, that run to and fro through the whole earth.' (*Full - Un-meted Spiritual Endowment*)

Isaiah

29,22 Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale; 29,23 When he seeth his children, the work of My hands, in the midst of him, that they sanctify My name; yea, they shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall stand in awe of the G_D of Israel. 29,24 They also that err in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmur shall learn instruction. 30,1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that form projects, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin (*Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding*)

42,1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him, he shall make the right to go forth to the nations. 42,2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 42,3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the dimly burning wick shall he not quench; he shall make the right to go forth according to the truth. 42,4 He shall not fail nor be crushed, till he have set the right in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his teaching. ... (*Spirit of Anointing/Election*)

44,1 Yet now hear, O Jacob My servant, and Israel, whom I have chosen; 44,2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, who will help thee: Fear not, O Jacob My servant, and thou, **Jeshurun**, whom I have chosen. 44,3 For I will pour water upon the thirsty land, and streams upon the dry ground; I will pour My spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring; 44,4 And they shall spring up among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. 44,5 One shall say: 'I am the LORD'S'; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel. {P} (*Spirit of Knowledge and Fear of the LORD*)

59,20 And a redeemer will come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. 59,21 And as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and forever. *(Spirit of Counsel & Might)*

Haggai

2,5 The word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt have I established, and my spirit abideth among you; fear ye not. 2,6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; 2,7 and I will shake all nations, and the choicest things of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. 2,8 Mine is the silver, and Mine the gold, saith the LORD of hosts. 2,9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the LORD of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.' *(Spirit of Rest/Shalom)*

Summary

Reference: Genesis 6:3

Context: Prophetic

Revealed Spirit(s): Life/Transformation

Reference: Proverbs 1:20-23

Context: Prophetic

Revealed Spirit(s): Wisdom & Understanding

Three References: Ezekiel - 36:22-27 | 37:9-14 | 39:25-29

Context: Prophetic

Revealed Spirit(s): Knowledge & Fear of the LORD | Life/Transformation | Rest/Shalom

Two References: Joel 3:1-4

Context: Prophetic

Revealed Spirit(s): Prophecy/Revelation | Anointing/Election

Reference: Zechariah 3:6-4:1-10

Context: Messianic Prophecy

Revealed Spirit(s): Full - Un-meted Spiritual Endowment

Four References: Isaiah - 29:22-30:1 | 42:1-4 | 44:1-5 | 59:20-21

Context: Prophetic | Messianic Prophecy

Revealed Spirit(s): Knowledge & Fear of the LORD | Wisdom & Understanding | Anointing/Election

Reference: Haggai 2:5-9

Context: Prophetic

Revealed Spirit(s): Rest/Shalom

Hopefully without too much contention we can once again see the emergence of seven discrete "Spirits" associated with these thirteen references as well as one that appears to represent a full complementary outpouring of all G_D's Spirit!

1. Spirit of Knowledge & Fear of the LORD
2. Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding
3. Spirit of Counsel & Might
4. Spirit of Anointing
5. Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation
6. Spirit of Life/Transformation
7. Spirit of Rest/Shalom
8. Full - Un-meted Spiritual Endowment (Messiah Alone)

Interestingly enough we also can garner a clue from Zechariah where we see a connection to Messiah in the context of a Full - Un-meted Spiritual Endowment ... and we also see wherein the seven facets are presented as being integral to Messiah and apparently connected in some manner with the "seven lamps". Hmmm!

But there are some other clues that we can find within the Tanakh as well. Three very discrete passages referencing G_D's Holy Spirit:

Psalms 51,12 Create me a clean heart, O G_D; and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 51,13 Cast me not away from thy presence; *and take not thy holy spirit from me.*

Isaiah 63,7 I will make mention of the mercies of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us; and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his compassions, and according to the multitude of his mercies. 63,8 For he said: 'Surely, they are my people, children that will not deal falsely'; so he was their Saviour. 63,9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bore them, and carried them all the days of old. 63,10 *But they rebelled, and grieved his holy spirit;* therefore he was turned to be their enemy, himself fought against them. 63,11 Then his people remembered the days of old, the days of Moses: 'Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? *Where is he that put his holy spirit in the midst of them?* 63,12 That caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses? That divided the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name? 63,13 That led them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, without stumbling? 63,14 As the cattle that go down into the valley, the spirit of the LORD caused them to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.'

Obviously it is not very easy to associate these references with any of the seven discrete Spirits of the LORD as previously identified. What we can deduce however is that David was surely aware of a "Holy Spirit" and was discerning enough to know that G_D had placed this Spirit within him ... or David was in fact simply prophesying about this Holy Spirit knowing what was to come in

the future from Messiah. In fact ... upon the previous review of the references from Samuel we see that David was in fact the recipient of all seven discrete Spirits from the LORD. HMMM!

Regarding the references to the Holy Spirit found in Isaiah 63 we should note that we can only conclude from the inspired text is the Holy Spirit of G_D was indeed within the midst of the Israelites although we would also have to state that "in the midst" would have to be viewed as being different than "within" ... and in all likelihood is pointing towards the inevitable conclusion that the Holy Spirit is being associated with the LORD who brought the Israelites through the Sea of Reeds. And this of course would clearly imply that the reference is being made that the Pillar of Fire was indeed completely full of the Holy Spirit of G_D MOST HIGH or perhaps in other terms ... given a full complement of all seven Spirits ... and then even more?

But let us look towards the B'rit Chadasha wherein we can find more details regarding G_D's Spirit and use what has been distilled thus far from the Tanakh to guide us!

Matthew

3:13 Then cometh Yeshua from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 3:14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 3:15 And Yeshua answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 3:16 And Yeshua, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of G_D descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (*Spirit of Anointing/Election*)

4:1 Then was Yeshua led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 4:2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward a hungred. (*Spirit of Counsel & Might*)

5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 5:2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. *(Spirit of Knowledge & Fear of the LORD)*

10:1 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. *(Spirit of Counsel & Might / Spirit of Rest/Shalom)*

10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. 10:17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 10:18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 10:19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 10:20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. *(Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding / Spirit of Counsel & Might)*

12:14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. 12:15 But when Yeshua knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; 12:16 And charged them that they should not make him known: 12:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 12:18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. 12:19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. 12:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. 12:21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust. *(Spirit of Anointing/Election)*

Mark

2:3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. 2:4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. 2:5 When Yeshua saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. 2:6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 2:7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but Elohim only? 2:8 And immediately when Yeshua perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? *(Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding - Spirit of Counsel & Might)*

8:11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. 8:12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. 8:13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side. *(Spirit of Prophecy)*

Luke

1:11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 1:12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 1:14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 1:15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 1:16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their Elohim. 1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. *(Spirit of Life/Transformation | Spirit of Prophecy)*

And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 2:27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Yeshua, to do for him after the custom of the law, 2:28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed Elohim, and said, 2:29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 2:30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 2:31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. (*Spirit of Prophecy / Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding / Spirit of Rest/Shalom*)

4:14 And Yeshua returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 4:15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. (*Spirit of Counsel & Might*)

4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 4:17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 4:19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 4:20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 4:21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. (*Spirit of Prophecy*)

8:49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. 8:50 But when Yeshua heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. 8:51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. 8:52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. 8:53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 8:54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 8:55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 8:56 And her parents were

astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done. (*Spirit of Life/Transformation*)

10:21 In that hour Yeshua rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. 10:22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. (*Spirit of Knowledge & Fear of the LORD / Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding / Spirit of Anointing/Election*)

Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. 11:8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. 11:9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 11:10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 11:11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? 11:12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (*Full - Un-meted Spiritual Endowment*)

23:46 And when Yeshua had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. (*Spirit of Rest/Shalom*)

John

1:29 The next day John seeth Yeshua coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of Elohim, which taketh away the sin of the world. 1:30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 1:31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 1:32 And John bare record,

saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 1:33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 1:34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of Elohim. *(Spirit of Anointing/Election)*

3:5 Yeshua answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Elohim. 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. *(Spirit of Life/Transformation)*

3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease. 3:31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 3:32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. 3:33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that Elohim is true. 3:34 For he whom G_D hath sent speaketh the words of G_D: for G_D giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. *(Full - Un-meted Spiritual Endowment)*

4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 4:24 Elohim is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. *(Spirit of Knowledge & Fear of the LORD / Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding)*

6:60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, this is a hard saying; who can hear it? 6:61 When Yeshua knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 6:62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. *(Spirit of Life/Transformation)*

7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Yeshua was not yet glorified.) *(Spirit of Life/Transformation)*

11:33 When Yeshua therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, 11:34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. 11:35 Yeshua wept. 11:36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! 11:37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? *(Spirit of Counsel & Might)*

13:18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. 13:19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. 13:20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 13:21 When Yeshua had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. *(Spirit of Prophecy)*

14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. . . . 15:25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 15:27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. *(Spirit of Knowledge & Fear of the LORD - Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding | Spirit of Counsel & Might | Spirit of Anointing/Election)*

20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Yeshua and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20:20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his

hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 20:21 Then said Yeshua to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 20:23 Whose so ever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins ye retain, they are retained. (*Spirit of Anointing/Election / Spirit of Rest/Shalom*)

And pray tell what can we see from these B'rit Chadasha references specifically dealing with Messiah Yeshua? Not surprisingly it would appear that the references depict a similar pattern to that exposed during the review of the Tanakh:

1. Spirit of Knowledge & Fear of the LORD
2. Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding
3. Spirit of Counsel & Might
4. Spirit of Anointing
5. Spirit of Prophecy
6. Spirit of Life/Transformation
7. Spirit of Rest/Shalom
8. Full - Un-meted Spiritual Endowment

So perhaps for the sake of discussion we might for the moment want to at least consider that we can see a consistent pattern of "seven" discrete Spirits and an eighth that appears to be the embodiment of all the aforementioned "seven" ... and or something else. And we can see these patterns emerge in both the Tanakh and the B'rit Chadasha!

And there are other Scriptures that will bear testimony to these patterns:

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 12:2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of Elohim calleth Yeshua accursed: and that no man can say that Yeshua is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 12:5 And there are differences of administrations, but

the same Lord. 12:6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same Elohim which worketh all in all. 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 12:8 For to one is given by the *Spirit the word of wisdom*; to another *the word of knowledge* by the same Spirit; 12:9 *To another faith* by the same Spirit; to another *the gifts of healing* by the same Spirit; 12:10 *To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues*: 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

We should be able to discern with these passages: Spirit of Knowledge & Fear of the LORD | Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding | Spirit of Counsel & Might | Spirit of Anointing/Election | Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation | Spirit of Rest/Shalom

Ephesians 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of Elohim which is given me to youward: 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Messiah) 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; ... 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, *to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*; ... 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 4:2 *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love*; 4:3 *Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* ... 4:11 And he gave some, *apostles*; and some, *prophets*; and some, *evangelists*; and some, *pastors and teachers*; 4:12 *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Messiah*: 4:13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of Elohim, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah*: 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even Messiah*: 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, *according to*

the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

We should be able to discern within these passages: Spirit of Knowledge & Fear of the LORD | Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding | Spirit of Counsel & Might | Spirit of Anointing/Election | Spirit of Prophecy/Revelation | Spirit of Life/Transformation | Spirit of Rest/Shalom

And we could assuredly continue on and on but let it suffice for now that these specific references provide enough witness to the bestowing of "spiritual gifts" ... for the time being and serve to confirm the working framework of the pattern associated with the "seven discrete Spirits of G_D" ... now seen in the Tanakh ... the GOSPEL ... and the Epistles.

Now let us take a look at some additional B'rit Chadasha passages that can shed even more light into the workings of "the Spirit"!

John 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: *for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Yeshua was not yet glorified.*)

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Yeshua Messiah, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of Elohim, 1:2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 1:3 Concerning his Son Yeshua Messiah our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 1:4 And declared to be the Son of Elohim with power, *according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:* 1:5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

We see in John and Romans where the Holy Spirit was made available only through the glorification of Yeshua after completion of the Messianic mission!

Hebrews 9:13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Messiah, *who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to Elohim*, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living Elohim?

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of Elohim; and every one that loveth is born of Elohim, and knoweth Elohim. 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not Elohim; *for Elohim is love*. 4:9 *In this was manifested the love of Elohim toward us, because that Elohim sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*. 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved Elohim, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 15:12 *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you*. 15:13 *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*. 15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

We see in Hebrews and from John where the Holy Spirit is the eternal Spirit of G_D MOST HIGH and the Spirit of Love ... the SPIRIT in which Messiah's self-sacrifice was offered.

Galatians 4:6 *And because ye are sons, Elohim hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father*. 4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of Elohim through Messiah.

The Holy Spirit responsive to Messiah's glorification is the Spirit of Yeshua ... G_D and Messiah are ONE!

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 14:19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 14:20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 14:22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 14:23 Yeshua answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

The Holy Spirit is given to those who love Messiah as an indwelling of Messiah and the Father!

Ephesians 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Messiah, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Messiah. 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, *after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

The Holy Spirit is the seal of the promise of salvation!

1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which Elohim hath prepared for them that love him. 2:10 *But Elohim hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of Elohim.* 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of Elohim knoweth no man, but the Spirit of Elohim. 2:12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of Elohim; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of Elohim.* 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 8:24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 8:25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: *for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* 8:27 *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of Elohim.*

We see in Corinthians and Romans where the Holy Spirit interacts on our behalf ... making intercession ... revealing our deepest secrets to G_D ... revealing to us what G_D has for us!

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim. 1:2 The same was in the beginning with Elohim. 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 1:13 *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible Elohim, the firstborn of every creature: 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

We see from John and Paul where Messiah Yeshua is revealed to be the eternal force of G_D's essence used for creation!

John 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, he that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. 1:16 And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Yeshua Messiah. 1:18 *No man hath seen Elohim at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

Matthew 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

We see from the Gospels where Yeshua reveals that no created being has ever seen G_D except for himself and those who he reveals the Father to by the Holy Spirit!

1 John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Yeshua is the Messiah is born of Elohim: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 5:2 By this we know that we

love the children of Elohim, when we love Elohim, and keep his commandments. 5:3 For this is the love of Elohim, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 5:4 For whatsoever is born of Elohim overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5:5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Yeshua is the Son of Elohim? 5:6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Yeshua Messiah; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 5:7 *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

Messiah (the Word), G_D's Holy Spirit and G_D the invisible all powerful and unfathomable force of all existence are the witnesses that testify to the truth!

Commentary:

It would certainly appear that not only have we been able to discern the pattern of "Seven Spiritual Gifts" within the B'rit Chadasha but even more importantly it appears that our handling of the Word has enabled us to peer into the nature of G_D a bit deeper and bring forth an explanation associated with the enigmatic "Eighth Spirit" ... that being the very Spirit of G_D MOST HIGH ... the Holy Spirit ... the Spirit of Pure Love! And what we've learned:

- The Holy Spirit was made available only through the glorification of Yeshua after completion of the Messianic mission!
- The Holy Spirit is the eternal Spirit of G_D MOST HIGH!
- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Messiah Yeshua ... G_D and Messiah are ONE!
- The Holy Spirit is given to those who love Messiah as an indwelling of Messiah and Father G_D!
- The Holy Spirit is the seal of the promise of salvation!

- The Holy Spirit interacts on our behalf ... making intercession ... revealing our deepest secrets to G_D ... revealing to us what G_D has for us!
- Messiah Yeshua is the eternal force of G_D's essence used for creation!
- No created being has ever seen G_D except for Messiah and those who he reveals the Father to by the Holy Spirit!
- Messiah (the Word), G_D's Holy Spirit and G_D the invisible all powerful and unfathomable force of all existence are the witnesses that testify to the truth!

Let us now look at the other clues we received from the Revelation regarding this matter in light of what we now understand:

Revelation

1:4: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; *and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;*

4:5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of Elohim.

5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the Seven Spirits of G_D sent forth into all the earth.

It would appear that we can begin to make some conclusions based upon the diligence done thus far and these clues from Revelation:

- 1) The Seven Spirits in front of G_D's throne represent those key eternal spiritual elements of G_D's power ... G_D is: Knowledge; Wisdom/Understanding; Counsel/Might;

Anointing/Election; Prophecy/Revelation; Life/Transformation and finally G_D is Rest/Shalom!

- 2) Yeshua ... G_D's Word from Creation itself is imbued with the spiritual outpouring of G_D's Seven Spirits which he dispenses at his will and authority upon the creation by the commandment of the Father!
- 3) Yeshua himself is integrally indwelt by the Holy Spirit of G_D MOST HIGH providing a connection point to G_D and the creation through himself!
- 4) Because of Yeshua's perfect love for humanity and himself manifesting as a new creation (the first fruits of the living to G_D) he has become empowered to send forth G_D's Holy Spirit in his own NAME and AUTHORITY!
- 5) Responsive to the outpouring of Yeshua's Holy Spirit, humanity is no longer limited to being clothed in spiritual endowment but now has access to the Holy Spirit of G_D MOST HIGH through Messiah Yeshua!

Quite frankly dear reader the implications are staggering! When we consider what the Scriptures are pointing towards ... it is a dynamic unlike any Trinitarian doctrine and far more complex.

What at least appears to be a more appropriate construct ... that is the Nature of G_D ... is that we are looking at an eternal co-existent plurality (G_D-Head) that is at all times ONE or "ECHAD" in a Hebraic perspective!

A singular plurality that does not operate independently but is bound in perfect unity ... orchestrating the unfathomable will and force of G_D the Father through his eternal Word by his eternal Holy Spirit.

When we consider this dynamic before creation came into being we must accept that G_D is totally Spirit ... whatever this really translates to? Meaning that all elements of G_D's plurality are in essence Spirit.

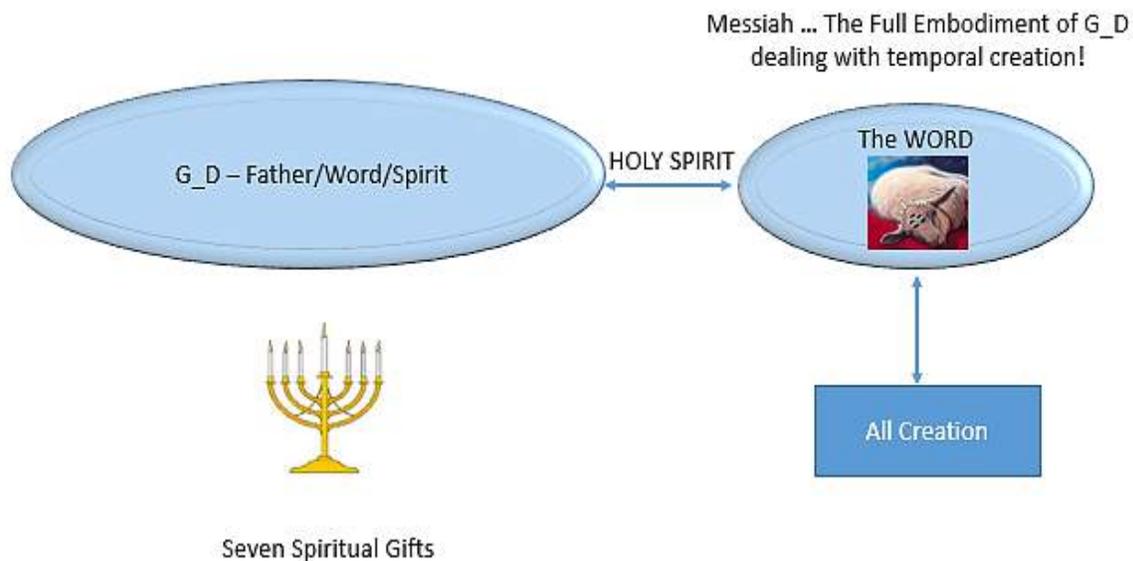
When we consider this dynamic with respects to "creation" however it appears that Yeshua (the Word) is the elemental component G_D uses to undertake creation and then interact with that same creation.

By bestowing G_D the Father's own Holy Spirit in Yeshua all good and useful spiritual gifts of the Father are availed to humanity through Yeshua and wielded completely in accordance with the Father's will through the Spirit.

Still further it appears that from a creation standpoint that our interface with G_D is strictly through and in Yeshua. This reality is of course mind boggling when we then have to consider that the manifestation of G_D within the Tanakh ... at all times and at all levels is with and through Yeshua. ALL interactions with G_D ... from a temporal creation perspective is with Yeshua and because of his Holy Spirit indwelling ... there remains a perfect interaction with the invisible all powerful G_D!

This dynamic is so mysterious and perfect that even responsive to Yeshua's mighty Messianic Mission that the Holy Spirit being sent forth upon humanity is revealed to be not just the Holy Spirit of the Father but also the Holy Spirit of Yeshua himself ... quite EXTRAORDINARY!

Les us for a moment consider a different visual to explain such mysterious truths.



What we can see from the visual is that there is no three independent parties ... communicating to act as one. What we have is a singular plurality (naturally defying all comprehension) which manifests as another singular plurality ... the later plurality being encapsulated within the Word and the former being encapsulated within The Father ... and in both instances the G_D-HEAD operates in the same exact manner!

So we don't have three independent parties operating in unison ... we have two manifestations of the same singular plurality working in perfect unison and each manifestation is co-existent simultaneously ... or so it would appear until such time that all things are made anew!

So there you have it dear reader ... I know it is a different pill to swallow but perhaps ... just perhaps mankind ... in its Hellenistic framework ... and its need to have an explanation for everything has put G_D into a theological box that simply can't withstand serious scrutiny.

Oh most assuredly the construct that has been put together herein may indeed be flawed ... how could it not be given the limitations of people and the unfathomable reality of G_D ... but all the same it would appear that the Holy Scriptures would refute a Trinitarian philosophy even under cursory review circumstances.

In any event the reader may still be wondering why such effort was made to review what most believers hold to be true already. In light of the fact these eternal truths can be discerned within the confines of the Hebrew Tanakh (Old Testament) ... it must again be recognized and accepted that the truths of a singular plurality (G_D-HEAD) are integral to the Hebrew Religion—be they accepted by mainstream Jews or not!

It is apparent G_D wanted people to not only get this fundamental understanding of him straight but to also understand this “truth” is not something new but a “truth” prevalent from the beginning of existence.

Trinitarian doctrine may indeed be considered “Christian” and may not per se be completely accurate as we have seen herein ... but as we can see from this last review the mystery and foundation on which this doctrine resides was revealed long before Christianity came into existence. As such we should essentially accept the notion that the mysterious and complex “singular-plurality” of ELOHIM - G_D MOST HIGH to be fundamental to the Hebrew Religion. Regardless if mainstream Judaism accepts this notion or not.

The author would be remiss however if it was not stated that it is the post-Messiah Testimony which brings to life all that was foretold in the Tanakh. Only in the post-Messiah Testimony does G_D tangibly reveal his G_D-head in a manner which people can comprehend. Only in the post-Messiah Testimony does the unified nature of G_D become clear to people’s senses. It is only in the tangible reality of Yeshua does mankind witness the incarnate Salvation of G_D as a real and living distinct manifestation of the G_D-head. Only at Yeshua’s baptism, at the hands of John the Immerser, do we see the singular plurality of the G_D-HEAD in operation; the Father/Son/Holy Spirit.

Only after Yeshua’s exaltation do we tangibly witness the fullness of the Holy Spirit gifted to humanity during the Festival of Shavu’ot. In a nutshell it is only when accounting for a Hebrew Scriptural Continuum that we can understand G_D’s Nature and plan in a proper context. If one does not account for the Tanakh then one loses an understanding that this is the way which was

set up for all time from the beginning. A way that is integral to the eternal covenant between G_D and his chosen people. Conversely if one does not account for the Gospel of Yeshua the Messiah then one does not see the fulfillment and perfection of the plan. One does not receive the benefit of the manifested G_D-HEAD in human tangibility. One in effect misses the boat!

It would certainly appear that G_D's very Nature ... his LOVE can be imparted to believers through Messiah Yeshua for the distinct purpose of manifesting and reflecting his HOLINESS within the creation.

It would also appear that even today the Seven Spirits of G_D's essential power are gifted to humanity through Messiah on an as needed/desired basis to ensure the good will and plan of G_D!

Still further it would appear that the requesting of all spiritual gifts is by way of the Holy Spirit in a manner revealed to be essentially indescribable for us humans ... ultimately it appears that Yeshua really means that "we can nothing without him!"

Perhaps at the end of the day G_D provides us these leads regarding his nature not just for our awe and amazement but because it has a direct impact on how G_D's nature through Messiah works in his children?

The author would subsequently challenge the reader to ponder why it would take the developing Church of Messiah three centuries to discern these fundamental elements of "truth." It would seem plausible to contend that the delay by Messiah's early Church in developing this fundamental doctrine was due to the previously reviewed factors and in all probability a result of pursuing this endeavor for a lengthy time frame only within the context of the post-Messiah B'rit Chadasha Testament.

Even more puzzling is why is it the mainstream Hebrew Religion does not discern these truths even to this day? It is most unfortunate that traditional Judaism has yet to grasp the reality that the B'rit Chadasha renewed covenant represents the completion of G_D's plan as prophesied in the Tanakh. In light of transpired history and continued discord relative to the nature of G_D, there should be no question as to why our Creator provided us the keys to understanding the fundamental

aspects of his complex, awesome and supreme nature. G_D gave us these clues so that our searching of his revelation to mankind would leave us breathless while bringing him glory!

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Salutatory Address - Role of Messiah

When we look at the Salutatory Address of Revelations we see a clearly defined perspective relative to the nature of Yeshua in his role as Messiah. Yeshua is declared to be:

- The faithful witness;
- The first begotten of the dead;
- The prince of the kings of the Earth;
- He who loved us and washed our sins with his own blood;
- He who made us kings and priests unto G_D; and
- He who bears testimony to the record of G_D's Revelation.

Outside of the Salutatory Address of the Revelation, it is only in the astounding combined corpus of the Apostle Paul's inspired writings do we come close to fully encapsulating the entire mission of Yeshua. In this Salutatory Address of Revelations however we have the single definitive inspired work which reaches out to the hearts, minds and souls of mankind and screams: "seek and you shall find me."

As the reader is well aware, with this being the last inspired testimony from G_D to mankind, it makes perfect sense that he would provide for us the keys to understanding his Salvation. Like most of Holy Scripture though it is designed to be found through steadfast and patient immersion. So let us explore the Holy Word of G_D and track the leads he deemed so important to provide to us. This search however must be undertaken under the auspices of a Hebraic context.

* * * * *

**“Yeshua who loved us and washed our sins with his own blood” and
“Yeshua the first begotten of the dead.”**

The author has combined these two Messianic references for review because of the obvious connections. At the highest level of review we see in Messiah the means of “sin atonement” through his perfect blood sacrifice. As a consequence of his sacrifice Messiah died but was resurrected and as such became the first begotten of the dead. These two references can safely be regarded as being inter-related.

To begin this topical discourse it should be presumed that “death” and “mortality” are the result of sin and as such sin subjugates all people under its penalty. All believers of course recognize that Yeshua allowed himself to be sacrificed for the atonement of peoples’ sins, but how does this really work? Is this some abstract mystical occurrence or an accounting type of paper transaction? Perhaps Holy Scripture can provide us with a deeper understanding?

Let us focus closely on the “blood of Yeshua washing away our sins” declaration and see if the Holy Scripture can provide insights to help better understand this. Leviticus states:

And the Lord spoke unto Moses: Herewith shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. ... And he shall take two he-goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering. And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself, and for his house. And he shall take the two goats, and set them before the Lord ...

And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for Azazel. And Aaron shall present the goat upon which the lot fell for the Lord, and offer him for a sin-offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell for Azazel, shall be set alive before the Lord, to make atonement over him, to send him away for Azazel into the wilderness. ...

Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with his blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the ark-cover, and before the ark-cover. And he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all their sins . . .

And when he hath made an end of atoning for the holy place, and the tent of meeting, and the altar, he shall present the live goat. And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of an appointed man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land which is cut off; and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. . . . And he (Aaron) shall bathe his flesh in water . . . and come forth, and offer his burnt-offering and the burnt-offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people . . .

And the bullock of the sin-offering, and the goat of the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be carried forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins . . . And it shall be a statute forever unto you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and shall do no manner of work, the home-born, or the stranger that sojourneth among you. For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord. It is a Sabbath of solemn rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; it is a statute forever.

And the priest, who shall be anointed and who shall be consecrated to be priest in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen garments, even the holy garments. And he shall make atonement for the most holy place, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar; and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make atonement for the children of Israel because of all their sins once in the year.' And he did as the Lord commanded Moses. (Leviticus: 16:1–34)

These passages from the Tanakh do indeed provide deep insight into the sacrificial actions of Yeshua. We first observe that “sin atonement” was an integral element of G_D’s sacrificial system. So perhaps unknown to the reader it should be concluded that sin atonement also is a primary component of G_D’s covenantal relationship with Israel. Once again contrary to popular belief the

roots of Messiah's role can be found in pre-Messiah Scriptures. Sin atonement is not exclusive to the B'rit Chadasha/New Testament. Of course what is exclusive to the B'rit Chadasha is the perfect sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah.

Beyond establishing this covenantal connection however we can see in Yeshua's physical human death that he did in fact literally take on the sins of all people just like the goat which was "cut off" from the people. If the sacrifice of Yeshua was only symbolic then Messiah would not need to die because he was personally spotless and without sin. So in essence the transfer of peoples' sins to Yeshua was real with Messiah literally bearing those sins and in all likelihood suffering the emotional and psychological burden thereof. The author would suggest the reader picture in their mind the mythical Atlas bearing up the weight of the world on his shoulders and the torment he is under; now picture Yeshua bearing up the weight of all the sins of the world on his shoulders and imagine the torment and strain that he was subjected to.

We also see the blood of Yeshua acting as the holy purifying agent for the people. The offering up of the holy blood is what washes away the impurity of peoples' sin and sanctifies their altar, the soul. We see from the sacrificial system why Messiah had to shed his blood. Although Yeshua bore upon himself our sins, there still, according to G_D's will, had to be death, for this is what the penalty of sin is in accordance to G_D's design. As such in accordance with G_D's design, Yeshua as the purifying sacrifice had to die!

We learn from the sacrificial ordinance of G_D that the cleansing of people's sin is in effect a two-fold operation. First there is the transference of sins to the sacrifice and then there is the death of the sacrifice by which people escape their own penalty of sin which is death. In essence the escape goat becomes the "scapegoat!" We also see that our sins are really lifted from us!

So Messiah's sacrifice is unquestionably inter-related with the Hebrew sacrificial system handed down by G_D. In fact, as is the case with all of Yeshua's actions, we see the continual pattern of fulfillment and completion of all things in Yeshua. In Yeshua we see the "Sacrificial Sin Offering" is not really done away with at all but rather completed and hence established for all time. Subsequently this is one of the rare rites of the Hebrew Religion where the mandate to

perform the ritual is no longer necessary for G_D's children given Yeshua's everlasting actions. Since Messiah's offering was perfect and everlasting there is no need to re-sacrifice the sin offering. There can be no adequate substitute for Yeshua's perfect sacrifice and of course Yeshua need not be sacrificed more than once.

What we should not lose sight of as well is G_D's mandate to keep for all times the Festival of Atonement (Yom Kippur). As G_D declares in Exodus 30:10: "It is most holy unto the Lord!" In light of Messiah's willing sacrifice for people it is this "High Festival" through which Yeshua is honored and glory to G_D is given. It is on this High Festival when believers, after preparing themselves during the ten days of Trumpets, afflict their souls in repentance. The inescapable conclusion once again is there is no disconnect between Yeshua and all of Holy Scripture. In fact when the sin-atonement aspect of the covenant and the sacrificial system are interjected with Yeshua the Messiah, it really sheds additional light on why "Passover"/"Pesach" was Yeshua's appointed time. There are no coincidences with G_D!

We now need to turn our sights on Yeshua as the "first begotten of the dead." We see in the previous review where Messiah's perfect sacrifice provides the means of eternal sin atonement. It is also a Scriptural declaration under the auspices of the perfected covenant, that mortal people can become immortal and share in G_D's glory. Obviously then it is in Yeshua that both cleansing and exaltation to immortality takes place. Because Yeshua in his Earthly/Human nature expired without personal sin, death could keep no hold of him. Yeshua was not subject to the penalty of sin and was subsequently worthy of judgment because he was righteous. In judgment Messiah was raised from death thereby making Yeshua the first begotten of the dead and the first of the new creation planned from the beginning of the world.

Although this truth may be well known to the reader let us take a closer look at the implications this dynamic brings forth. Yeshua being "the first" implies none before him have been begotten. So what does this tell us? Does it mean all others who have died before Yeshua cannot be begotten? Fortunately to find the answer we have to look no further than one quote from Messiah himself. John 5:25 states, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of G_D: and they that hear shall live."

So we know the atoning of sins wrought by Yeshua with his blood stands for people of all time. We also know the exaltation to immortality wrought by Yeshua stands for people of all time. It would seem the ability of G_D to present Messiah to anyone, even in death, is within his authority and capabilities. How the awesome G_D conducts such occurrences is outside the comprehension of this author but one thing is certain; it will be done according to what the Son of Man says!

Understanding at a rudimentary level the dynamic of Messiah's sin atonement and resurrection is one thing. Understanding what Messiah's actions mean to each person is a different issue. At first glance it is simply a clear fact: "He washed us from our sins!" The author's questions are: "Which sins did he wash us of?" "And do individuals need to do anything to be given this cleansing?" Big questions indeed!

We must start by confirming first who is the "us" being referred to in this passage. Is it everyone who ever existed and is to come? We should understand that Yeshua's sacrifice was indeed for all people of all ages. If this is so then is not everyone automatically granted salvation? We know this answer to be no! Why? From Matthew this is what Yeshua said during his sermon on the mount: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it". (Matthew 7:13-14)

We know that most people will perish by their own choices, so then something must qualify us for the sin atonement won for us by Messiah. Can Scripture lead us to this answer? It most certainly can! We see in Acts: Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do (since Messiah has already come)? Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yeshua the Messiah for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:37-38)

Peter provided the answer as clearly as it could ever have been explained. The cleansing of sins is paramount and of course dependent upon sincere repentance and then what is needed is to be baptized in the name of Yeshua so the gift of the Holy Spirit can be received. Repentance is first and foremost. Baptism would then be a logical progression after atonement. The baptism affirming the acceptance of Yeshua in faith and in response to that genuine faith there would be a receipt of the Holy Spirit being the baptism of fire through which re-birth in G_D is gifted to individuals. These actions must be viewed in the context of a life changing decision. The experience is essentially a real and tangible transformation of the person!

So the reader may think this would be fairly easy. If one were to do what Peter says then would one be in the good graces of G_D and be saved? If this were all that was to be done then Messiah would be wrong because this would certainly be no narrow or difficult path. It would seem more reasonable that the actions discussed by Peter in Acts signal the start of the journey as opposed to the completion of the journey.

So is the author implying that faith does not save? Of course not! It is true that grace from G_D is the only instrument of salvation lest people could earn salvation of ourselves and render G_D untruthful. It is also known that the grace of G_D is bestowed upon people because of genuine repentance and genuine faith in Yeshua the mediator and Messiah. But how then does this faith in Yeshua become validated? How then is it tested? How then do people walk the narrow path? Why then do not all who call upon the name of Yeshua find salvation? Fortunately Yeshua himself provides the answer. Here is what Messiah said during his sermon on the mount: Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and

shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:13–19)

Matthew 19:16–17 says, “And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, G_D: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

Once more we hear directly from Yeshua himself on the issue. It would seem the cleansing of sins is not a lifetime immunity deal at all. For Yeshua warns his own disciples they must not lose their salt (the Spirit within them) for if they do so then they become useless and will be discarded. So Messiah declares without question that faith can be rendered useless if the faith does not translate into obedience of the commandments! Yeshua declares faith can indeed be invalidated! On the other hand if the Spirit is alive within an individual then the world will know this by their works which give glory to G_D. The world will know this because the individual will keep G_D’s commands and statutes. This is how Yeshua defines how faith in him is validated and the walking of the narrow path works for true believers.

Additionally from Matthew: Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Matthew 6:19–21)

So it is apparent works alone do not save, but they certainly act to validate one’s faith in G_D when performed for the glory of G_D by the transforming Spirit of Messiah. Still further it is works which create treasures for a believer; treasures that will serve to determine one’s reward upon Judgment. How can the author make this declaration? Yeshua himself declares this in Matthew 16:27: For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Ultimately if there are no works then there is no glory to G_D, and if there be no glory for G_D then there is no genuine faith because the Spirit of Messiah lives to bring G_D glory! From

a practical application of faith perspective then it is not enough to keep one's faith inside as a secret. The outward expression of the believer must serve to be a light which gives glory to G_D. Given the difficulties people have within the modern society that frowns upon such overt practicing faith, it is not difficult to understand why believers do not let their light shine. It is indeed much easier to walk the broad path and fit in with the general population.

* * * * *

He Who Made Us Kings and Priests unto G_D

Regarding this passage one must undoubtedly, out of sheer necessity, seek the meaning of this within a Hebraic context. The first objective is to understand the roots and nature of the "Priesthood."

King Melchizedek of Salem (ancient Jerusalem), conjectured as possibly being Shem the son of Noah by another name, is the first person in Scripture to be called a "Kohen" or priest. Genesis 14:18: "And Melchizedek king of Salem (Peace) brought forth bread and wine; and he was priest of G_D the Most High."

Important to understand is that the priestly order in a Hebraic context was established and continued via a bloodline lineage. This is another major reason why the nature of the "first born birthright" is so important in Hebrew culture. As the reader may know the bloodline from Shem to Isaac is documented within Biblical genealogies. So when Esau sold the birthright of the first born to Jacob, it would seem the Priesthood was sold along with it, because by right the priesthood heritage belongs to the first born and his heirs. In this manner the priesthood lineage was maintained within the community of G_D's chosen people. Remember it is through the lineage of Jacob/Israel that G_D forged his chosen people.

Only when the firstborn of Israel sinned in the desert by worshiping the golden calf/bull, was the priesthood given by G_D to the tribe of Levi, which had not been tainted by this incident. Although it would seem Moses would have been the logical recipient of the priestly order along with the leadership of the Jewish people, he argued with G_D that he should not be the leader. It was apparently then given to Aaron (Moses older brother) by G_D. Aaron thus received the priesthood along with his children and any descendants that would be born subsequently. We can find in Exodus the first real meaningful passages regarding priests: And Moses went up unto G_D, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying: ‘Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will hearken unto my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own treasure from among all peoples; for all the earth is mine; *and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.* These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.’ (Exodus 19:3–6)

We also see in Scripture G_D then designated a priestly order and priestly offices which would minister to G_D on behalf of the people of Israel. Furthermore G_D even separated the tribe of Levi at the time of Moses and Aaron to serve as ministers with special obligations. Under this arrangement commanded by G_D the tribe of Levi would receive no physical territorial inheritance when the Israelites would enter the Promised Land. The Levites were to be given living rights within “cities” established within tribal territories and for sustenance they were to be provided tithes (contributions) from the rest of Israel. This priestly order is of great importance within the relationship of G_D and his people.

Once more we see the foundation of Yeshua the Messiah’s role rooted within the Tanakh. Interestingly enough we see where the Levites, though set aside to perform G_D’s priestly ordinances, were commanded to be dispersed throughout all Israel. Dispersed but living amongst all the other tribes. As we see the nature of the priestly order was one of special designation but not one of separation.

In looking at the role of the high priest functionally, it is apparent the position was of tremendous importance. He was entrusted with the stewardship of the Urim and Thummim. On

Yom Kippur he alone entered the Holy of Holies, to make atonement for his house and for the people; on the occasion he wore white linen garments and more costly vestments instead of his regular attire. He alone could offer the sacrifices for the sins of the priests, or of the people, or of himself, and only he could officiate at the sacrifices following his own or another priest's consecration. The High Priest also offered a meal offering every morning and evening for himself and the whole body of the priesthood. Other information concerning functions and duties of the High priest is not readily apparent within Scripture. Undoubtedly however he was privileged most likely to take part at his own desire in any of the priestly rites. Josephus the historian declared the high priest almost invariably participated in the ceremonies on the Sabbath, the New Moon, and the of course all of the Holy Festivals. Ultimately then the high priest functioned as a mediator for the people and was to be holy unto G_D.

So now that the roots of the priesthood have been established and briefly summarized historically, it can be seen the priesthood is a critical component of G_D's plan for his chosen people. We see the priestly order, akin to royalty, traditionally followed along a genealogical path. Subsequently priests essentially had to marry and have children to maintain the priestly bloodline. We see the priestly order's role was primarily to: undertake the holy service (avodah); act as mediator between G_D and the people; and of course to insure that the chosen peoples' culture/society was a "holy" nation abiding by the statutes and commands of G_D.

So what shall we say given the passage in Revelations that priests are made of us by the work of Yeshua the Messiah? Initially we must of course view Yeshua in his role as the High Priest. The atonement of sins as the intercessor role of Messiah within this context enables us to see the plan of G_D unfold in a contiguous as opposed to original New Testament fashion. Without this Hebraic context there is no connectivity between Yeshua's personal sacrifice and the making of priests in "us." Certainly this aspect was not lost on Paul who in his epistle to the Hebrews declares: For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to G_D, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. (Hebrews 2:16–18)

As Scripture shows us the priestly order was sustained through a bloodline inheritance, just as the original covenant with G_D and Israel was a bloodline dynamic. In Yeshua however we see the perfected covenant expanding to include those peoples traditionally not of the Hebrew bloodline. We also in similar fashion see the priestly order being expanded also to include priests not of the Levitical or even Hebrew bloodline. In Yeshua all peoples of genuine faith and of the Holy Spirit become connected with the bloodline of Yeshua—both Hebrew and Gentile alike.

Through perfect intercession and the covering of sins once and for all Yeshua becomes the High Priest for all time. In this respect there can be no other being serving in this role be they of an ecclesiastical position or not. If a spotted human could, through the blood of animals, intercede perfectly on behalf of others for the sake of their sins, then Messiah need not have been sacrificed. But the truth stands. With genuine faith in Yeshua and receipt of the Holy Spirit then each faithful believer becomes the priest unto the temple of G_D which is their soul. In this instance holiness becomes the priestly requirement of each and every believer.

When a believer is then imbued with the Holy Spirit and tends to G_D's Temple within the soul they become sanctified. This is how the true believing body of Yeshua the Messiah is transformed into a nation of priests. A kingdom premised not upon geographical boundaries but a kingdom premised upon spiritual unification.

Herein is a passage from Luke which best describes a just and rightful role of a true priest: And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, thou shalt love the Lord thy G_D with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Yeshua, And who is my neighbor? And Yeshua answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place,

came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, he that shewed mercy on him. Then said Yeshua unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. (Luke 10:25–37)

The reader must understand the Hebraic priestly dynamic within this parable. It should not be inferred that the priest or the Levite totally lacked compassion. Within the legalistic Rabbinic framework however there would have been numerous instances where the touching of this injured individual would have rendered the priest or Levite “unclean” and possibly inhibited them in conducting their priestly or Levitical functions. Once again Yeshua was correcting what was wrong. The command of love and compassion must outweigh the command of rabbinical regulation.

This construct and proper understanding of this parable is only relevant within a Hebraic context. What this means for individuals under the auspices of the B’rit Chadasha renewed covenant is that a believer must be a priest of love and compassion. A priest whose light shines forth and brings glory to G_D! A representative of the living G_D! Holiness, righteousness and closeness to G_D are no longer reserved for the priests of the Temple but for each and every person who calls on the name of Yeshua as their personal Messiah.

Now the reader in no way should infer that the “priesthood” has been done away with. This is not the intent of the review herein. There is much Scriptural support for the continuation of a “priestly order” within the B’rit Chadasha construct. In fact the reader will recall a previous discourse wherein the “renting of the Kingdom of G_D away from the Jewish religious establishment” was covered in detail. In this light we can see Yeshua establishing the priestly order through his own apostles just as G_D did with Aaron under the auspices of the eternal covenant. A priestly order which is now premised upon faith in Yeshua! A priestly order which is now

operational through the Holy Spirit! A priestly order which is still premised upon a genealogical heritage, but now the genealogical heritage is of and through Yeshua the Messiah.

From a logical perspective however we must also understand the genealogical nature of this nation of priests that is in Yeshua the Messiah. To get the most succinct picture the author refers to Paul's letter to the Romans: For I speak to you Gentiles . . . If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh (Jews), and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou (Gentiles), being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: For if G_D spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of G_D: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for G_D is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? (Romans 11:13–24)

The reader should not find Paul's explanation difficult to understand. What he is saying is that Yeshua is the tree root and the chosen Hebrew people are natural branches. Under the auspices of the perfected covenant Gentiles take on a new nature and shed their "wild" or unnatural spiritual being and take on the nature of the natural branches. In effect Gentiles become like their brethren the Hebrews through faith and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Please do not mistake this message from Paul as being "symbolic!" Paul is being literal in his commentary and believers actually are grafted into the "Holy Tree Root" who is Messiah. Bringing this point back full circle, what should be recognized is the eternal continuity in G_D's plan for

his chosen people. In Yeshua, we see the bringing forth not of a new priesthood but the establishment of the priesthood under the auspices of the fulfilled and perfected covenant.

G_D has not disenfranchised the Hebrew royal line of priests but established it for all time in all peoples. G_D has established it for all eternity with Yeshua the Messiah functioning as the perfect and eternal High Priest (Kohen Gadol)! With the priestly order established within the bloodline of Yeshua we can now readily understand fully the context in which Messiah makes people kings unto G_D.

Although there can be only one King of the Universe, G_D, we see from Scripture how at the behest of the chosen people G_D did establish an Earthly king. The reader is probably aware this was done through Samuel the prophet when Saul was anointed King of Israel. Similar to the proposition of the priesthood however Saul lost favor with G_D through disobedience and the genealogical line of kingship was removed from his bloodline and given to the house of David. 1st Chronicles states: So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, because of the word of the Lord, which he kept not; and also for that he asked counsel of a ghost, to inquire thereby, and inquired not of the Lord; therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse. (1 Chronicles 10:13–14)

1 Chronicles states: even from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel; and I will subdue all thine enemies. Moreover I tell thee that the Lord will build thee a house. And it shall come to pass, when thy days are fulfilled that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will set up thy seed after thee, who shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be to him for a father, and he shall be to me for a son; and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee; but I will settle him in my house and in my kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever.’ According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. (1 Chronicles 17:10–15)

Psalms states: Why are the nations in an uproar? And why do the peoples mutter in vain? The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his

anointed: 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' He that sitteth in heaven laugheth, the Lord hath them in derision. Then will he speak unto them in his wrath, and affright them in his sore displeasure: 'Truly it is I that have established my king upon Zion, my holy mountain.' I will tell of the decree: the Lord said unto me: 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give the nations for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' (Psalms 2:1-9)

As we see in Scripture the earthly kingship heredity was passed down through David to Yeshua the Messiah. As the reader can surmise then, when Messiah makes us kings unto G_D it is once again set in the Hebraic context of the royal bloodline. Only when people are grafted into the royal bloodline of Yeshua can there be any royal inheritance.

So ultimately what can we say about being kings and priests unto G_D through Yeshua the Messiah? Because of Yeshua the Messiah, the role of king and priest is no longer outside the reach of the common person or those separated by bloodline. Under the auspices of the perfected covenant believers can become the genealogical inheritors of the royal priestly and kingly bloodline through Yeshua. A human bloodline which was originally and still is essentially a Hebrew bloodline!

So what can we say about this inheritance with regards to daily life and general practice? The author would contend a true believer would naturally be set apart from the world of non-believers or non-inheritors. The responsibility of a true believer would be to act both kingly and priestly in accordance to the inheritance. As a priest of G_D true believers would accept the role of keeping G_D's temple, the soul, sanctified. A true believer would make G_D the central focus of life not just in thought but in actual practice. A true believer would follow the precepts of the priestly order as handed down from G_D.

From a kingly perspective a true believer would act as a king. A true believer would be a leader and not a follower. A true believer acting kingly would attempt to insure that justice and righteousness prevails in all walks of life. We see in Scripture how a king derives his righteousness;

Deuteronomy states: And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law (Torah) in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his G_D, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:18–20)

When the kingly and priestly inheritance of people is viewed within the proper Hebraic context there is more to the titles of kings and priests than simple rhetoric. Essentially the review just undertaken implies that believers undergo a spiritual transformation of incredible significance when accepting Yeshua through faith. As Paul declared; a believer is grafted into the root of Yeshua the Messiah and as such literally takes on the nature of the natural branches. When one really stops and considers this prospect it is mysterious indeed. Mysterious though it is, one cannot escape the obvious implications: 1) through faith in Yeshua believers become part of his called out community and are no longer bound to this world; 2) through faith in Yeshua believers become part of the Hebrew royal bloodline and become heirs to the inheritance of Yeshua; 3) through faith in Yeshua believers become “Sons and Daughters of G_D.”

Of course the implications relative to faith, behavior and lifestyle perspectives are far reaching as well. With this grafting into the root and subsequent royal inheritance comes much responsibility. It is apparent this type of practicing faith in any worldly environment is indeed difficult. So believers need to remember that just like the priestly and kingly heirs from Scriptural history show us, this inheritance is one that can be stripped away in the event the heirs do not conform to the ways and will of G_D. As Isaiah 53:1 declares: “Who will believe our report?”

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The Prince of the Kings of the Earth

The next reference is Yeshua as the “prince of the kings of the earth.” One would think it strange that Yeshua be referred to as a “prince” as opposed to a “king.” That is until we review it within the proper context. First we must realize the reference is made in the context of G_D as the supreme King of the Universe with Yeshua ... pertaining to the creation being the authoritative bloodline seat of royalty. Subsequently this immediately puts Yeshua above all Earthly kings and in essence in charge of the entire created Universe from a royalty perspective. This is the broader concept which we realize to be the destiny of Yeshua the Messiah who sits in a throne as the right hand of the Father.

There is however an Earthly context which should not be overlooked. In the Earthly context Yeshua is prince to all the kings of the Earth. Yeshua then is the heir to all kingdoms of the Earth; his rightful inheritance as the Son of Man. We see how King David prophesied long ago how G_D would appoint his King over Zion and he shall break the nations with a rod of iron. We also know this Earthly King would be G_D’s Son. The point being made is that we are indeed discussing an Earthly Kingdom that will be ruled by Yeshua as commanded by the Father.

Psalms states: All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord’s; and he is the ruler over the nations. All the fat ones of the earth shall eat and worship; all they that go down to the dust shall kneel before him, even he that cannot keep his soul alive. (Psalms 22:28–30)

In light of the covenant and promises to Israel it would seem apparent Messiah of Israel must establish an Earthly Kingdom. In this way justice will prevail and the enemies of the chosen people will be brought to task. Not only brought to task but made to worship Yeshua in spite of the fact in doing so their souls will not be salvaged. When viewed outside the auspices of the Hebraic context it is common belief among numerous Christians that the Earthly Kingdom is symbolic and not really coming. Holy Scripture on the other hand depicts the Earthly Kingdom in a literal sense.

As for others who conversely believe the temporal Earthly Kingdom of Messiah is already here . . . perhaps not? Scripture is never wrong and the revelations point to Messiah being

physically here as King of all nations in the future. If Yeshua is not here physically ruling the nations then we are certainly in no manner living in his Messianic Kingdom.

Regarding this literal view of Yeshua's Earthly Kingdom the author must admit there seems to be an inordinate number of modern Christians who quite frankly do not believe that the scripturally foretold Kingdom of Yeshua will be manifested in the future. The author sincerely hopes you the reader are not counted in this contingent!

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The Faithful Witness

In the second verse of Revelations chapter one, we see that we are dealing with the Word of G_D and the testimony of Yeshua the Messiah. The reader may not find this strange but the author finds the construct to be a bit "official." It appears as though things are being discussed in terms of a "courtroom testimony." This construct is of importance and this passage is connected in a significant manner with verse five wherein we see Messiah referenced as "the Faithful Witness."

So then regarding witnessing what does Holy Scripture indicate to us about its relevance to G_D and mankind? For one thing, we know it was important enough that G_D declared it to be one of his great commandments for mankind: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." So the indication is clear that G_D is truly mindful of our witnessing and the command for truthful testimony is indeed quite serious.

Exodus states: Thou shalt not utter a false report; put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou bear witness in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to pervert justice; neither shalt thou favor a poor man in his cause. (Exodus 23:1-3)

Deuteronomy states: And the judges shall inquire diligently; and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had purposed to do unto his brother; so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee. (Deuteronomy 19:18–19)

Numbers states: And these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be slain at the mouth of witnesses; but one witness shall not testify against any person that he die. (Numbers 35:29–30)

We can see from the Scriptural excerpts what G_D declares as righteous testimony. Again it is very clear that G_D is serious about truthful testimony. It is within this context that John has inspirationally delivered the important dynamic of Yeshua's testimony.

So the reader at this point is saying to themselves "OK already, so truthful testimony is important to G_D," but what does it have to do with Revelations or even Messiah? The reader must realize that we have once again a very important matter that can only be adequately understood in the context of "Hebraic roots." As we see from Scripture when dealing with "death" and "killing" there is a mandate that there be more than one witness. The reader must acknowledge that regarding the end times we are in essence dealing with the eternal death or killing of the unrighteous. We are dealing with life and death judgment! It should seem clear then G_D himself is establishing the necessary witnesses to enact righteous judgment.

What does Yeshua discuss if anything regarding witnessing? The Gospel of John states: I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, (the Baptist), and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works

that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. (John 5:30–38)

Ultimately as odd as this may sound it seems apparent G_D has given us clear indications that he, even he, will abide by the laws and statutes which he has laid down. From this we know G_D is totally righteous and holy. We know G_D does not pass along laws and statutes simply because they make life miserable for humans. We also know adherence to the Laws and Statutes set forth by G_D himself are valid forever.

In establishing the importance of witnessing and testimony we can easily conclude that a major role of Messiah is indeed to bear faithful witness. Certainly not that G_D would need a witness mind you! But keeping in mind that G_D is holy and righteous it is apparent no individual, read as people or Satan, shall question the acts or judgments of G_D and hold the lack of witnesses against him. G_D is perfect and as such will not be hypocritical with respects to his Holy Laws and Statutes.

With the importance of witnessing being established the real big question is: “To what or whom does Yeshua testify for or against?”

- 1) Let us first think in context of mankind. Scripture is clear that Messiah has been given Lordship over people with respects to judgment. Consequently it is Yeshua the Messiah who will testify either for or against all individual persons at the judgment. Yeshua will judge righteously because he will judge not as a person but as the Father would judge. There is of course one apparent notable exception to this rule and this will be in the case of the unbelieving chosen people of Israel whom Moses will testify against. The Gospel of John states: “Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuses you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:45–47).

2) Let us next think in terms of Satan, the evil one. It is Yeshua the Faithful Witness who will bear testimony against him. As a witness from the beginning of all things it is Yeshua who will uphold the Father's place and righteousness when Satan attempts to usurp the throne of the most high. Isaiah says: The nether-world from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; the shades are stirred up for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; all the kings of the nations are raised up from their thrones. All they do answer and say unto thee: 'Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the nether-world, and the noise of thy psalteries; the maggot is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.' How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst cast lots over the nations! And thou saidst in thy heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, above the stars of G_D will I exalt my throne, and I will sit upon the mount of meeting, in the uttermost parts of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. (Isaiah 14:9–14)

It will be Yeshua, the Faithful Witness from the beginning, who will testify against the evil one who dares blaspheme the Most High and Holy G_D. It will be Yeshua who will uphold the judgment of G_D against Satan.

3) Yeshua's role as the Faithful Witness with regards to people and Satan is probably most apparent to the reader. The role of Faithful Witness however which the author wants to shed greater light upon, that is probably not so apparent, is Messiah's testimony for G_D himself.

- Yeshua's testimony upholds G_D as the singular and omnipotent G_D of all creation.
- Yeshua's testimony upholds G_D as being perfect, holy and righteous.
- Yeshua's testimony upholds G_D's Laws and Statutes as being perfect and holy for all eternity.
- Yeshua's testimony upholds G_D's Holy Scripture.
- Yeshua's testimony and Earthly ministry upholds G_D as being all truthful, all loving and all merciful. G_D let his own Son suffer so that his creations made in his image could be reconciled unto himself.

- Yeshua's testimony upholds the gift of G_D's Holy Spirit for those people who genuinely call upon the name of Yeshua in faith.
- Yeshua's testimony upholds G_D as the singular means of salvation for all people.

Although the author might not have exposed any Earth shattering truths that the testimony of Yeshua upholds, the reader should be aware if the previous truths are uncontested then there are indeed far reaching consequences for any espoused believers. Without going into any further details at all, the author would encourage the reader to ponder a few simple questions.

- If Holy Scripture is upheld for all times then why would any believer not seek within Holy Scripture those practices and behaviors that G_D has commanded of them?
- If Holy Scripture is upheld for all times then why would any believer willingly and knowingly act in contrary manner to those practices and behaviors that G_D has commanded of them?
- If Holy Scripture is upheld for all times then why would any believer accept, as authoritative, any explanations external from Holy Scripture that promote practices and behaviors that are contrary to those commanded of us by G_D?
- If Yeshua as our singular means of reconciliation with G_D is true then all that Yeshua testifies too is true. There can be no contradiction between Yeshua and Holy Scripture. There can only be contradiction between people's ideas/traditions and Holy Scripture.

If by some chance the reader is not quite sure what the implications of this argument are then the author will declare it plainly. G_D has withheld nothing within Holy Scripture that is pertinent to salvation for people.

- He has provided for people the commands and statutes which he wants people to live by.
- He has provided for people the "Appointed Times" through which he wants people to revolve their lives around.
- He has provided for people the means of receiving grace through genuine faith in his Messiah.

- He has provided the means through which people can be reborn of his Holy Spirit; a rebirth which will result in people bearing fruit that testifies to their indwelling.
- He has provided for people, in his Salvation—Yeshua, the means of receiving mercy.
- He has provided for people the means of eternal life in him.

With all of these truths being set before people how then can people say they do not need to follow the eternal statutes and commands of G_D? How then can people say they do not need to keep the Biblical “Appointed Times?” How then can people say they do not need to bear fruit and bring glory to G_D? How then can people say they can be saved without being reborn?

Could it possibly be that G_D’s mandates of “eternal” and “forever” only meant “until the time of Yeshua the Messiah?” Could it possibly be that love has magically done away with G_D’s plan for humanity? Could it possibly be that all the aspects of G_D’s plan for mankind depicted in the Tanakh and the B’rit Chadasha are only meant for the Jews?

In essence there can be only one truth. The truth as revealed to us in all of Holy Scripture. Any espoused truth which runs contrary to Holy Scripture is not truth. If it is not truth then it is false. If it is false then it has its roots in Satan who is the father of all lies and deceit. So the big question is now this: “When judgment time comes for a person, how will Yeshua, the Faithful Witness, testify on behalf of a person?”

Will Yeshua say, “You called on my name so come into the bosom of my Father?” Perhaps; but let us recall Yeshua said he who calls on him in faith will not be turned away but he also said that many will call upon him and he will turn them away. Obviously then, as Scripture has shown us within this work, there is more to genuine faith than simply “calling” upon the name of Yeshua. Genuine faith means: joyfully accepting and adhering to G_D’s statutes and commands, abiding by the appointed times G_D has set forth, immersing oneself in G_D’s ways and not the ways of the world and cultivating one’s own sanctuary, the soul, so that the Holy Spirit has a place to reside.

The author asserts that one must look at Scripture in its entirety, and from a Hebraic context, to gain a complete perspective. One cannot use a passage here or there to establish the doctrine of “practicing faith.” One must understand that truths in Scripture are not canceled out by other truths in Scripture. When doctrine is developed which is incongruous with Scripture then the doctrine must be questioned; the doctrine must be challenged! The teachers of the doctrine must be brought to task and explain under what conditions the doctrine is authorized to act in contradiction to Holy Scripture.

In today’s modern Church of Messiah, the collective Christian body, practicing faith and salvation are viewed in a variety of perspectives. Without going into the liberal versus orthodox perspectives it is obvious there are significant variations within the spectrum of beliefs. It should be obvious to most readers that these diverse beliefs, being contradictory to each other, logically mean that many if not all are incorrect. Incorrect regardless of the voracity to the contrary by the faithful within each belief system!

With most of these diverse beliefs being scripturally supported to some extent, by the holders of those faiths, it must be concluded most or all of these diverse beliefs cannot be supported by the complete Scriptural corpus. If this was so then Scripture would not be upheld; for the ways to G_D are not b broad but narrow. In essence then the vast majority of Christian belief systems are representative of only portions of Scripture. Unfortunately in most cases these apportioned Scriptural passages are used to support a human desired belief system and not the belief system ordained by G_D.

It must be recognized that G_D’s plan for people must be morally absolute for it to be valid. The plan must be Holy just as G_D is. The plan must be eternal and unchanging. This argument should not be contested by any believer. G_D’s plan should be perfect and simple . . . his Way or the highway!

So people should not be fooled into thinking Yeshua will be anything less than a Faithful Witness! Each and every person is responsible for following the path to G_D as he has prescribed for people within Holy Scriptures. Failure to do so would have to be considered a risky endeavor!

The author will challenge each reader to search their hearts and minds and ask without reservation if they actually understand the nature and conditions of Messiah's saving works.

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Salutatory Address - Future Times

In Revelation 1:3 we see a literal prophetic intent for this writing: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." The author will note the prominence that is placed upon the prophetic declaration: it directly precedes the first mention of the "seven Churches." It should also be noted that preceding the mention of the "seven Churches" is an exhortation to all individuals that a blessing be upon those who read and hear and keep the things that are contained within this "revelation."

Practically speaking we should understand John would be well aware that the readers would not be limited to the Church membership of those addressed seven communities. In effect this opening exhortation should then be viewed as historically relevant to all peoples and consequently peoples of all times.

Moving to Revelation 1:7 we see the next clear historical reference; "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

The very first notable prophecy in this passage deals with Yeshua coming in the clouds. In the event any reader thinks this symbolic, let us review the following from Scripture.

Matthew says: Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens

shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:29–31)

Matthew states: And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Yeshua held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living G_D, that thou tell us whether thou be the Messiah, the Son of G_D. Yeshua saith unto him, thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, he hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. (Matthew 26:62–65)

Acts states: But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Yeshua, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:8–11)

We see in Scripture that Yeshua will indeed come again to Earth and in no way shape or form will this return be symbolic. His return will be real, glorious and awesome. Remaining within the confines of verse seven the author finds it intriguing that all eyes will see him coming, even those who pierced him. Should one consider this to be symbolic or literal in meaning? Logically it should be construed this passage is literal and the “those that pierced him” reference is not intended to be symbolic for unbelieving sinners alive at that time given the text. It seems apparent a literal intent is meant and that not just the living will witness the coming of the Son of Man but all who ever lived; even those who are asleep in the dust. How this can be explained in further details

unfortunately escapes the comprehension of this author. This must be added into the massive list of the “I just don’t know” category, and it will be left at that.

Pressing on let us next examine “kindreds!” Kindred: a group of related persons, as a clan or tribe. ⁽²⁴⁾ We see here that people of all ethnic clans or races will wail upon his coming. This means everyone both Jew and Gentile alike.

Let us examine “wail!” Wail: to grieve or protest loudly and bitterly; lament; to utter a prolonged, inarticulate, mournful cry, usually high pitched or clear-sounding, as in grief or suffering: to wail with pain. ⁽²⁵⁾

We see this glorious appearance of the Son of Man in the clouds will surely not be a welcome sight by all the nations of the Earth. In context we should at first glance surmise this passage minimally reads as “general lamentation” throughout the planet.

Although there is no clear indication there will be any “joy” it would seem the passage may not necessarily include all people in the lamentation. The author will be careful to declare however that this passage just might indicate there will be no joy at all!

So historically what can we deduce from this global lamentation? Initially we should look at this in the context of the Church of Messiah. If the Church is here then there should be much joy in the world for this is what believers are awaiting: his coming! Where then is the joy? The author would contend there are only a few possibilities.

First we could have a Church which is extremely small in number or secondly we could have a scenario in which the Church of Messiah is no longer here at all in a recognizable capacity. Further insight into these possibilities will have to be explored as we proceed through more of the Revelation.

From a human population perspective we also need to consider why the Son of Man causes so much lamentation. Could it be this lamentation is a general reaction of seeing first-hand what

was not believed? Or could it be this “coming of the Son of Man” is expected, but the sheer awe of the appearance is dreadful?

In any of the potential scenarios posed it should be concluded that the state of mankind at this coming of Messiah must be one which is in an extreme state of sinfulness, un-holiness and or indifference.

Without even considering the possibility that Messiah’s second coming is symbolic what does Scripture indicate to us will be the purpose of this climatic appearance?

Isaiah states: I have commanded my consecrated ones, yea, I have called my mighty ones for mine anger, even my proudly exulting ones. Hark, a tumult in the mountains, like as of a great people! Hark, the uproar of the kingdoms of the nations gathered together! The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole earth. Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; as destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Therefore shall all hands be slack, and every heart of man shall melt. And they shall be affrighted; pangs and throes shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman in travail; they shall look aghast one at another; their faces shall be faces of flame. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel, and full of wrath and fierce anger; to make the earth desolation, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. (Isaiah 13:3–9)

Isaiah states: Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the earth: say ye to the daughter of Zion: “Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.” And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called Sought out, a city not forsaken. “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with crimsoned garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, stately in the greatness of his strength?”—“I that speak in victory, mighty to save.”—“Wherefore is Thine apparel red, and thy garments like his that treadeth in the winevat?”—“I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the peoples there was no man with me; yea, I trod them in mine anger, and trampled them in my fury; and their lifeblood is dashed against my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. For the

day of vengeance that was in my heart, and my year of redemption are come. And I looked, and there was none to help, and I beheld in astonishment, and there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury, it upheld me. And I trod down the peoples in mine anger, and made them drunk with my fury, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.” (Isaiah 62:11–63:6)

Isaiah states: For, behold, the Lord will come in fire, and his chariots shall be like the whirlwind; to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the Lord contend, and by his sword with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many. They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves to go unto the gardens, behind one in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the detestable thing, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord. For I [know] their works and their thoughts; [the time] cometh, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and shall see my glory. . . . And they shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations for an offering unto the Lord, upon horses, and in chariots, and in fitters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring their offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And of them also will I take for the priests and for the Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. (Isaiah 66:15–66:24)

Daniel states: Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast, which was diverse from all of them, exceeding terrible, whose teeth were of iron, and its nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet; and concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, and before which three fell; even that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke great things, whose appearance was greater than that of its fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High; and the time came, and the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said: “The fourth beast shall be a fourth

kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise; and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings. And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the seasons and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. But the judgment shall sit, and his dominions shall be taken away, to be consumed and to be destroyed unto the end. And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.” Here is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my thoughts much affrighted me, and my countenance was changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart. (Daniel 7:19–28)

The reader is probably aware there are scores of Scriptural passages which are end times related. Far too many to deal with in depth for the purposes of this topical discourse! What can be seen throughout these end times passages however is consistent. The recurring themes are the wrath of G_D, the destruction of sinners, the return of righteous and just stewardship to the Earth, the restoration of Israel, the exaltation of the chosen people and the subjugation of the chosen peoples’ enemies.

The bottom line from a prophetic vantage point is the coming of Yeshua the Messiah is the coming of judgment and the installation of G_D’s Earthly Kingdom. According to Scripture these are not symbolic events! These events represent our future!

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[Salutatory Address Summary](#)

Although it seems an inordinate amount of material was extrapolated from such a small salutatory address, the author would point out a far more extensive body of related subject matter could have been introduced into this work if there was such a need. The author's assessment is the interpretive analysis and conclusions put forth did not require additional subject matter ... hopefully the reader agrees.

Admittedly the passages contained within the salutatory address may not seem to be significantly prophetic at first glance; on the other hand it should be concluded the passages are of revelatory importance from a fundamental truth perspective. As the author contended from the outset of this work, this Revelation contains keys to solving the fundamental problem within the greater Church body of Yeshua the Messiah; the problem of course being separation and discord due to doctrinal variations and misunderstanding of the Gospel message itself.

Obviously it is incumbent upon the reader to accept that there is indeed doctrinal discord within the greater Church body of Messiah today just as there was 1,900 years ago. There are doctrinal differences not just within diverse belief systems but within individual belief systems and all the way down to single congregations as well.

Much effort has been spent herein exposing for the reader the environment and dynamic existing within the early Church of Messiah. The author is comfortable with the established positions which declare the early Church to be in effect de-hebraicized, if not outright anti-Judaic, by the time doctrinal development in earnest was undertaken.

Undoubtedly this up-rooting by the early Church of Messiah was the cause for divergent and erroneous doctrine that is widespread to this day. The author has made genuine and good faith efforts to bring this disconnect to light through both historical and scriptural review.

Beyond exposing this disconnect the author has further attempted to provide the reader with a basis for establishing the correct mind set in which the Scriptures should be viewed. This mind set calls for viewing Holy Scripture as a contiguous body of inspired works and not two distinct "testaments." This mind set calls for viewing the covenantal relationship between G_D and his

chosen people as a contiguous eternal relationship and not two distinct “covenants.” This mind set calls for viewing G_D’s Plan for mankind in a Hebraic rather than a Gentile context.

The author has gone still further and attempted to review the fundamental elements of faith within the appropriate context outlined previously. Fundamental elements of faith which G_D did indeed provide to the Church of Yeshua the Messiah within the blessed Revelation!

The author certainly cannot be accused of manufacturing a reason to expose the subject matter related herein. It was indeed G_D himself who decided the contents of this Salutatory Address and not this author or any other human. The reader should appreciate the grandiose nature of the salutatory address G_D provided and realize the significance of the subject matter therein.

It would seem as well this address is actually prophetic in its own rights given the nature of future disputes which would beset the Church of Messiah in the areas of: G_D’s Nature, the nature and role of Yeshua the Messiah, the nature of the Holy Spirit, the nature of Salvation, the inheritance for true believers and of course what it means to follow in the path of Yeshua. It certainly seems G_D had minimally provided the early Church of Messiah with a heads up so to speak. Unfortunately it would seem this heads up was overlooked.

So in looking at the fundamental doctrinal review that was undertaken, the author’s objective is to have the reader consider a few simple questions:

- Do the scriptural conclusions reached by the author, in light of the supporting materials, make sense?
- Does it make sense that the Church of Messiah would turn away from scripturally ordained Festivals because they recognized no association with Yeshua the Messiah or because these Festivals were too Jewish?
- Does it make sense that the Church of Messiah would turn away from the eternal statutes and commands as a way of living and practicing faith according to G_D’s design and commanded plan?

- Does it make sense that the Church of Messiah would deem the covenant between G_D and Israel to be null and void and still further declare itself to be the replacement heir?

What transpired does make sense in light of actual history and cultural influences; though certainly not from a common sense theological perspective! It should be understood these failures by the Church of Messiah are indeed the root of all subsequent failures. As thinking individuals everyone must be reasonable and look at the net result of these failures. When one considers that: G_D's Appointed Times were ignored; G_D's Holy Torah was ignored; G_D's Eternal Covenant was ignored; and G_D's first chosen people were not only ignored but persecuted relentlessly, it is not unreasonable to conclude the early Church of Messiah in effect ignored major components of G_D's Plan for mankind and in so doing turned its back on G_D's Way in favor of its own way.

Considering the path of the early Church of Messiah it should be recognized this disconnection from G_D's scripturally ordained plan for mankind set the stage for numerous other issues which would surface in the Church and remain until this day. What exemplary issues might the author be alluding to?

- The Church's practice of infantile baptism;
- The Church's practice of canonizing and venerating saints;
- The Church's practice of icon veneration;
- The Church's bureaucratic and elitist ecclesiastical institution;
- The Church's institution of the Papacy;
- The Church's mandate of celibacy for priests;
- The Church's persecution of Jews;
- The Church's substitution of The Bible for the catechism;
- The Church's use of altars made out of hewn stone;
- The Church's various doctrines related to the Holy Eucharist;
- The Church's practice of ordination of women;
- The Church's practice of ordination and toleration of homosexuals;
- The Church's decision of supporting birth control;
- The Church's decision of supporting same sex marriages.

- On and on ... or so it appears.

These various doctrinal and practice issues listed are but a representative list. Some of these issues as the reader may know are pertinent to the Roman Catholic and so called Orthodox Church while some issues are pertinent to the so called Reformist Churches. From the author's perspective it matters little because there is not one recognized Christian belief system which adheres to the scripturally prescribed authoritative system provided by G_D through the Hebrew oracles.

Unfortunately for mankind the mainstream Hebrew belief systems (Judaism) is devoid of Yeshua the Messiah and as such also does not adhere to G_D's scripturally authoritative system as defined by both the Tanakh and B'rit Chadasha. Even further, Judaism has still not revoked the rabbinic fences and legalisms which Messiah came to correct.

Of course it is understood that much doctrine and Church practice are premised upon earlier Church father traditions, but these traditions should be viewed as no more valid than the traditions of the Hebrew Religion Church fathers. History certainly proved what happens when the tradition of men are invoked over the tradition of G_D. No good comes of this scenario!

This declaration is certainly no condemnation of all Church tradition by any means in either Hebrew or Christian belief systems. Sometimes tradition is necessary and beneficial, but other times it is not, especially when tradition contradicts and or subjugates Scripture.

This then is no blanket condemnation for all belief systems or all practices. Certainly there are many good works that come out of the Christian and Hebrew populations just as it should be noted that not all doctrinal precepts are incorrect. But it must be recognized there is much wrong emanating therewith as well and of course the divided nature of the modern Church body of Messiah can in no way be reasonably refuted.

The primary problem we see with the institutional belief systems lies not in the works, good or bad, though Yeshua himself told us that a good tree bears good fruit while a bad tree bears bad fruit; the real issue is the lack of capability of the Churches to bring congregants close to G_D in

accordance with “his plan.” If the Church of Messiah is not working in accordance with G_D’s plan for mankind then many or maybe most congregants are not really getting close enough to G_D. Maybe many or most congregants do not really know what the gift of the Holy Spirit is or what it can do for a person. Maybe many or most congregants do not really know what it means to be transformed.

In essence it might be suggested the Church of Messiah has become a stumbling block for many or maybe most congregants just as Yeshua was a stumbling block for the adherents of Judaism. If the Church of Messiah is pliable enough to change so modern believers feel comfortable within the Churches, then it would seem wrong if changes entail modification to G_D’s absolute plan for mankind. The Church has no right or authority to change what G_D has declared! But it has nonetheless, and from this declaration the author will not budge.

In fact there are a number of Christian belief systems even asserting to this very day that doctrine and faith are evolutionary and meant to grow to meet the changes of life. To the author this is just a neat way of getting around the fact that their tenets of faith espoused cannot be supported by Scripture. In fact this is the outputs of a thoroughly Hellenistic culture and mindset in the opinion of this author.

The reader really needs to think about how a collective Church body knowingly drifted away from the absolutes handed down from G_D himself because of cultural and political pressures. Historically and doctrinally this seems to be the case regardless of how vigorous the various Church apologists would contend that G_D’s plan is being followed.

The reader ultimately needs to consider if the author has presented a valid argument. If the argument is valid then the great questions become: what other compromises were made to the absolute truth over the course of nearly 2,000 years? What will be the next compromise(s) made to the absolute truth and mandates of G_D in the years ahead? Still further yet, what are the effects of these changes to G_D’s plan for mankind on all believers in Yeshua? Do believers move closer to or further from G_D when his Ways are not followed? Moreover how far does one need to deviate from G_D’s ways before personal salvation becomes jeopardized or even unattainable?

This work as can be seen is designed for individual introspection. Certainly one ordinary person such as the author or the reader will not influence the workings of the Church bureaucracies let alone the doctrines and practices they have long held and esteemed. Each reader and believer must be aware that ultimate judgment is a personal issue between a person and G_D. Each person is responsible for his own path and his own soul. This does not mean congregational fellowship is to be abandoned or unnecessary. By all means the opposite is true. G_D wants us to be as one. Yeshua wants his Church on Earth to be united as one or “echad!”

In essence the author would see as the greatest of all things for the entire Church body of G_D to be as one. All believers in Yeshua the Messiah completely united and following the path which keeps us close to G_D and beckons the Holy Spirit to fill believers without measure. All believers following the path ordained by G_D in Holy Scripture and traveled perfectly by Yeshua the Messiah.

Unfortunately as we will see upon review of the messages to the Church, this unification, and return to G_D’s way, is not the decision people will make! Just as the rebuking, provided to the first chosen people, through the oracles and prophets was disdained and ignored; so too will the same fate befall the chosen people under the auspices of the perfected covenant.

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The Vision-Introduction

(9) I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Yeshua the Messiah, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of G_D, and for the testimony of Yeshua the Messiah. (10) I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, (11) Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamon, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. (12) And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; (13) And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. (14) His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; (15) And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. (16) And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. (17) And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: (18) I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (19) Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; (20) the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches. (Revelations 1:9–20)

The Vision Commentary - Introduction

In the first portion of verse ten the author finds it quite interesting John would indicate he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day! It would seem apparent this is pertinent in some way to either John or this specific revelation. As such it would behoove us to take a closer look at this mention of the Lord's Day.

Although the first inclination might be to accept as true the common Christian tradition, which contends this “Lord’s Day” is a reference to Sunday; the reader should cast away any such thoughts. Without going into a significant review the reader should understand the Shabbat ordained by G_D, as previously detailed, falls on the seventh day or Saturday. Generally speaking there is no Scriptural basis for modifying the Shabbat at all, and historically there is evidence to indicate John would have been celebrating Shabbat on the seventh day: Saturday.

When considering the importance of G_D’s eternal Shabbat and the purpose of Shabbat being human rest and introspection within G_D, it certainly would make sense that John would be prone to being in the Spirit on this hallowed day as a combined function of John’s obedience to G_D and of course blessings from G_D.

The primary question however is: why didn’t John just say: “in the Spirit on G_D’s sacred Shabbat?” This most certainly would have been a clearer indication of the day if this was John’s intent. On the other hand it could simply be John’s way of paying tribute to Yeshua, who as Matthew 12:8 declares, is indeed “Lord of the Shabbat!”

The author is convinced this passage is one of those declarations within Scripture which carries multiple meanings. The author does not doubt for one moment the implication is that the day of the vision falls on the eternal Shabbat ordained by G_D. The author also sees within the passage another meaning, a less obvious meaning!

When we view the “Lord’s Day” passage it can just as easily be viewed in terms of “the day of the Lord.” Instead of looking at this passage simply in terms of Shabbat could it be possible John was in the Spirit actually on “the day of the Lord?” Perhaps John was not referring to the day or time of his physical existence but rather to the “day of the Lord’s coming” which Revelations depicts!

Previously during the synthesis of John the Apostle, the author broached the issue of the prophetic declaration by Yeshua where he declared the contemporary generation would not pass

without seeing his return. During the topical discourse it was implied John's visions very well could have satisfied this prophecy. With this in mind then we might better explain John's phraseology. John very well might have been present in Spirit at the Lord's coming. The author means present not in a psychic or pre-cognitive way as previously implied but rather in a very real and very temporal manner. A spiritual presence which only G_D could provide!

The author believes the second portion of verse ten and all of verse eleven need to be viewed together and are of great significance to the Church of Messiah. Essentially we have John hearing the trumpeting blast that is the voice declaring this is a message from G_D and what will be relayed must be recorded and sent to the seven Churches of Asia. So one may ask: "what is so significant about these passages?"

The reader will recall previous discourse materials concerning the sacred Festival Season of G_D. Furthermore of the seven ordained Festivals, Messiah has clearly filled up four of them: 1) Passover/Pesach; 2) Unleavened Bread/Chag HaMatzot; 3) First Fruits/Yom Habikkurim and 4) Pentecost/Shavu'ot.

Conversely we are left awaiting fulfillment by Yeshua of the remaining three later season Festivals: 5) Trumpets/Yom Teru'ah, 6) Atonement/Yom Kippur and 7) Tabernacles/Sukkot.

It would seem logical to presume this trumpeting declaration represents the completion of the 5th Holy Festival of G_D, Yom Teru'ah or The Festival of Trumpets. As the reader will recall this Festival is the call to repentance and preparation for judgment in the wake of the awesome Day of the Lord!

As previously indicated there has been conjecture by other commentators that the actual fulfillment of this Festival by Yeshua will take place when the rapture of the true believers occurs. A detailed review of "the rapture" is not a main purpose of this work and would warrant an individual work but for those readers not very familiar with this position, it is a belief that true believers in Yeshua will be spirited off of the Earth prior to the horrible tribulation of the end times.

The author however does not agree with this concept of a pre-tribulation rapture and there are numerous scriptures to support the fact that true believers will be on the earth and suffer persecution during the tribulation.

In any event it would appear that this Festival has been completed to some extent in Yeshua the Messiah with the gift of this revelation to John. But more so it appears from the patterns within Scripture that this Festival will be completed in full upon Messiah's return to set up the Earthly Kingdom and usher in the millennial reign. There should be no doubt that all of G_D's Festivals will be completed and perfected in Yeshua the Messiah as part of G_D's great plan for humanity. In this announcement bellowed to John we see a clear connection between Yeshua and the blare of the trumpet and there can be no doubt at all that Revelations is representative of the final days. Consequently Messiah's trumpeting to John is declaring that the reign of the King is fast approaching and all souls need to prepare. Messiah's Church needs to prepare!

When viewed in the context of the Church messages representing the historical and spiritual path that Messiah's Church will take during its journey, it becomes clear Yeshua is not only issuing the call to repentance to his Church but also intending to use these Church messages to define exactly why repentance is necessary. From this perspective we see no ambiguous fulfillment of the Festival of Trumpets by Yeshua. From this perspective we see a clear and concise call to repentance directed specifically to the body of believers in Yeshua the Messiah.

Still further when these passages are considered with the "day of the Lord" perspective there is perfect continuity with the other Festival which is directly connected with Yom Teru'ah and that of course is the Festival of Yom Kippur or Atonement. As previously detailed we will see the fulfillment of Atonement/Yom Kippur by Yeshua at the White Throne Judgment.

Although this work only deals in detail with the first three chapters of Revelations the author would be remiss if complete fulfillment of the Holy Festival Cycle through Yeshua was not exposed. We see in Revelations the completion of the last Festival, Tabernacles/Sukkot. Revelations states: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth

were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from G_D out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of G_D is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and G_D himself shall be with them, and be their G_D. And G_D shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. (Revelations 21:1-5)

When Revelations is viewed within the proper Hebraic context, we can easily discern the completion and perfection of G_D's Festival cycle within Messiah. It should be understood that within a traditional Christian/Gentile context however these passages just do not resonate with the same truth or meaning and consequently their significance quite frankly cannot be recognized or appreciated. How could it be otherwise in as much that Christianity essentially fails to even celebrate G_D's scripturally ordained Festivals?

The Son of Man vision in essence sets the stage for introspection into the completion by Yeshua the Messiah of the Biblical Festival Cycle if one simply looks past the surface in the least bit. Undoubtedly these last three festivals are end times related. Undoubtedly these last three festivals will be fulfilled and perfected by Yeshua the Messiah. Undoubtedly G_D would provide information relative to the fulfillment of these last three festivals within Revelations.

The conclusion of verse eleven has John being instructed to record what he sees and send it unto the seven Churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Verses twelve through eighteen describe the vision which John saw.

Please refer to the following graphic herein which will be used to further discuss in detail this vision. (Note: Image source is unknown)



Fortunately we are told in verse twenty that the seven gold candlesticks represent the seven Churches while the stars represent the seven angels of the Churches. Because this element of the vision provides a perfect segue into the messages to the Churches this will be covered at the end of this discourse on John's vision of Yeshua the Messiah.

From a general commentary perspective we should view the astounding and glorious appearance of Yeshua, as described by John, as clearly implying the deified and awesome nature of Yeshua the Messiah. We know from Scripture that G_D has given unto Yeshua all things

relative to man and as such is indeed one with G_D. This last declaration is of course obvious from a belief perspective but from an interpretation perspective really does not provide much assistance with analysis of the individual Church messages. For additional contextual support we must pursue a more detailed approach which mandates review of Messiah's appearance within the vision to see if there are specific meanings hidden therein. More specifically we should look at the following visionary references: "golden girdle," "head and hair being white as snow," "feet refined like fine brass," "eyes aflame," "voice sounding as many waters," "two-edged sword coming from his mouth," "his countenance being as the sun" and "He has the keys of hell and death!" ...

Is it any wonder why John fell at his feet as though he were dead?

When reviewing these passages in a symbolic context the author has segmented these various references to Yeshua into three distinct groupings. The first group is classified as the "Righteous Messiah" references. The second group is classified as the "Judge Messiah" references, and the third group is classified as the "Lord Messiah" references. The rationale behind these categorizations will become apparent upon review of the specific vision components.

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The Vision-Yeshua the Righteous One

Yeshua wearing a golden girdle

When reviewing Scripture it must be noted that "girdle" appears numerous times, most often however in reference to priests, kings and prophets. We also see in Scripture where gold is valued and prized just as it has and always will be.

Specific scriptural references applicable to this passage the author has excerpted are as follows:

Leviticus states: He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with the linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired; they are the holy garments; and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and put them on. (Leviticus 16:4)

Jeremiah states: Thus said the Lord unto me: “Go, and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.” So I got a girdle according to the word of the Lord, and put it upon my loins. For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the Lord, that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory; but they would not hearken. (Jeremiah 13:1–11)

Isaiah states: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the land; and he shall smite the land with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. (Isaiah 11:4–5)

Isaiah 22:21 states: “And I will clothe him with thy robe, and bind him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.”

The reader is certainly encouraged to review on their own additional Scriptural references pertaining to this allusion but should note as mentioned the use of the term girdle consistently emerges when dealing with priests, royalty and prophets. One should not dismiss this reference as benign or simply descriptive. We should clearly recognize the symbolism of Yeshua’s “golden girdle:”

- Yeshua is above Priests and in fact is the new and everlasting High Priest;
- Yeshua is above Kings and all the nations of the Earth have been given to him by G_D as his inheritance;

- Yeshua is above Prophets and it was through Yeshua himself that G_D provided the Hebrew oracles with their words. This is why Revelations 19:10 declares that the testimony of Yeshua is the spirit of prophecy!

As The Messiah or “the anointed one,” which of course traditionally describes priests, kings and prophets, we see Yeshua as being the perfect embodiment of all three; hence the spectacular golden girdle.

Yeshua's head and hair being white as snow

We see from Scripture where white predominantly symbolizes both the presence of G_D and purity. Specific Scriptural references the author would like to excerpt and look at are as follows:

Exodus says, And the Lord said unto Moses: “Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail—and he put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand—that they may believe that the Lord, the G_D of their fathers,” . . . And the Lord said furthermore unto him: “Put now thy hand into thy bosom.” And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. (Exodus 4:4–6)

Isaiah says: Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. (Isaiah 1:18–20)

Psalms states: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow . . . Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create me a clean heart, O G_D; and renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Psalms 51:9–12)

Daniel 7:9 states: “I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit: his raiment was as white snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire.”

It would seem apparent the vision is declarative of Yeshua's oneness with G_D as well as Yeshua's purity and sinless adherence to G_D's statutes and laws. The allusion to Yeshua as the spotless one who cleanses sins should certainly not be missed.

Yeshua's feet refined like fine brass

Within Scriptures the predominant symbolism of refining and forging is representative of cleansing and purification. Specific Scriptural references the author would like to excerpt and look at are as follows:

Isaiah says: "Behold, I have refined thee, but not as silver; I have tried thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, for mine own sake, will I do it; for how should it be profaned? And my glory will I not give to another" (Isaiah 48:10–11).

Zechariah 13:9 states: "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will answer them; I will say: 'It is my people,' and they shall say: 'The Lord is my G_D.'"

Malachi says: But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver; and there shall be they that shall offer unto the Lord offerings in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers; and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 3:2–3:5)

The obvious allusion of these passages with respects to Yeshua is that through his love, obedience, passion and suffering he established perfect righteousness in the furnace of tribulation. Through the Holy Spirit can the tabernacle of the individual be cleansed and purified through steadfast obedience to G_D.

Collectively we see within these three visionary references the allusion to Yeshua the Messiah as the Righteous One of G_D. We see Yeshua refined to perfection: spotless and unblemished. We see Yeshua worthy before G_D to receive his rightful judgment as the perfect priest, king and prophet!

The reader should readily discern that these allusions are pertinent to the saving work of Yeshua the Messiah. These allusions point us directly to the perfect love that Yeshua has for us. He literally gave everything he had for our benefit out of love. Yeshua was and is and will be forever the perfect intercessor and righteous one.

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The Vision-Yeshua the Judge

Yeshua's eyes like flaming fire!

Yeshua's "eyes being like flaming fire" reference. When Scripture is reviewed flames are most often associated with the sacrificial offerings and of course destruction or recompense. Specific Scriptural references the author would like to excerpt and look at are as follows.

Isaiah 5:24 says: Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and as the chaff is consumed in the flame, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and contemned the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah says: Therefore will the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory there shall be kindled a burning like the burning of fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame; and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day. And the glory of his forest and of his fruitful field, he will consume both soul and body; and it shall be as when a sick man wasteth away. And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them down. (Isaiah 10:16–19)

Ezekiel says: And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying: “Son of man, set thy face toward the South, and preach toward the South, and prophesy against the forest of the field in the South; and say to the forest of the South: Hear the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord G_D: Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree, it shall not be quenched, even a flaming flame; and all faces from the south to the north shall be seared thereby. And all flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it; it shall not be quenched.” (Ezekiel 21:1–4)

Matthew states: I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance [the Immerser]; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (Matthew 3:11–12)

Although these excerpts are only representative of Scriptural references on the matter, the reader should not fail to recognize the emergent relationship between burning, sinfulness and judgment. The allusion is quite evident and unmistakable especially in light of the fact it is Yeshua’s eyes that see all the things people do—even in their secret places and in the dark.

Yeshua's voice sounding as many waters

Although the first impression might be to simply think in terms of massive acoustical resonance or sheer power ... as in the very voice of creation, when Scripture is reviewed relative

to “many waters” we also see the emergence of punishment and references to all the nations of the Earth.

Numbers says: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy dwellings, O Israel! As valleys stretched out, as gardens by the river-side; as aloes planted of the Lord, as cedars beside the waters; Water shall flow from his branches, and his seed shall be in many waters; and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. G_D who brought him forth out of Egypt is for him like the lofty horns of the wild-ox; he shall eat up the nations that are his adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a lioness; who shall rouse him up? Blessed be every one that blesseth thee, and cursed be every one that curseth thee. (Numbers 24:5–9)

Isaiah says: Ah, the uproar of many peoples, that roar like the roaring of the seas; and the rushing of nations, that rush like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters; but he shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like the whirling dust before the storm. At eventide behold terror; and before the morning they are not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us. (Isaiah 17:12–14)

Jeremiah spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon: O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, the measure of thy covetousness. The Lord of hosts hath sworn by himself: Surely I will fill thee with men, as with the canker-worm, and they shall lift up a shout against thee. . . . At the sound of his giving a multitude of waters in the heavens, he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings at the time of the rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures; Every man is proved to be brutish, for the knowledge—every goldsmith is put to shame by the graven image—that his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, a work of delusion; in the time of their visitation they shall perish, the portion of Jacob is not like these; for he is the former of all things, and [Israel] is the tribe of his inheritance; the Lord of hosts is his name. (Jeremiah 51:13–19)

Jeremiah says: Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will do judgment upon her graven images; and through all her land the wounded shall groan. Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the Lord. Hark! A cry from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans! For the Lord spoileth Babylon, and destroyeth out of her the great voice; and their waves roar like many waters, the noise of their voice is uttered; For the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, their bows are shattered; for the Lord is a G_D of recompenses, he will surely requite. (Jeremiah 51:52–56)

Ezekiel 43:2 says: “behold, the glory of the G_D of Israel came from the way of the east; and his voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth did shine with his glory.”

Collectively what we can discern from these and other passages in Scripture is that the voice of Yeshua sounding as many waters is in effect a frightening and threatening prospect. We see clear indications that the sound of Messiah’s voice as many waters is not a good thing; indeed the opposite is true, and the bellowing of Messiah’s voice is quite ominous indeed. Furthermore we see allusions wherein many waters are also representative of the nations or all peoples of the Earth. Essentially we see where the raging voice of the Lord will overcome and drown out the raging noise of the nations!

Yeshua having a two-edged sword coming from his mouth

As anticipated upon a review of Scripture, references to swords are indicative of fighting and most often associated with judgment.

Leviticus says: And if in spite of these things ye will not be corrected unto me, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you; and I will smite you, even I, seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword upon you that shall execute the vengeance of the covenant. (Leviticus 26:23–25)

Deuteronomy says: And it is said: Where are their gods, the rock in whom they trusted; who did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink-offering? Let him rise up and help you, let him be your protection. See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no G_D with me; I kill, and I make alive; I have wounded, and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say: As I live forever, If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine adversaries, and will recompense them that hate me. (Deuteronomy 32:37–41)

Matthew says: Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. (Matthew 10:32–34)

There should be no doubt at all the allusion of the two-edged sword of Yeshua the Messiah is the recompense of G_D for disobedience and sin. We should also not lose sight that the sword emanating from Messiah's mouth is clearly indicative of his Words and truthfulness as being his weapon.

Yeshua warned people to do what he said, follow the Torah of G_D; it would seem then judgment will also be by Yeshua's Word. It would seem that Messiah's judgment and authority is every word that proceeds out of the mouth of G_D and this would of course include Holy Scripture.

When these multiple "Yeshua as Judge" references are viewed collectively it must be admitted the traditional view of Yeshua as the master of love and peace is undoubtedly only a part of the picture. What we see in the end times is Messiah, as the Right Arm of G_D, exacting justice and recompense upon the unholy and sinful population of the world. We see the glorious Day of the Lord is indeed a most dreadful day of woe and wrath and destruction.

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The Vision-Yeshua the LORD

Yeshua's countenance being as the sun

Psalms says: For not by their own sword did they get the land in possession, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou wast favorable unto them. Thou art my King, O G_D; command the salvation of Jacob. (Psalms 44:4–5)

Psalms says: And of the stock which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance. Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself. (Psalms 80:16–18)

Luke says: And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias. (Luke 9:28–30)

There should be no doubt that the allusion to Yeshua having a countenance as the sun is indicative of Yeshua as glorified in G_D. Yeshua as being one with G_D! Yeshua as being G_D!

Yeshua having the keys of hell and death

This declaration is most certainly a direct implication that G_D has indeed given all things unto the Son. We know from Scripture G_D is alone the source of life and death. With Yeshua having the keys essentially over life and death there can be no doubt that Yeshua is Lord!

Mark says: And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. (Mark 8:34–35)

John says: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with G_D, and the Word was G_D. The same was in the beginning with G_D. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of G_D abideth on him . . . For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. (John 1:1–5:27)

As we can readily see these visionary elements which depict Yeshua as having the countenance or radiance of the sun and being given the keys of hell and death clearly are declarative of Yeshua's omnipotence and divine glory.

As indicated previously the last element of the Son of Man vision to be discussed will deal with the seven lamps and stars which are pertinent to the Church of Messiah. The author will deem this to be the "Yeshua, Center of the World" discussion.

In earlier portions of this work contextual development took place which exposed many aspects of the Church of Messiah. Most critical to this topical discourse is the developed context where we recognize the centric nature of the Church of Messiah upon modern mankind from a cultural and historical perspective.

In recalling the key Scriptural and Covenantal Continuum constructs which were exposed and developed within this work, it should be accepted that all of human history, (past, present and future), can be defined as the interaction, or lack thereof, of humans with G_D's plan!

From a Scriptural perspective this interaction with G_D by people is more clearly defined in terms of interactions with his chosen people and those non-chosen peoples that are in effect contacted by the “chosen people.” Undoubtedly G_D’s Plan for mankind calls for subjugation of man’s cultures for that of his own through “free will.”

In looking at the auspices of the Tanakh and the original covenant between G_D and the “chosen people” it would not be unfair to characterize this dynamic in the following visual manner:

In the event the provided visual is not clear enough the reader should note what is depicted is the Ark of the Covenant, housing the Commandment Tablets, sitting upon twelve pillars representing the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

As can be seen from this visual, the auspices of the pre-Messiah Covenant between G_D and mankind was, in a Biblically historical perspective, a straight forward Israeli/Hebrew World View. Before the Earthly mission of Yeshua the Messiah, the chosen people were indeed only Hebrews and righteous converts.

Within Yeshua, the Son of Man, however, we see a new covenantal view emerge. We see the scope expanded to encompass a planetary view, and we see the chosen people, through faith in Yeshua, expanded to incorporate peoples from every nation of the Earth, and we see the inheritance, eternal life for the chosen people, perfected within Yeshua.

Regarding John’s Vision the symbolic nature of Yeshua being amidst the seven lamp stands then should be viewed in a context similar to the previous graphic, a context where the seven lamp stands/Churches represent the chosen people of G_D. Furthermore rather than the Ark, housing the written Torah, we see Yeshua, the living Torah representing the perfected Covenant between G_D and the chosen people.

Progressing even deeper we see from Holy Scripture, under the auspices of the pre-Messiah Covenant, life and history revolving around G_D’s plan with the Hebrews. In essence we see

history from the vantage point of the chosen people. We see blessings and good fortune for the chosen people when they are loyal to G_D and curses and misfortune when they are not.

In similar fashion under the auspices of the B'rit Chadasha Covenant then it stands to reason history will again be shaped through G_D's chosen people. History will be shaped through the Church of Messiah. Human existence will then ultimately revolve around G_D just as it always has.

When the vision of John is viewed within this context it is virtually impossible to think of the seven lamp stands to be representative of seven by-gone Church communities. This vision succinctly puts Yeshua at center stage in relation to human existence and history. Human existence, as history unfolds, upholds G_D as the center and source of everything that there was, is and is yet to come into being!

Finally the author would point out the proper context to think of the seven stars, or "angels," to the Church is a context of "messenger." As we can see throughout Scripture G_D's primary use of angels, with respects to mankind, is one of message bearing. With respects to the Church letters then we should view the angels to be the messengers of the Church. More succinctly we should view the messengers to be the Church leadership or authority.

This of course does not discount that each and every individual person is not a valid recipient of these blessed revelations; however understanding that the Church messages are in effect being proclaimed to the Church leaders is important to proper interpretation in the opinion of the author.

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The Vision Summary

As was seen in this high level review of the “Son of Man Vision,” revealed to John the Apostle, there is meaning in every single aspect. When viewed in context with the Salutatory Address the visual depiction of Yeshua the Messiah is perfectly synchronized. Yeshua the Messiah is the Righteous One of G_D; Yeshua the Messiah has been given authority to judge all people; Yeshua the Messiah through his inheritance has been given all things from G_D and is indeed Lord.

Of course in keeping with G_D’s plan for humanity there is no doubt then Yeshua the Messiah is the center of the World relative to human existence. G_D has declared this truth throughout Scripture and most certainly summarized this truth within the first three chapters of Revelations.

There should be no doubt the “Son of Man” vision provides us further insight into Yeshua the Messiah and certainly supports previous theological positions put forth earlier within this work. Not surprisingly when this vision component is reviewed within the proper Hebraic context we readily see the completion of G_D’s Festival Season in Yeshua the Messiah. We readily see Messiah's inseparable connection to the eternal covenant. We readily see Messiah's inseparable connection to the sacred law. We readily see Messiah's inseparable connection to the Priesthood and the holy service. In essence we see Messiah, through this awesome vision, as being the center of all existence!

The “Son of Man” vision, like everything else within this blessed revelation is deeply meaningful, extremely important and consequently purposeful. If the reader however is wondering why the detailed review of the “Vision” was necessary, the author will explain. In light of the seven Church messages, it must be noted that the composition of the individual Church messages, as will be seen, entail a specific greeting from Yeshua wherein certain “visionary” elements are included. Subsequently it is logical to presume the symbolic use of these visionary elements is meaningful to the specific message recipients and subsequently critical to proper message interpretation.

As we prepare to finally move into the interpretation of the seven Church messages portion of this work, the reader should not feel duped or disappointed that such a detailed introspective

review was undertaken thus far. As was declared previously, a proper interpretation, or at least a plausible interpretation of the Church messages is premised upon development of a contextual framework that is exposed and open for review.

The author believes this contextual framework has been developed objectively while properly considering the pertinent historical, cultural and theological issues. The author has approached this majestic vision of Yeshua not in some off-hand or informal manner but rather gone right back to Holy Scripture to gain insights and understanding as to how these visionary elements should be approached within a Hebraic Biblical context.

End Part 2

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Part 3 - The Seven Church Messages

Church Messages-Introduction

As indicated previously, the idea of the seven Church messages representing a prophetic Church of Messiah historical path is not new. In fact it is an idea which has actually lost momentum over the last few decades. This “Church era” dynamic, in light of the evidence produced herein, should however reinforce earlier contentions and be considered a most reasonable and still further only logical exegetical approach.

Before the interpretive analysis of the individual Church messages from Yeshua is undertaken, we should first recap some earlier developed materials within this work regarding these messages to the Churches.

The reader should recall the significance of “seven” with respects to the Seven Spirits of G_D, the Sacred Shabbat, the Seven Sacred Festivals and G_D’s Sacred Torah; these aspects just cannot be ignored. Ultimately seven cannot be separated from either a time or path construct when viewed in a Scriptural Hebraic context. The correlation of the sacred “seven” to the seven Church communities and delivery path/road taken cannot simply be ignored or viewed as being sheer coincidence.

These connections seem fairly obvious when viewed in the proper Hebraic context. On the other hand, with the Church of Messiah seemingly incapable of thinking in this manner, it also is apparent why then these connections remain mysterious. From one perspective it could be presumed the failure to see this connection is strictly a function of culture, tradition and embedded theological doctrine. From another perspective however one needs to entertain the possibility that discerning this connection is simply not expedient or convenient for the modern Church of Messiah.

The author will also point out that previous attempts to interpret these seven Church messages have not withstood serious scrutiny simply because these efforts failed to develop the proper contextual framework which in essence represents the supporting foundation for the ultimate interpretation put forth.

Within this work contentions have been made which indicate the Earthly Gentile Church of Messiah will eventually run a designed course and ultimately give way in the end days. The author has asserted that the Gentile Church of Messiah has not replaced Israel within the auspices of G_D's eternal covenant with his chosen people, but rather, have become a part thereof. The author has contended the Gentile Church of Messiah has strayed from the Hebraic roots and Scripture handed down by G_D to the Hebrew oracles. Ultimately it is the author's conclusion that the Gentile Church of Messiah has become something other than what Yeshua imparted to his first apostles and is in need of repentance.

Once again the author will reiterate this last declaration certainly is not to be translated to mean that "salvation" for individual believers cannot be found within the Gentile Church of Messiah. Undoubtedly there are some individuals from nearly all Christian belief systems who have been gifted the Holy Spirit through genuine faith in Yeshua. Of this the author is confident.

In looking at Holy Scripture however we must accept the reality and truth of the prophecies which are contained within, regardless of the implications. We see from Holy Scripture where order will not be restored by G_D until the time of the Gentiles comes to an end. We see from Holy Scripture where the end times will be one controlled by the beast and where the beast himself will attempt to usurp the place of the Most High G_D and ascend to his very throne. We see from Holy Scripture where the end times will be dark and dreadful days of retribution upon a sinful and unrepentant Earth. When the Son of Man returns in the end days we can objectively see from Scripture that the "Church age" is simply nowhere to be seen. These times will be the time when the Earth is under judgment and the Son of Man has come to exact G_D's retribution on the sinful world.

So the great questions then are: What happens to the Gentile Church of Messiah which culturally and historically is inextricably connected with modern Western Civilization? What happens to a collective Gentile Church of Messiah that currently comprises approximately one third of the planet's population?

These are the great questions we seek the answers to by reviewing the messages to the seven Churches.

Remembering this is a "Church era" construct whereby Yeshua is prophesying about the general conditions of his Earthly Church in a future time, it will be incumbent upon the author to establish the following key aspects: the time frame and general welfare of the Church during each of these Church eras. To this extent the individual Church messages will be interpreted keeping in mind this incumbent requirement.

For purposes of structure and systematic discourse the author has reviewed the seven Church messages in search of a uniform literary approach. The seven messages can in effect be categorized as having all or a subset of the following components:

- 1) Image of Yeshua,
- 2) Declared Positives,
- 3) Declared Negatives,
- 4) A Warning,
- 5) Declared Reward, and lastly what the author will call
- 6) Extras. These extras are additional positive or negative commentaries which are found out of place or seemingly ambiguous commentary apparently meant for an alternative purpose.

All of these Church message components are meaningful and subsequently where applicable each will be reviewed.

The reader should be forewarned with all of these prophetic messages; there will typically never be the discrete "smoking gun;" as previously detailed this is not the way G_D works. What

we do have however is the luxury of two thousand years of history on our side. As such, history will play a key role in establishing the chronology of the messages. Furthermore we do have the contextual framework which has been laboriously developed within this work. Ultimately then we have a method of check and balance. Because the contextual framework has been exposed, as well as the review of “The Vision” components, it will be easy to identify interpretations which are not supported by the framework. Ultimately the author will not have the luxury of taking liberties with fanciful interpretations which cannot be supported by the established framework!

Without the proverbial smoking guns the supporting arguments will be made by examination of the total body of circumstantial evidence presented within each Church message. Circumstantial evidence, as will be seen however, can be very convincing and in most cases overwhelming.

* * * * *

Church Messages-Ephesus

(1) Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; (2) I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: (3) And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. (4) Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. (5) Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. (6) But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. (7) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of G_D. (Revelations 2:1-7)

Letter to Ephesus Components

Image of Yeshua: He holds the seven stars and walks amidst the seven golden candlesticks.

Positives: Works, labor, patience and cannot bear them that are evil! ... Have tried the false apostles and found them to be liars. ... Hast worked and labored without fainting in Yeshua's Name.

Negatives: Thou hast left thy first love.

Warning: Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent; do the first works or else Yeshua will come quickly and remove thy candlestick out of his place.

Extras: Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes which Yeshua also hates.

Reward: To him that overcomes Yeshua will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of paradise.

* * * * *

Letter to Ephesus Commentary

In opening we see Yeshua the Messiah as the one who holds the seven stars and walks amidst the seven candlesticks. As previously noted the stars are representative of the Church messengers while the candlesticks are representative of his Earthly Church. This is the only Church message where Yeshua presents both the seven stars and the seven candlesticks together.

Utilizing the "Church era" context we see Yeshua, in holding all seven stars, declaring to his Earthly Church that this message is in fact for all messengers and therefore all of his Church. Because Ephesus is the first Church message, and hence the first Church era, the clear indication

is this message is in no way limited to Ephesus and therefore is pertinent in some manner to all the Church eras. This of course can only be accurate if the message is one of prophecy thereby making the message important to ensuing Church periods.

We should not lose sight that Messiah walking amidst the seven candlesticks is clearly indicative of a complete Church. In context of the “Church era” theme it should then be seen that this represents the beginning of the journey where the entire delivery path, or seven Church eras, is declared.

Moving now to the positives which Yeshua declares, we see a recognizable Church laboring greatly; producing many works while at the same time putting up with much evil and dealing with false apostles.

Interestingly enough we see in Revelation 2:3 a near repeat of the positive applause in 2:2; we see patience, labors for the namesake of Yeshua the Messiah, the unwillingness to falter/faint and also that the Church has “borne.”

The reader should recognize the repetitive nature of passages is typically seen throughout Scripture to indicate emphasis. Subsequently we are seeing by this redundancy the emphatic description of the extremely hard working and patient Church of Messiah. Additionally the use of the word “borne” can also provide us insight to the time frame when viewed in more detail.

When we look at this word we see a variety of meanings:

“Borne:” 1) To hold up/support; 2) To carry from one place to another; transport; 3) To transmit at large; relate; 4) To carry (oneself) in a specified way; conduct; 5) To be accountable for; assume; 6) To give birth to; 7) To produce; yield; To offer; render. (26)

The use of this word by Yeshua to this Church, a word not associated with any other Church era message, is clearly descriptive of the very early Church of Messiah. Supposedly one could argue that this term might apply to other large growth periods of the Church of Messiah, but

ultimately we are left with the natural and common sense implication of the word “borne” representing a birth or beginning.

In a short sighted sense, the word could be translated strictly as “persevere” however in a broad sense, as more appropriately defined by the various meanings listed above, one should readily see that only the early Church of Messiah really fits this description.

The author implores the reader to ask oneself: if “borne” does not best describe the early Church era of Messiah then what possible one word descriptor more appropriately does?

In light of this birthing effort we can then view the reference to “not fainting” with a clearer understanding. When coupled with the tireless efforts of witnessing and bearing the burden without fainting, what we are left with is only the early Church that did indeed birth and persevere against all odds. Persevere in a way of a mother laboring to give birth. In no other time period could the Church of Messiah be under more duress nor need an effort of astounding proportions to survive.

This introspection however is not all the evidence pointing to an early Church era. The reference to battling false apostles should without argument place this time frame within the earliest of Church eras. Certainly from a historic perspective the Apostolic Age and shortly thereafter is the time frame when the term apostle is most readily applied. Although the term apostle has been utilized throughout the ages, from a common sense perspective one should inevitably think of the very early Church when the term “apostle” is invoked.

These so noted references represent the overt indications of which Church age is being alluded to but as we will soon see these references are certainly not the most convincing elements of the evidential body. The author would like to turn the reader’s attention to a few additional and less overt references in this Church letter for review.

We have already seen where Yeshua walking amidst the seven candlesticks is representative of his Universal centrality. We may also view this from a Church era message as a declaration that Yeshua’s presence or impact would be most prominent or profound within this first Church era.

When we think in terms of conviction and strength of faith associated with the infantile and early Church of Messiah, without knocking contemporary people of today, we surely must admit that we cannot know what it must have been like to be alive in the early Church days. To hear preaching from those who personally knew Yeshua; to witness divine healings and miracles right before our eyes; to possibly even have seen and heard Yeshua himself. There can be no doubt this would have been the era with the strongest faith and most conviction. This would have been the era with the most zeal. This would have been the era where Yeshua was most profoundly in their midst!

Moving now to Revelation 2:6, Yeshua declares his hatred for the Nicolaitanes, an author dubbed “extra,” while applauding the early Church for their similar disdain of them. As should be seen this identifiable “positive” for the early Church seems to be an after-thought given its placement in the message; or perhaps not.

The placement of this reference within the message to the Church seems odd and out of place, does it not? Obviously this positive reference for the early Church logically should have been placed in verses two or three of chapter two where the other applause from Yeshua was given. But the reference is made even after the warning to repent was declared.

It would seem then this reference is separated and positioned in such a way as to be given prominence. Subsequently the author believes this reference to “Nicolaitanes” in fact needs some further review.

To begin some scholars would contend, with minimal historical support, that the Nicolaitanes were the followers of an early Church notable, one Nicolas of Antioch. Nicolas was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles—see Acts chapter six.

These Nicolaitanes purportedly lead lives of unrestrained indulgence without spiritual concerns, due to their belief that all sins were covered under the blanket of grace once a believer accepted Yeshua as Messiah. ⁽²⁷⁾ Of course this ran contrary to early Church belief.

Although there theoretically may be some merit to this “Nicolaitane” explanation, one should consider the following arguments against such a position.

Nicolas was appointed directly by the apostles themselves to his position. Therefore he would have personally been known and as such presumably his character known as well by the apostles.

Secondly there is no historical evidence of this group or any record of writings, etc. Furthermore the Church of Antioch was a cornerstone community within the early Church outside of Jerusalem. Antioch was historically where early believers were first dubbed “Christians.” Antioch in fact held the highest position of prestige within the early Church for a few centuries. It seems very odd we have no record of such activities associated with such a prominent and esteemed Church.

The author brings up these issues to stress the very high probability that the postulated inference to the Nicolaitanes as a sect spawned from Nicolas of Antioch does not really hold up under close scrutiny.

The reader will recall that in Revelation 2:2 Yeshua has already declared he knows the early Church cannot stand that which is evil. Certainly licentious and promiscuous behavior, purportedly practiced by the unsubstantiated Nicolaitane sect, would fall within the category of evil given the sinful nature of such activities. We have also covered in detail the problem the early Church had with various heresies of which finding records and evidence of is typically not a problem. But Yeshua mentions these heresies or alternative doctrines not at all. So if the issue was one of heresy it would seem Messiah could have addressed this issue more clearly than referencing a rogue and mysterious sect as the Nicolaitanes.

Ultimately it would seem the use of this term is symbolic and was not meant to depict a minimally referenced cult of licentious behaving believers. It would seem the Nicolaitanes is a more important lead that needs to be pursued further.

So what else could the word “Nicolaitane” be referring to? The term itself derives linguistically from two Greek words: Nikao which means to conquer, and Lao which means the people or laity. Nicolaitane in essence linguistically translates as, “to conquer the laity.” (28) What this really alludes to of course is probably not a physical or war-like conquering but rather a “separated ecclesiastical body/bureaucracy that rules over, and is set apart from, the regular Church body or laity.” This being said would not however preclude the possibility of physical or political subjugation.

Ironically this is just the scenario Yeshua himself had to deal with, during his own glorious ministry, with the Jewish religious establishment. Subsequently Yeshua’s hatred for this dynamic becomes very understandable and in reality makes more sense within the context of this Church message. Most likely Yeshua’s declared hatred of the Nicolaitanes’ deeds was a direct reference to the bureaucratic and elitist nature of the Jewish religious establishment which had set itself above and over the flock of Israel. The Establishment was a well-oiled bureaucratic machine that took pride in the elevated and elitist status which had been forged over a long period of time. This same Nicolaitane body politic was of course continuing to hamper the sheep of Israel from coming to Messiah.

On the other hand Yeshua’s declaration may have been implying this early Church was confronting this type of activity from within and apparently did not stand for it. What should be kept in mind is that Nicolaitane does not represent a status or condition of the Church at this time. Yeshua’s revelation only indicates the Church of this era hates the deeds of the Nicolaitanes.

Of course the previous insight would dictate the reader accept the use of the term “Nicolaitane” as being used in a symbolic manner? This symbolic use of “Nicolaitane” should not represent a burden upon a reader and furthermore when the concept of a separated Ecclesiastical body is introduced to the Church of Messiah in a historical context; it really makes sense this is indeed what Yeshua is discussing within this message.

In viewing “Nicolaitane” with regards to the developing Church of Messiah the author has very little choice but to sum up the overall situation in brief. A thorough review of the development

of the ecclesiastical organization within the Church of Messiah would easily demand a comprehensive work of its own which is certainly not feasible within the confines of this work. However a summary review is in order.

By the turn of the first century the early Church communities were not operating like today. Churches were less centralized, ministered or lead primarily through the authority of the elders of the Church and functioned very much independently by today's standards.

From the end of the first century the Church of Messiah was beset with organizational difficulties and was certainly under duress to rein things in so to speak. As we have previously detailed it was a time period of explosive growth but the growth was not necessarily controlled which subsequently led to diversities in doctrine, beliefs and practices.

In reaction to this growing organizational need there naturally developed different schools of thought on how best to organize. Fundamentally the issue of authority and control came down to either centralizing control under one individual, a bishop (overseer), or maintaining leadership via the body of presbyters or the group of elders.

As history declares, the former school of thought ultimately became the preference and the standard. What this movement actually created was the beginnings of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In the earliest of times this would have basically consisted of: bishop, presbyter and deacon/priest. Prior to this classification, a "bishop" would not have necessarily ruled over a body of presbyters and would have probably been a presbyter himself. Outside of these positions there is no mention in B'rit Chadasha Scripture of other ecclesiastical positions. In essence the early Church was what we would consider organizationally flat consisting of possibly a bishop but certainly elders and priests/deacons and of course the people or laity. This was it!

What we do know historically from early Church writings is the movement to organize and create infrastructure was begun earnestly between the years 110 Ce and 150 Ce. We also know according to Catholic Church history: Victor (Bishop of Rome c. 190–198 Ce), according to Jerome, was the first Christian author to write about theology in Latin but is best remembered for

the intolerance he displayed towards any lack of uniformity in the Church. It was Victor who excommunicated bishops, such as Polycrates of Ephesus, who opposed Victor's views on Easter.

Until Victor's time, Rome celebrated the Mass in Greek. Victor changed the language to Latin, which was prevalent in his native North Africa at the time. (29)

History tells us between the end of the true Apostolic Age, (death of John the Apostle) approximately 100 Ce, until the turn of the next century there had evolved a position of power for the Bishop of Rome sufficient enough to implement "excommunications" upon other Bishops and even change the language of the Mass. For this scenario to evolve there can be no doubt a significant organizing of some sort had taken place and the early Church communities of Messiah had become subjected to a higher authority outside of the local bishop and/or body of elders. Centralization with a bureaucratic tone was certainly beginning to emerge.

The importance of pointing out the organizational development just referenced is for two distinct purposes. First it is imperative to set the stage for further discourse regarding "Nicolaitanes" in as much that the second century Ce was when decisions were made which would ultimately lead to subsequent Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy. Secondly this will lead into the last real indicator of the Church time frame relevant to this Church message.

The reader will recall previous discourse was undertaken regarding the Synod of Ephesus (190 Ce) and the problem of the Quartodecimans. Much more than an issue of the dating of Passover/Easter the real issue was a fundamental question of the Church of Messiah being a religion which was ultimately rooted in the Hebrew tradition or rooted in some other manner.

The ultimate excommunication of the Quartodecimans in effect settled this issue once and for all. So the reader may ask: "what does this have to do with the Church message to Ephesus?" In Revelation 2:4 Yeshua rebukes the Church for leaving the first love and continues with a warning in verse five to repent and do the first works or risk losing their candlestick.

From the author's perspective the rebuke is a condemnation of the early Church's separation from their inherent Hebraic roots. Why would the author make this contention?

First let us once again revisit the idea of Scriptural and Covenantal Continuums. When we view peoples' relationship with G_D it is impossible to do so without thinking in terms of the eternal covenant and the chosen people. Furthermore it is absolutely impossible to think in terms of the covenantal relationship without thinking in terms of G_D's divine plan for mankind as defined in Holy Scripture. Subsequently Yeshua's reference to leaving the first love and doing the works of the first love can only logically imply a separation from G_D's Sacred Torah in which the very nature of people's behavior, or the first works, are defined.

As we have already covered in much detail there can be no doubt the early Church in effect turned its collective back on G_D's sacred and eternal festivals. There can be no doubt the early Church in effect turned its collective back on G_D's sacred laws and statutes. There can be no doubt the early Church in effect turned its collective back on the Scriptural roots which had been planted from the beginning of creation by G_D.

We know from historical evidence reviewed within this work that the Synod of Ephesus, near the turn of the second century, certainly marked an official Church of Messiah stance on the celebration of Passover or more appropriately not celebrating Passover. Passover of course being the very first scripturally mandated festival of G_D and representative of the original covenant. In so many respects is Passover representative of G_D's love and mercy for his chosen people be it considered under the auspices of the original or renewed covenant as perfected in Yeshua the Messiah.

The author can only note the irony of this Church message being sent to Ephesus given the nature of the issues dealt with by the Synod of Ephesus, approximately 100 years after Revelation was authored. The decisions of the Synod are historically linked to the rebuking Yeshua made to the early Church and these decisions essentially represent the official declaration by the Church that they had abandoned their first love.

If for some reason the reader is still not yet convinced “the first love” is a reference to G_D’s Torah, then the author would turn the reader’s attention to Revelation 2:7. In this verse Yeshua exhorts believers to overcome presumably that of which needs to be repented. If so then he will give to them to eat from the tree of life. Is there any insight which can be ascertained from this declaration by Yeshua? As always it is incumbent to look to Holy Scripture for guidance.

Genesis states: And the Lord G_D said: ‘Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.’ Therefore the Lord G_D sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. (Genesis 3:22–23)

We must remember that Adam and Eve were sent forth from the Garden of Eden because of disobedience to G_D’s command.

Proverbs states: my son, forget not my teaching; but let thy heart keep my commandments; for length of days, and years of life, and peace, will they add to thee. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that obtaineth understanding. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that holdest her fast. (Proverbs 3:1–18)

We clearly see in Scripture the connection between the tree of life and G_D’s commands and statutes which undoubtedly represent the first works. There should be no doubt that Messiah’s rebuking of the early Church concerning the loss of the first love is a direct reference to drifting away from scripturally ordained Hebraic roots and G_D’s Torah!

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Letter to Ephesus Conclusion

The author is confident the interpretations and contentions put forth in this “Letter to Ephesus” discourse are rational and well supported. The reader should have no recourse but to conclude that this Church era is comfortably dated within the time frame of the first two centuries Common Era.

Beyond making a solid case for a definitive Church era time frame it should be noted the spiritual temperament or defined historical movement has also been identified. In the case of this Church era the spiritual temperament, both positive and negative is indeed supported by historical review.

The author does not believe a critical case can be made asserting the author has simply used historical evidence to make the prophetic revelations of Yeshua fit a desired argumentative position. The author indeed has history as a valuable guide but ultimately the author’s positions fit cleanly. The positions fit tightly because we are dealing here with the perfect and divine Revelation of G_D.

Although the review has indeed produced a reasonable interpretive output, the author would like to relate one more important insight to the reader before proceeding to the next Church message.

In Revelation 2:5 Yeshua warns the Church that if it does not repent then he will come quickly and take away their candlestick. In light of the discourse just undertaken it should be concluded the Church did not, and still has not, repented of their transgressions—leaving the first love. There is just no way around this obvious reality. The Church of Messiah today is no closer than it was 1900 years ago when it embarked on its journey away from G_D’s scripturally ordained eternal mandates for mankind. It should be understood the ramifications are most significant.

So what can we say if indeed the candlestick has been removed from his place? To begin we should look to Scripture to get a firm understanding of the symbolic nature of the “candlestick.”

Exodus says: And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made, even its base, and its shaft; its cups, its knops, and its flowers, shall be of one

piece with it. And there shall be six branches going out of the sides thereof: three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candle-stick out of the other side thereof; . . . And thou shalt make the lamps thereof, seven; and they shall light the lamps thereof, to give light over against it. (Exodus 25:31–37)

Leviticus states: And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying: ‘Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually. Without the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, shall Aaron order it from evening to morning before the Lord continually; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord continually. (Leviticus 24:1–4)

As we can see in these Scriptural passages as well as others that the candlesticks, and of course their light, are connected to G_D’s sanctuary and presence. Yeshua himself likens the Holy Spirit inside each man to be a beacon to the world glorifying G_D through obedience and works.

It would seem the removal of the Church’s candlestick should be viewed in the context of lessening the Church’s purity and thus available “spiritual light.” In essence reducing the measure of Spirit that G_D will provide to the Church for its mission of bringing people to him. This penalty as seen during this review is a direct result of spurning G_D’s eternally ordained mandates of human behavior as defined in Holy Scripture.

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Church Messages-Smyrna

(8) And unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; (9) I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. (10) Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. (11) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. (Revelations 2:8–11)

Letter to Smyrna Components

Image of Yeshua: He that is the first and the last; who was dead and is alive

Positives: works, tribulation, poverty (but art rich)

Extras: blasphemy of false Jews of the synagogue of Satan, fear not which thou will suffer, the devil shall cast some in prison, ye shall have tribulation for ten days, be faithful unto death and get a crown of life (a reward)

Negatives: none

Warning: none

Reward: not be hurt by the second death

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Letter to Smyrna Commentary

In this message to the Church of Messiah the image of Yeshua presented within this message is one of martyrdom and resurrection. Yeshua presents himself as the first and the last; he that was dead and is alive. More so than any other Church message can the presented image of Yeshua be associated directly with his passion and sacrifice . . . and hence Earthly suffering to beget heavenly glory.

Yeshua continues in verse nine by declaring that he knows the Church's works, tribulation and poverty. Oddly enough, unlike the message to the Church of the previous era, Yeshua does not rebuke the Church. Undoubtedly the Church, consisting of imperfect people, is of course imperfect, but Yeshua choosing not to rebuke the Church leads the author to conclude this is an act of mercy by Messiah. It would seem the tribulation and dread suffered by believers, the allusion being "death," is sufficient to overshadow any wrongs of the Church body. It would seem fairly evident that martyrdom for the sake of Messiah is the greatest testament of faith one could ever profess.

The author subsequently views this Church message as indicative of a time of tremendous and unparalleled persecution of peoples for the name of Messiah. Although the first Church era was certainly not devoid of troubles and persecutions, this Church era will be typified by ongoing and extremely harsh tribulation for members of the Church of Messiah. A time period when many believers will pay the ultimate price for their faith in Yeshua the Messiah and the Church will undergo its own passion of sorts.

As the reader can easily verify on their own, with minimal historical research, the time frame which best describes this Church can be identified as approximately spanning the years 202 Ce through 313 Ce. During this time frame major persecutions of the Church were undertaken in both the Roman and Persian Empires.

Historical records for the Roman Empire are more abundant and will be the focus of interest herein. The author will note however that within the East the early Church had been tolerated for approximately two centuries but beginning with the Persian—Sassanid Dynasty (227 CE) this changed and the persecutions of the East began in earnest and were purportedly dreadful.

Throughout this time period persecutions were tolerated and initiated by notable Roman Emperors: Septimius Severus, Maximian, Decian, Valerian and Diocletian. Without doubt there are scattered periods of toleration and some peace for the Church but it must be noted that even within these so called times of peace the Church was subject to wanton pagan persecution.

Despite the tremendous growth of the early Church within this Church era, the established and primary religion throughout the Roman Empire was paganism. Like many other topics broached within this work there is no plausible means by which a thorough exposition of Paganism can be portrayed herein. This being declared it is critical however to understand from a high level perspective the nature of paganism and the subsequent dynamic with burgeoning Christianity.

The paganism of the Roman Empire combined several different cult practices and embraced more than a single set of beliefs most assuredly. The Romans originally followed a rural animistic tradition, in which many spirits were each responsible for specific, limited aspects of the cosmos and human activities, such as “ploughing” for example. The early Romans referred to these gods as “numina.” Another aspect of this animistic belief was ancestor worship, with each family honoring their own dead by their own rites.

Early in the history of the Roman Republic, foreign gods were imported, especially from Greece, which had a great cultural influence on the Romans. In addition, the Romans connected some of their indigenous deities with Greek gods and goddesses. The old Roman gods became associated and sometimes synonymous with their counter-part Greek gods. Therefore Jupiter was perceived to be the same deity as Zeus. Mars was associated with Ares, and Neptune with Poseidon. The actual fact is of course that Jupiter had a distinctive Italic flavor that Zeus did not, and Juno retained as much of her Etruscan attributes as she borrowed from the Greek goddess

Hera. It is a simplistic mistake to assume that the Roman gods simply absorbed completely the attributes and histories of these Greek gods, though they did come to be associated with them.

Based heavily in Greek and Etruscan mythology, Roman religion came to encompass and absorb hundreds of other religions, developing a rich and complex mythology. During the Roman Republic and early Empire, there was a strict system of priestly offices under the governance of the “College of Pontiffs.”

This College of Pontiffs or “Collegium Pontificum” was a body whose members were the highest-ranking priests of the pagan state religion. At the head of this body was the “Pontifex Maximus,” the high priest and most honored position in Roman religion. A distinctly religious office under the early Roman Republic, it gradually became politicized until, beginning with Augustus, it was integrated into the Imperial office. “Flamens” were major priests who took care of the cults of various gods, while “Augurs” were the “seers” entrusted with interpreting omens and determining the will of the gods.

It should be understood by the middle of the second century Ce, despite being weakened by various cultural influences, paganism had reemerged with strength and was synonymous with the Roman Empire. There was an entrenched and civilly important bureaucratic religious leadership that worked in league with imperial elements to maintain unity and order throughout the Roman Empire. Essentially the Pagan Empire was by no means unreligious; in fact the opposite was true.

(30)

It is against this backdrop that the Church of Messiah had to battle to survive. In essence the Romans, whom history proved absorbed all other religions of those territories that were conquered, were faced with a new sect of believers who were not so willing to forego their beliefs and succumb to pagan integration. Under this cultural and societal environment the growing Church of Messiah must have been viewed as a major threat to both Roman societal unity and of course the entrenched pagan religious bureaucracy. The subsequent result was an unprecedented era of persecution and subterfuge which resulted in the deaths of countless numbers of Church believers.

For instance, under the Decian Persecution of the middle third century, all citizens in every town and village of the Empire were required to perform acts of worship to the recognized gods of the State. Persons suspected of being Christian were brought before a commission and required to sacrifice. Refusal meant a long prison stay and subjection to torture so that the accused would apostatize; failing that, they were put to death. This systematic persecution produces so many martyrs that devotion to martyrs, once a more private practice, becomes widespread among Church of Messiah believers.

Under Emperor Valerian leaders of Christian communities are summoned to sacrifice to the pagan gods. Failure to comply resulted in exile and seizure of Church property that had been legally acquired. At the completion of a year of exile if the persons would still not comply they were executed. During this period faithful Christians who were caught assembling in a religious manner were subject to immediate execution.

But the lack of freedom to practice was not the only tribulation suffered by believers during this time frame. Intolerance of Christians also resulted in the lack of economic and civil opportunities. By the beginning of the fourth century Christians officially could not serve in any imperial capacity. It was indeed an extreme time of suffering for Church of Messiah believers.

Perhaps the most notable persecutions however would be those of Emperor Diocletian. During this time, from 303 Ce until the Edict of Milan in 313 Ce, Christians were once again forced to sacrifice to pagan gods or suffer death. Records of massacres depict a ruthless and systematic attempt to destroy the Church within the Roman Empire. Churches were burned and books were destroyed in an attempt to purge forever the Church of Messiah. It is not until the 313 Ce Edict of Milan issued by Emperor Constantine that the black period of martyrdom within the Church of Messiah came to an end.

So when historical records are reviewed we can only conclude this time frame clearly coincides with Yeshua's declaration of works, tribulation and poverty. Furthermore the imagery of Messiah's death and resurrection aligns perfectly with this great age of martyrdom and personal

suffering. Yeshua's salutation to this Church era was indeed pointing to a period where the ultimate sacrifice of death would be prevalent.

Although it would seem the author has made a compelling case in identifying this Church of Messiah era it should be noted there are additional passages within this Church message which are most interesting and demand further review.

Let us begin by reviewing the last portion of verse nine and all of verse ten where Yeshua declares: "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried and ye shall have tribulation ten days."

At first glance one might be inclined to think, the author included, that the conclusion of verse nine is a direct reference to Jews whom do not believe in Yeshua as Messiah. However for the purposes of objectivity, as well as the desire to discern and validate the truth, one should denote all the range of interpretive possibilities and then either support or negate declared potential interpretations premised upon due diligence and available facts. In keeping with this process the author has devised the following potential interpretations:

- #1 This could refer to Torah faithful ethnic Jews who, because of unbelief, are recognized by Yeshua as being false Jews and therefore of the synagogue of Satan.
- #2 This could refer to ethnic Jews who, because of failure to follow G_D's Torah as prescribed, are recognized by Yeshua as being false Jews and of the synagogue of Satan.
- #3 This could refer to persons that are not ethnic Jews but claim to be Jewish from an ancestral perspective.
- #4 This could refer to persons that are not ethnic Jews but claim to be Jewish from a symbolic perspective where "Jew" symbolically represents "chosen people."

Certainly this expanded view opens up the list of potential persons or groups significantly. However it must be taken into account that not all passages can be presumed to be literal. Previously at the outset of this work the author pointed out from a Scriptural perspective that

passages could be: literal, literal and symbolic at the same time, or just symbolic. Given the nature of these passages it would be wise to exercise caution during this review and examine all potential interpretations.

The reader must also bear in mind the great evangelist Paul's discourse on the subject of being a Jew in the letter to the Romans. In this discourse Paul makes the case that a real Jew is one who is circumcised inside, of the heart, and not outside. In this discourse Paul eloquently depicts how "Jew" can easily be used symbolically to represent anyone, including a Gentile.

Before we begin the review of the potential interpretive options it seems prudent to explore the other leads included within the passages to assist the endeavor. To begin we should consider the context in which verses nine and ten are set.

It would seem logical to presume that the "blasphemers" spoken of would be directly involved with the tribulation of the Church of Messiah given its position within verse nine where tribulation and poverty are prominent.

It would seem logical to presume that the "devil" in verse ten is connected with the "synagogue of Satan" in verse nine given the similarity in symbolism and imagery between Satan and the devil.

It would seem that the reference to "ten days of tribulation" is directly associated with the "devil" who will cast some into prison.

We are dealing with a Church era that roughly spans 190 Ce to 313 Ce.

Outside of setting the correct context we should also take a look at some other literal leads which have been provided. First let us review the word "blasphemy:"

- (a) A contemptuous or profane act, utterance, or writing concerning G_D;
- (b) The act of claiming for oneself the attributes and rights of G_D;

(c) An irreverent or impious act, attitude, or utterance in regard to something considered inviolable or sacrosanct. (31)

Secondly let us review the word “synagogue:”

- (a) A building or place of meeting for worship and religious instruction in the Jewish faith;
- (b) A congregation for the purpose of worship or religious study;
- (c) The Jewish religion as organized or typified in local congregations. (32)

The next lead to be looked at is “Satan:” adversary; accuser. When used as a proper name, the Hebrew word so rendered has the article “the adversary or hasatan” (Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7). In the New Testament it is used as interchangeable with Diabolos, or the devil, and is so used more than thirty times.

He is also called “the dragon,” “that old serpent” (Rev. 12:9, 20:2), “the prince of this world” (John 12:31, 14:30), “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2), “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4), “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2), and “Beelzebub, the prince of the devils” (Mat.12:24).

He is “the constant enemy of G_D, of Messiah, of the divine kingdom, of the followers of Yeshua, and of all truth; full of falsehood and all malice, and exciting and seducing to evil in every possible way.”

His power is very great in the world. He is a “roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). Men are said to be “taken captive by him” (2 Tim. 2:26). Christians are warned against his “devices” (2 Cor. 2:11) and called on to “resist” him (James 4:7).

Yeshua redeems his people from “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). Satan has the “power of death,” not as Lord, but simply as executioner.

The last lead to be looked at is “Devil:” (a) In many religions, the major personified spirit of evil, ruler of Hell, and foe of G_D; (b) A subordinate evil spirit; a demon; (c) A wicked or malevolent person (33)

Now that we have gathered some basic definitions for the added clues we should evaluate these to ascertain if additional meaning can be extracted and applied to the apparent mystery at hand: “who represents the synagogue of Satan?”

The author considers the literal definition of “blasphemy” suitable but cautions the reader to understand that “blasphemy” in effect can be generally interpreted to mean lowering the status of G_D either directly or indirectly through elevating another to the position of “Supreme Being.”

Furthermore with regards to “blasphemy” it should be viewed as defiling that which is holy or sanctified before G_D. In a broad sense blasphemy is knowingly and overtly acting against the will of G_D in a “high handed/defiant” manner.

Moving on to “synagogue,” these definitions bring no surprises, but the author must note in a general symbolic sense synagogue cannot be ruled out as referencing any “house of worship” or “place of religious instruction.” Subsequently this potential symbolic use of the word synagogue must be taken into account when reviewing the interpretive options; certainly so for options 3 and 4 respectively where the potential persons or group being considered are not ethnically Jewish.

Regarding Satan it would seem enough material was provided herein however the reader should understand in a general symbolic religious sense “Satan” translates to “other than G_D,” as would be the case for any false god such as Baal. In the context we are dealing with, it should be accepted that worship of any deity other than G_D would have to be considered “satanic.”

As for “devil” the author believes the provided definitions are suitable for our needs. We can now proceed with a review of our four potential options concerning the false Jews of the synagogue of Satan.

Looking at option #1 we will consider the “false Jews” reference to mean Torah observant and faithful Hebrews who did not accept Yeshua as Messiah of Israel.

Although it might seem contradictory that devout and faithful believers in G_D could in any manner be deemed to be blasphemous, we must bear in mind that denying Yeshua, both as Messiah and as G_D manifested on Earth, would indeed fit the broad definition of blasphemous. Still further when we look at the general definition of Satan which is “the adversary” we could objectively conclude the synagogue of Jews did indeed put itself in an adversarial position to Yeshua and hence G_D.

On the other hand any reasonable individual should be hard pressed to declare the Jewish denial of Yeshua as Messiah is maintained out of hatred of G_D. This being the case would mean this unfortunate decision represents a brutal and fatal mistake and not a high handed blasphemous act against G_D. It would seem that faithful Jews would not fit the description of “synagogue of Satan.”

Still further could this reference by Yeshua relate to third century Jews anyway? We must bear in mind the time frame or Church era being referred to. The last great attempt of Jewish re-emergence took place from 133–135 Ce. This revolt was crushed by Rome and in essence rendered the Jews utterly defeated. In fact countless Jews were enslaved, vast numbers of others dispersed throughout the empire and Jerusalem became a totally pagan city where Jews were not even allowed to enter under penalty of death. In light of this situation it would seem that option #1 should be eliminated.

Moving now to option #2 we will review the potential scenario of the false Jews reference to mean ethnic Jews that do not follow G_D’s prescribed plan for his chosen people.

To begin the author will point out this group could consist of two distinct segments of persons. The first group can readily be identified as those ethnic Jews who are in effect “secular,” or non-religious, whereas the second group would have to be identified as ethnic Jews who are religious but knowingly usurp the Sacred Torah of G_D.

In looking at the first group it should be proposed without much argument that a secular, non-religious, Jew is one who has revoked their birth right as a member of the chosen people. They have in effect turned their backs on G_D all together and hence have blasphemed in a most dreadful manner.

With this being the case however can we see this as having any bearing on the reference within this Church message? It would seem there is no historical evidence to indicate secular non-religious Jews would have any hand in the persecution upon the Church of Messiah. There is just no evidence to support that any secular Jewish contingent ascertained any position of influence or authority within the Roman Empire to conduct such activities.

Based on this simple argument alone we should be able to eliminate the secular non-religious Jew as being the referenced “false Jews” within this Church message, regardless of their blasphemy.

Moving on to the second group of ethnic Jews who are religious but knowingly usurp the Torah of G_D, this will require some explanation. The reader will recall the author had exposed earlier in this work that early Church fathers had serious problems with heresies in the developing Church of which a significant heresy was that of “Gnosticism.”

The Gnostic movement of the first through third centuries Common Era was centered in Alexandria, Egypt which had become a center for Jewish learning and culture after the failed revolt of 133–135 Ce. Before tying this movement to any purported false Jews some additional background materials on mysticism are warranted.

The reader must keep in mind that alchemy, astrology, numerology, etc., were not just ways of the ancient Egyptians and Chaldeans. Modern mystics contend vociferously that knowledge of and practice of the craft can be traced back to Shem and Abraham of Hebraic roots. They point to the origins of the craft in Biblical accounts of the Nephilim or “fallen angels,” which purportedly had traded divine knowledge for human sexual favors. This divine knowledge consisted not just

of “technological” information but purportedly secrets that could provide the initiated and learned, a path to spiritual ascension or metaphysical transmutation. In effect salvation or perfection could be acquired through secret knowledge and practice of the craft, as opposed to salvation being a gift from a merciful G_D bestowed upon people willing to be faithful and obedient to him.

We could of course go on and on regarding this topic, but what is important to relate is the following. Mystical under currents apparently were at work within Judaism for a long time, most probably as a result of the Babylonian Captivity where these two schools had ample opportunity to cross pollinate. By the onset of the Common Era, marked by the loss of power and control by the legalistic Jewish religious establishment, this mysticism began to manifest itself significantly in the Jewish Talmud or “Rabbinical Commentaries/Oral Traditions.” These traditions even to this day in Judaism stand equal and as a part of G_D’s Tanakh in importance; much like the Canon of the Roman Catholic Church.

Unlike infantile Christianity, which denounced claims of mystical origins as heresy, Judaism retained a powerful connection with those purported mystical roots. The earliest alchemical text, “Isis the Prophetess to her son Horus,” points to an Egypto-Hebraic source for its transformational philosophy. Interestingly enough, a Hebrew contemporary of the author of the “Isis the Prophetess” story, Rabbi Nehuniah ben HaKana, purportedly revealed to his students the magical technology behind these transformational processes. In the later centuries of the Dispersion, his teachings would form the basis of the traditional Jewish Kabbalah. ⁽³⁴⁾

The reader should be aware that numerous Jews of the mystical persuasion would have indeed migrated to early Christianity where they would have seen Yeshua as the ultimate magician. In fact it is in these mystical Gnostic schools where the stories of Mary Magdalene as Yeshua’s wife first emerge. It must be remembered within this mystical cultic sector women are by no means secondary and represent a very important element of the grand scheme. It is also within these schools where Mary Magdalene is professed to be the first alchemist. As the reader can surmise the Gnostics were and still are the root of all the nonsensical holy grail and DaVinci Code myths.

Within this backdrop we can certainly envision this sect as not just attempting to infiltrate the Church of Messiah but whole heartedly embracing it; but under a false conviction and with motives very different than those of Yeshua the Messiah. It is under this scenario Yeshua certainly could have been pointing to these mystical schools as being false Jews and of the synagogue of Satan. There are no doubt these groups, still existent today in various forms: Kabbalists, Freemasons, etc., represent elements of the synagogue of Satan.

This being the case however it should be realized these schools or groups would not have held sway over the Roman government or is there any historical evidence to indicate these groups conspired to attack members of the Christian faithful, even those of orthodox non-mystical beliefs.

So based on the sole fact these groups of ethnic Jews were not the ones persecuting the Christians it would seem, though they were indeed blasphemers, this was not the specific synagogue of Satan being referenced.

Option #3 will have us investigate the possibility of the false Jews to mean any non-ethnic Jews purporting to be ethnic Jews—that is of the seed of Abraham.

In looking at potential candidates we might consider first the possibility of those Hebrews dispersed during the Assyrian Captivity—Hebrews from the fabled lost tribes of Israel. This would pose an interesting option in as much there very well must be persons of Hebrew lineage, who do claim to be Jews, but are of a different tribe and have no proof of Hebrew lineage. We must acknowledge however there is no historical evidence to work any such group into this Church message or Church era. This group as it pertains to this Church message must be deemed to be implausible.

The next group which we could identify to fit this non-Jew claiming to be of the seed of Abraham would of course be the Arab Muslims who contend that through Ishmael, son of Abraham and his concubine Hagar the Egyptian, that they are the rightful heirs as “chosen people.” Or perhaps through Esau, who had sold his birthright to Jacob/Israel, are the rightful heirs of G_D’s promises.

Of course this group however must be excluded as a potential option within this Church message simply because the rise of Islam did not take place until the seventh century Ce.

We are now left only with option #4 which will entail a brief review of a group which is not ethnically Jews but claim to be chosen people. The reader hopefully is tolerant of the author for not proceeding directly to the most likely suspect first, but it is important that all plausible options are at least reviewed.

Because the presumption is that the false Jews of the synagogue of Satan are in fact the persecutors of the Christians, we know for a fact we are discussing the Roman Empire. In light of the reference to tribulation for ten days we can even identify the “devil” as most likely being Emperor Diocletian. The reader should first understand in Biblical symbolism the term “day” is often used to describe a year or many years depending on the intended need. In essence the reference could translate to ten or even one hundred years.

As has been previously disclosed it was Diocletian who initiated, authorized and was most zealous in persecuting the Christians in the most grievous of manner. As also noted this heinous period of persecution and martyrdom lasted roughly a decade from 303 to 313 Ce. There are two authorities for the ten year period of the most intense persecution against the Christians, that initiated under Diocletian. Eusebius and Lactantius, were contemporaries and eye-witnesses, the one in Phoenicia and Egypt, and the other in Nicomedia itself. From the two we get many details of the events leading up to the promulgation of the decrees, as well as of the horrors and cruelty attending their execution.”⁽³⁵⁾

But even acknowledging that Diocletian is the “devil” being referenced, where do we see the false Jews from the synagogue of Satan in this construct? As the author exposed within the discourse of this same Church message, the Roman pagan priesthood was most prominent throughout the empire. The fact the pagan religion was in essence integrated and sponsored by the Roman Empire should alone qualify it as a “synagogue of Satan.” In looking at this relationship

between paganism and the Roman Empire a bit closer we will see how this is without question the reference Yeshua was making in the Church message.

Obviously the blasphemy of paganism cannot be denied when thinking in context of the one true G_D of Israel and all peoples; this is a given! However it should be understood by the beginning of the third century Ce Rome was being ruled by the Severan Dynasty. During this dynasty it had become common practice for the emperor to be deified by the Roman Senate; blasphemy indeed!

Ironically in 218 Ce one of the most controversial Roman Emperors to ever reign came to power; his name was Elagabalus or Heliogabalus. What is notable about this emperor was his religious fervor and practices. Elagabalus' name is a Latinized form of the Semitic deity El-Gabal, a manifestation of the Semitic deity Ēl. Elagabalus replaced Jupiter, head of the Roman pantheon, with a new god, "Deus Sol Invictus," which in Latin means "the Sun, god Unconquered."

Since the reign of Septimius Severus sun worship had increased throughout the Empire. Elagabalus apparently saw this as an opportunity to set up his god, El-Gabal, as the chief deity of the Roman Pantheon and hence the entire Roman Empire. El-Gabal, renamed "the Invincible Sun," was placed even over Jupiter. As a sign of the union between the two religions, Elagabalus gave either Astarte, Minerva, Urania, or some combination of the three, to El-Gabal as a wife. Moreover, he himself married the Vestal Virgin Aquilia Severa, provoking great outrage. He said he would have "god-like children" from the marriage.

A temple to house El-Gabal, a black conical meteorite, was built in Rome on the east face of the Palatine Hill and its foundations remain today. To become the high priest of El-Gabal, Elagabalus had himself circumcised keeping in the tradition of the ancient Hebrews.

Herodian writes that Elagabalus forced senators to watch while he danced around the altar of El-Gabal to the sound of drums and cymbals and that each summer solstice became a great festival to El-Gabal. The festival became popular because of its tradition of widely distributing food to the masses. During this festival, Elagabalus placed El-Gabal in a chariot adorned with gold and jewels

and brought him out from the city to the country. A six horse chariot carried the divinity, the horses huge and flawlessly white, with expensive gold fittings and rich ornaments. No one held the reins, and no one rode in the chariot; the vehicle was escorted as if the god himself were the charioteer. Elagabalus ran backward in front of the chariot, facing the god and holding the horses' reins. He made the whole journey in this reverse fashion, looking up into the face of his god. (36)

In light of this exposed historical evidence the author would contend that the mystery of the third century false Jews of the synagogue of Satan may have been unraveled.

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Letter to Smyrna Conclusion

Within the context of third century Christianity it is historically conclusive there were persecutions that included forcing faithful Christians to submit to emperor worship that would have constituted the greatest of blasphemies. Not only were emperors elevating themselves to positions rivaling the most high G_D but they systematically attempted to defile the temple of true believers' souls through forced apostasy in a most egregious manner.

Under this horrific onslaught we find a message from Yeshua that is full of exhortation and comfort. A message where the themes are persecution, tribulation, poverty and death. A message where Messiah is depicted as dead ... yet alive forever more. A message wherein Messiah pays no heed to any deficiencies within the body of believers for the focus is on him and the eternal hope of life which he brings despite any temporal sacrifices that will be made in this present world.

What we see is that historical records show that Smyrna had shown an unwavering loyalty to Rome. It was proud that it had been declared a "free city," which meant its residents had the right to govern their own affairs. Long before Rome was undisputed mistress of the world, Smyrna had cast in its lot with her, never to waver in its fidelity. Cicero, a Roman orator, called Smyrna "one

of our most faithful and most ancient allies.” (37) Such was the reverence of Smyrna for Rome that as far back as 195 BCe it was the first city in the world to erect a temple to the goddess Roma. Smyrna was indeed loyal to Rome and to the synagogue of Satan.

These aspects of Smyrna, in light of the persecutions suffered by the believing body of Messiah, paint for us a clear portrait of not just the historical era in question but also of the powers and principalities being confronted.

We see an enemy that seeks assimilation and where this will not succeed we see a movement of genocide which sadly continues until the very end ... continues until Messiah returns to set things right!

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Church Messages-Pergamon

(12) And to the angel of the Church in Pergamon write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; (13) I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. (14) But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. (15) So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. (16) Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. (17) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Revelations 2:12-17)

Letter to Pergamon Components

Image of Yeshua: He that hath a two edged sword

Positives: Works, hold fast Messiah's name, not denied faith in Yeshua

Extras: thou dwellest where Satan's seat is, faithful even in those days when Antipas was martyred where Satan dwelleth

Negatives: thou hast them there that hold to the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols and to fornicate, thou hast them there that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which Yeshua hates

Warning: Repent or else Yeshua will come quickly and fight against them with the sword of his mouth.

Reward: He will give hidden manna and a white stone with a new name upon it

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Letter of Pergamon Commentary

In looking at the opening verse we see Yeshua presented as he who hath the sharp sword with two edges. This passage will represent the first topical discourse. At first glance we might view Messiah as simply declaring to the Church it is he that ultimately wields the power of judgment and in essence life and death. The vast majority of prior works done on this Church message interpret this image of Messiah in this manner.

From the author's perspective however this is an overly obvious and simplistic interpretation ... for this symbolism we already knew since it has been revealed within the context of the vision. Furthermore as was the case in the previous two messages this introductory image of Yeshua, in similar fashion, should certainly have a deeper contextual meaning specific to this Church era.

From still another perspective it would seem if Yeshua was simply declaring it was he who wields ultimate judgment it would have made more sense to provide this symbolic image to the previous Church era, a time when believers were being slaughtered by pagan Rome. In this way the message would simply have translated to "fear not the Romans who can destroy only the body for it is G_D who has the power to destroy the soul." But as we saw it was the suffering Yeshua presented to this persecuted Church era. So what then can this image be projecting?

As the author has exposed previously within this work the association of the sword and judgment/authority is inescapable. Regarding this specific Church era message the following should be noted specifically about ancient Pergamon: Attalus III King of Pergamon bequeathed his royal capital and kingdom to the Romans in 133 BCE and they formed it into the Province of Asia Minor. Pergamon became the official capital of the province from where the provincial

governor, wielding the broad double bladed Roman sword, symbolic of Imperial Rome's might, would issue the official decrees of Caesar throughout the province.

Pliny declared of Pergamon: it was the seat of a Roman supreme court, where prisoners were brought, sentenced and often executed. Pergamon was then in fact the seat of Roman authority and judgment within Asia Minor. [Pergamon Sources] ⁽³⁸⁾

Within this context we see a different meaning to Messiah's introduction to the Church era. From this perspective the introduction from Yeshua may be indicative not of a judgment upon the Church but rather this will be a Church era where his Church will either wield the power of judgment over people or perhaps be associated with the government that wields power over the people.

In verse thirteen Yeshua declares he knows the works of the Church and that they dwell even where Satan's seat is. Yeshua also declares that the Church holds fast his name and has not denied his faith even in those days when Antipas was a faithful martyr where Satan dwelled.

From a historical perspective Pergamon was notable as the official center of the pagan religion of the province and the leader in emperor worship. Jupiter, god of the sky and ruler of the Roman pantheon, was purported to have had his origins here. There were temples to Jupiter/Zeus, Athena, Dionysus, and Aesculapius. Aesculapius, "the serpent god," or "god of healing," also known as "the Great Physician," and "the Savior" was revered as "the god of Pergamon." A living serpent was actually kept in the temple and worshiped. Many coins from Pergamon display a picture of a serpent entwined around a pole, the modern symbol of the medical profession. Additionally in connection with the temple there was a famous school of medicine and learning. ⁽³⁹⁾

But Pergamon was still indeed further yet a far more notorious place in the realm of religious history. It would seem Pergamon, according to some historians and commentators, had become home to the fleeing priests and cult of that most despicable Babylonian Mystery Religion upon the defeat of the Babylonians at the hands of the Medes and Persians in the fifth century BCE. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ This Babylonian Mystery sect, the oldest of pagan worshippers and hence Satan's oldest synagogue,

had apparently usurped even the indigenous pagans because in short order after their arrival the snake, now really representative of that old serpent from the garden of Eden, had become chief idol in Pergamon. It should also be noted the traditional Greek cult of Aesculapius had enjoyed its time of prominence centuries before. The comeback for Aesculapius in Pergamon bodes quite strange.

So in light of this historical information we can draw clear implications from the reference to Antipas the faithful martyr; who according to tradition was bishop of Pergamon and was martyred during the persecutions of Domitian by being shut up in a brazen bull which was heated till it was red hot. Antipas purportedly ended his life with praises and thanksgiving to G_D. (41)

With history assisting our path we can see where Pergamon was literally the seat of Satan at one time declared by Messiah. The author says at one time because Satan unlike G_D does not dwell or sit in more than one place at a time. Satan is simply not omnipresent like G_D. It would seem evidence suggests Pergamon was the seat of Satan at least when Antipas was martyred.

But what about a Church era that is later than the persecutions of Diocletian, determined to be the end of the last Church era? What about this current Church era? Did Satan's seat pass into antiquity with the ancient city of Pergamon or move on? This will certainly be an issue which we will attempt to answer through historical review. It should also be noted that in conjunction with the "seat of Satan" construct does Yeshua applaud this Church era for not denying his name and holding fast their faith.

We see in verse fourteen Yeshua declares a negative against the Church era where some hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Now the reader may be aware of the recounting of the events of the chosen people in the Book of Numbers concerning the King of Moab, Balak. In brief this king, being dreadfully fearful of the horde of Israelites coming up out of Egypt, solicited the support of Balaam, a seer/priest of Pethor

to come and curse the approaching Israelites. Balaam was apparently noteworthy for such activities.

As recounted, Balaam consulted G_D who told him to in effect stay out of things and leave the Israelites alone for he had blessed them. Balaam decided to go and meet with Balak in the hopes G_D would change his mind and as such Balaam could curse the Israelites and earn the great booty that Balak had offered. Ultimately Balaam was prohibited by G_D from cursing the Israelites and in fact issued the blessing, going so far as to inform Balak that in the end of days the Israelites would ultimately smite Moab.

In response to these events, and of course the desire for retribution, Balaam advised Balak to have the women of Moab seduce the men of Israel and lead them to worship the false god Baal. This is indeed what happened. Ultimately the evil within the Hebrew camp had to be rooted out physically and killed.

The key elements relevant to this Scriptural account from the author's perspective are as follows:

The prophet Balaam represents leaders who are told to do one thing by G_D but find justifiable means of doing what they want to do and these things lead astray the chosen people. Although specific transgressions caused by Balaam's conspiring were idol worship and sexual fornication, the doctrine of Balaam is broadly symbolic of the mingling of the ways of G_D's chosen people or the ways of Scripture, with the ways of the heathens.

A point that previous commentators miss is the symbolism within this record of Balak that has G_D's chosen people violently rooting out of their community those that transgress. In the case of the Israelites this rooting out was of course "righteous" before G_D.

Another point that previous commentators seem to miss completely is the symbolism within this record of Balak where G_D's chosen people are warring with the heathens while they travel the path to the land of promise.

Ultimately what we will need to be in search of historically then is evidence of:

- 1) The Church era leadership following their own desires, those of Balaam and not G_D;
- 2) The ways/practices of the heathen being mingled with the scripturally ordained ways of G_D;
- 3) G_D's chosen people warring with the heathens;
- 4) G_D's chosen people violently purging the wayward from among their ranks.

Moving along we see in verse fifteen Yeshua once again broaches the topic of the Nicolaitanes. As previously covered, this is an allusion to a conquering and elitist ecclesiastical body. With this Church message however this is not just a threat but a reality as declared by Messiah; subsequently this Church era will also be one associated with a Nicolaitane ecclesiastical bureaucracy to some extent.

In closing the opening review of the Church letter to Pergamon let us summarize the notable characteristics of the Church era which we will seek to validate with historical evidence.

1. A Church era where the Church of Messiah itself is playing judge or at least in league with a secular power that is playing judge
2. A Church era where we see a definitive Nicolaitane ecclesiastical bureaucracy that literally conquers the people
3. A Church era where we see a violent purging within the ranks of the Church
4. A Church era where some notable leaders follow the doctrine of Balaam—pursue their own desires
5. A Church era where we see the Church of Messiah come under attack or at war
6. A Church era where we see the mingling of pagan practices with the ways of G_D
7. A Church era where we can situate the dwelling seat of Satan and in conjunction with this location the Church holds fast their faith in Yeshua while not denying his name

* * * * *

Historically the rise of the Church of Messiah from the depths of the third century Roman persecutions could be considered nothing less than extraordinary and perhaps even miraculous. In brief, the turn-around must be attributed in large part to the actions of the Emperor Constantine, who in 313 Ce issued the famous “Edict of Milan” which in effect “legalized” Christianity within the Roman Empire, though in the East the Persians reacted by persecuting Christians.

Within a very short time frame not only was the Church of Messiah thriving but it had become dominant within the empire. Historically we see in the decrees of Emperor Theodosius (347–395 Ce) a progressively anti-pagan stance being adopted. He declared in 389 Ce that those pagan feasts which had not yet been rendered Christian were now to be workdays. In 391 Ce, he outlawed blood sacrifice and decreed “no one is to go to the sanctuaries, walk through the temples, or raise his eyes to statues created by the labor of man.” The temples that were thus closed were to be declared “abandoned,” as Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria immediately noted in applying for permission to demolish a site and cover it with a Christian Church, an act which must have received general sanction, for mithraea forming crypts of Churches, and temples forming the foundations of fifth century Churches appear throughout the former Roman Empire.

Theodosius participated in actions by Christians against major pagan sites: most notably the destruction of the gigantic Serapeum of Alexandria and its library by a mob in around 392 Ce, authorized by Theodosius. The destruction of the greatest temple in Alexandria gave encouragement to Christian vigilantism and mob action in other centers, often spurred on by the local bishops, as early hagiographies proudly relate.

By decree in 391 Ce, Theodosius ended the subsidies which had still trickled to some remnants of Greco-Roman civic paganism as well. The eternal fire in the Temple of Vesta in the Roman Forum was extinguished, and the Vestal Virgins were disbanded. Taking the auspices and practicing witchcraft were to be punished. Pagan members of the Senate in Rome appealed to him to restore the “Altar of Victory” in the Senate House; he refused.

After the last Olympic Games in 393 Ce, Theodosius cancelled the much-diminished games, and the reckoning of dates by Olympiads soon came to an end. Now Theodosius portrayed himself on his coins holding the labarum, the banner adopted by Constantine I after his conversion to Christianity. [Theodosius Source Material] (42)

Within the fourth century the tide had indeed turned in favor of the Church of Messiah, and we in effect historically see the downfall of official Roman Paganism. The historical records show Christianity had become the de facto religion of the Roman Empire. These actions and policies undoubtedly inspired much of the population to convert to Christianity.

This period marks the beginning of an extremely long time frame in which the Church of Messiah would be deeply connected with the secular base of Western Power, be it identified as the Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire or the Monarchical Kingdoms of Europe. Regardless of apologists' attempts to downplay the relationship between the Church and state, the game of politics would be ingrained within the Church of Messiah. Admittedly politics were often forced upon the Church but often the Church willingly indulged in politics. This simply cannot be refuted and historically is a result of the marriage between the Roman Empire and the Church of Messiah.

Though the progressive Christianizing of the Roman Empire in the fourth century did not confer upon bishops civil authority within the state, the gradual withdrawal of imperial authority during the fifth century left the Pope the senior Imperial civilian official in Rome, as bishops were increasingly directing civil affairs in other cities of the Western Empire.

This status as a secular and civil leader was vividly displayed by Pope Leo I's confrontation with Attila in 452 Ce and was substantially increased in 754 Ce, when the Frankish ruler Pippin the Younger donated to the Pope a strip of territory which formed the core of the so-called Papal States. In 800 Ce Pope Leo III crowned the Frankish ruler Charlemagne as Roman Emperor, a major step toward establishing what later became known as the Holy Roman Empire, from that date it became the Pope's prerogative to crown the Emperor or any monarch with affiliations with the Church until the crowning of Napoleon. (43)

By 500 Ce the Roman Empire, undoubtedly in the West, was essentially extinct. What remained was the Roman Catholic Church which undoubtedly became the glue that held the collapsed portion of the empire together. There was indeed no other institution capable of performing such a daunting task and it cannot be refuted that this role played by the Church of Messiah mandated it take on secular responsibilities in light of the empire's collapse and the need to institute social order.

So how did the Church come to this position of power? As history declares the Church of Messiah became the religious arm of the secular Roman Empire during the fourth century. In conjunction with the Edict of Milan we also historically see the first reference to the Lateran Palace, a gift of Constantine, which housed the Bishop/Vicar of Rome until the early fourteenth century, or nearly 1,000 years. It was commonly referred to as the "Palace of the Popes."

Although history indicates the evolution and rise of the Roman Catholic Papacy occurred over many centuries it should be noted in 607 Ce, under a decree by Emperor Phocas, the bishop of Rome was deemed "Universal Bishop of the Church." Prior to this time the term Pope had been used strictly as a courtesy for the Vicar of Rome.

To understand the position of the bishop of Rome and to a greater extent the governing ecclesiastical organization however one needs to look at the relationship between the Church and the Roman Empire. As was previously detailed the pagan religion had its own priestly order. The reader will recall the order consisted of: the Pontifex Maximus at the top, the collegium of Pontifices, the Flamens/Priests and the Augurs or oracles. Most important to understand is the ingrained civic nature of this priestly order. This was not simply a religious component of the Empire by any stretch; the priestly order was deeply entrenched within Roman civil affairs and society in general.

What the author is pointing out is with the fall of paganism and the priestly order there was a natural power vacuum which undoubtedly was filled by the Church of Messiah. When one objectively looks at the development of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical body one simply cannot

ignore the similarities between it and the pagan priestly order from an organizational perspective. In essence the Pope assumed the role of the Pontifex Maximus, a literally gifted designation from the Emperor of Rome who was bearer of the title. It should also be noted this Latin term is still an official title of the modern Pope. We certainly cannot ignore the similarities between the college of pontiffs and the college of cardinals, etc. It must be remembered the secular power base would not only desire to use the Church as a means of stability and influence but would have needed such an arrangement. It was logically natural for this scenario to develop in light of the history of the Roman Empire.

It was under this scenario in which the bishop of Rome assumed not just religious authority but also political authority. Within this environment the ecclesiastical organization would have followed suit and the hierarchical structure would and did evolve. Ultimately what emerged within the Church was an ecclesiastical institution, which unlike the Apostolic Age, comprised a distinct sector of individuals which had not only religious but secular authority as well.

A summary review of the development of the Papal States can shed some much needed light on the nature of the ecclesiastical institution which the priesthood had evolved into within the Church of Messiah. The seeds of the Papal States were planted in the sixth century. By the seventh century, with Byzantine power weighted at the northeast end of this territory, the Bishop of Rome, as the largest landowner and most prestigious figure in Italy, began by default to take on much of the ruling authority that Byzantines were unable to project to the area around Rome.

In practice the Duchy of Rome, an area roughly equivalent to modern day Latium, became an independent state ruled by the Church. The Church's relative independence, combined with popular support for the Papacy in Italy, enabled various Popes to defy the will of the Byzantine emperor; Pope Gregory II even excommunicated Emperor Leo III. Nevertheless the Pope and the Exarch still worked together to control the rising power of the Lombards in Italy. As Byzantine power weakened, the Papacy took an ever larger role in defending Rome from the Lombards, usually through diplomacy, threats, and bribery.

The Donation of Pippin and the Holy Roman Empire

In 751, the Duchy of Rome was completely cut off from the Byzantine Empire by the conquering Lombards. Pope Stephen II acted to neutralize the Lombard threat by courting the Frankish ruler, Pippin the Younger. Stephen gave Church sanction to Pippin's desire to depose the Merovingian figurehead, Childeric III, and take the throne himself; he also granted Pippin the title Patrician of the Romans. In return, Pippin led a Frankish army into Italy in 754 and 756 and conquered much of northern Italy and made a gift of the properties to the Pope. In 781, Charlemagne codified the regions over which the Pope would be temporal sovereign: the Duchy of Rome was key, but the territory was expanded to include Ravenna, the Pentapolis, parts of the Duchy of Benevento, Tuscany, Corsica, Lombardy, along with a number of Italian cities. The cooperation between the Papacy and the Carolingian dynasty climaxed in 800, when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne "Emperor of the Romans"—"Augustus Romanorum."

Over several campaigns in the mid-tenth century, the German ruler Otto I conquered northern Italy; Pope John XII crowned him emperor and the two of them ratified the "Diploma Ottonianum," which guaranteed the independence of the Papal States. However, over the next two centuries, Popes and emperors squabbled over a variety of issues, and the German rulers routinely treated the Papal States as part of their realms on those occasions when they projected power into Italy. A major motivation for the Gregorian Reform was to free the administration of the Papal States from imperial interference, and after the extirpation of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, the German emperors rarely interfered in Italian affairs. By 1300 Ce, the Papal States, along with the rest of the Italian principalities, were effectively independent. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

What should logically be concluded by this brief review of the "Papal States" is that a segment of the Church of Messiah had indeed evolved into an institution wherein a separated and authoritative ecclesiastical organization was prevalent and not just running the Church but an entire geo-political realm.

Important to note is this discourse thus far has clearly focused upon the Roman segment of the Church of Messiah for obvious reasons. While the ecclesiastical institution within the Church

was evolving within the West there were marked differences when compared with the Church of the Eastern Empire. Constantinople had essentially become the seat of the Roman Empire during the fourth century and by the fifth century the unrivaled replacement of Rome as Imperial Capital City. Despite the deeply Christian (Greek Orthodox) nature of the realm there had not been a deep embedding of the Church ecclesiastical organization within the secular power base. Essentially the Eastern Empire had what could be described as a somewhat separated Church and state. The Church most assuredly was influential but could in no way be described as wielding the power as did their Western counter parts.

In light of the developed authority of the Western segment of the Church of Messiah it is absolutely clear the general population was subjected to the rule of the Roman Church or at least its ecclesiastical institution. It would also seem clear then the Western Church had assumed the role of ruler and judge within its realm of influence. Essentially then it should be considered a given that a separated and elitist organization, a Nicolaitane organization had emerged. With this being the case is there historical evidence that points to this organization being a “conqueror” of the laity or general population?

During the same time of the Christianization of the Roman Empire, the Church began to handle internal differences in a new method. As we see from a brief historical review of the Donatist Churches of Africa it was not just the general Christian population that would become militant.

The Donatists, founded by the Berber Christian Donatus Magnus, were followers of a belief considered a heresy by the broader Catholic community. They lived primarily in the Roman Africa Province and flourished in the fourth and fifth centuries. The Donatists’ primary disagreement with the Church was over the treatment of those bishops and priests who renounced their faith during the violent and terrible persecutions of Diocletian. The rest of the Church was apparently far more forgiving of these people than were the Donatists.

The Donatists essentially refused to accept the sacraments and spiritual authority of any priests and bishops who had fallen away from the faith during the persecution. The Donatists

deemed the renouncing of faith to be unforgivable for a person of leadership stature within the Church. After the persecutions many of these apostatized Church leaders had been forgiven by the Church and returned to positions of authority under Constantine. The Donatists however proclaimed that any sacraments celebrated by these priests and bishops were invalid. As a result, many towns were divided between Donatist and non-Donatist congregations particularly in North Africa.

Constantine, as emperor, ultimately got involved in the dispute, and in 314 Ce he called an Imperial council at Arles in France; the issue was debated and the decision went against the Donatists. The Donatists however refused to accept the decision of the council; their distaste for bishops who had collaborated with Rome came out of their broader view that the Roman Empire was inherently an evil pagan entity. After the Constantinian shift when other Christians accepted the emperor as a leader in the Church, the Donatists continued to see the emperor as the devil. In 317 Ce Constantine ultimately sent troops to deal with the Donatists in Carthage, for the first time in history we see Christian persecuting Christian. It resulted in banishments and executions. It failed completely and Constantine had to withdraw and cancel the persecutions in 322 Ce. ⁽⁴⁵⁾

This record is recounted because this treatment of the Donatist Churches essentially became the acceptable modus operandi of the Church of Messiah in dealing with dissenters as well as non-believers within their realm of influence. As history depicts violent judgment prevailed: with ongoing persecutions of Jews, brutalities during the Iconoclastic Wars (eighth and ninth centuries BCe) and certainly of notable importance were initiation in the late twelfth century of the horrific brutalities of the Inquisitions.

The author believes the historical record needs no embellishment to prove definitively how the Nicolaitane authority of the Western Church of Messiah conquered the laity. The author ultimately wants to impress upon the reader that historically the development of and control by a Nicolaitane Church bureaucracy can simply not be reasonably argued. History points out the Church bureaucracy ruled in most cases with an iron fist and in political fashion akin to the modus operandi of a secular empire.

In looking at this last topical discourse it should be noted the historical review initially started with the search for seven definitive attributes applicable to this Church era. The author is confident that attributes one, two, and three have been adequately identified herein.

1. A Church era where the Church of Messiah itself is playing judge or at least in league with a secular power that is playing judge
2. A Church era where we see a definitive Nicolaitane ecclesiastical bureaucracy that literally conquers the people
3. A Church era where we see a violent purging within the ranks of the Church

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Attribute number four pertinent to this Church era as listed previously deals with the Church leaders following after Balaam and pursuing authority, wealth, influence, etc. It should be apparent to the reader these types of activities would be most prevalent of course within a Nicolaitane ecclesiastical environment. As such it would be logical to pursue historical leads relative to the Western Roman Church segment.

Despite the emergence of the “dominant Church” within the Western empire it must be noted in all fairness to the Church that specific records of personal opulence and greed are not very abundant. It would seem in spite of the opportunity to systematically abuse their positions of authority, Church leaders were not very prone to do so. This statement by no means is meant to portray the Church as perfect or even excellent but is just meant to be objective and make it clear that abuses along the lines of Balaam as described herein were not widespread or prevalent.

Can history then not assist us in defining this Church era attribute? What history does provide for us is a look into a period known outside the Church as “The Rule of the Harlots,” or “The Pornocracy” by another name. This time period is relative to the Papacy in the early tenth century, beginning with the installation of Pope Sergius III in 904 Ce. This period is usually considered to

have lasted for sixty years, until the death of Pope John XII in 963 Ce. Some sources describe it as ending after thirty years, with the reign of Pope John XI in 935 Ce.

During this period, the Popes were influenced strongly by three major Roman families, the Theophylacts, the Alberics, and the Tusculans. They were in particular under the influence of powerful women, though not necessarily prostitutes, in these families, especially Theodora and her daughters, Marozia and Theodora, of the Theophylact family. It is widely believed, outside the Church, Marozia was the concubine of Pope Sergius III and the mother of Pope John XI. She was also accused of having had Pope John X murdered (who had originally been nominated for office by Theodora) in order to secure the election of her current favorite, Pope Leo VI. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

The author must note the historical records regarding these alleged matters are not what anyone could objectively call conclusive. What we do know however is this time frame fits in with the emergence of the Papal States and the consolidation of control and power by the Papacy within the Western Church of Messiah. Despite the lack of historical records to support the argument of Church leaders pursuing those things which Balaam desired, it would seem that common sense would declare this to be a fact given the geo-political environment within the Western Church where essentially the Papacy was already functioning as a head of state to some degree.

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Attribute number five to be dealt with centers upon the chosen people at war; provided herein is an abbreviated list of historical military campaigns relative to the Emperor Constantine through Crusader Campaign time frame.

- 410 Ce Gothic Rampage of Rome
- 475 Ce Rome Falls to the Visigoths
- 535–552 Ce Gothic War
- 569–728 Ce Lombard Intrusions into Italy and Southern Europe

- 620s Ce Avar & Persian besiege Constantinople, Bulgars overwhelm the Balkans
- 627 Ce Byzantines respond to the Persians and defeat them at Nineveh
- 638 Ce Christian Jerusalem and Syria conquered by Muslim armies
- 642 Ce Egypt falls to the Muslims, followed by the rest of North Africa.
- 674–678 Ce Arab siege of Constantinople
- 711 Ce Muslim armies invade Spain
- 732 Ce Muslims' advance into Western Europe halted by Charles Martel at Poitiers, France.
- 717–718 Ce Arab siege of Constantinople
- 793 Ce Sacking of the monastery of Lindisfarne marks the beginning of Viking raids on Christian Europe.
- 900s-1000s Ce Eastern Empire reclaims Crete, Cyprus, Cilicia, Armenia, Eastern Anatolia, Northern Syria and the holy city of Antioch.
- 1095–1272 Ce The Crusades (the nine primary expeditions)
- 1204 Ce Christian Constantinople sacked by Crusaders

Without the need to provide additional details outside of this list it should be concluded that, in spite of the Church's rise to dominance within the Roman Empire and the strength of the Eastern Roman Empire, threats abounded on a continual basis in the form of pagan encroachment. These threats most certainly jeopardized the Church's geo-political base of operations and subsequently the faith itself! Like the chosen people in the desert on their way to the Promised Land, the new group of chosen people on their way to the Promised Land of global witnessing to Yeshua were besieged by the nations of unbelievers whose aim was to stop them.

Notable about this period from a Church of Messiah perspective is the fact the fight for survival was most often initiated under the auspices of the Papacy and the emperor from Constantinople. Though these military campaigns can of course be viewed in geo-political terms there is overwhelming historical evidence to support that the military actions were supported tremendously by the Christian population/laity. These actions were essentially viewed in the context as being holy religious campaigns being undertaken to uphold the name of Yeshua and the

faith. Despite the political makeup or activities of the Church within this period the rank and file within Christianity can be summarily viewed as being devoutly faithful and loyal.

With this being declared however it should be noted politics ultimately played a major role in many campaigns with the sacking of Constantinople in 1204 by European Crusaders, with assistance from a Venetian fleet and army, being the primary example.

Regarding the chosen people at war it should be admitted that the net result was the loss to Muslim conquest of the Biblical Holy Lands and pretty much the vast majority of what was once the Eastern Roman Empire. Conversely these same endeavors effectively staved off Muslim conquest of the traditional realm of the Western Roman Empire. By the fourteenth century the geographical domain associated with the classical empires had become once again split between east and west. For all practical purposes the secular or cultural Romic Empire had essentially been buried.

Within the Church of Messiah it must be admitted the net outcome of the wars against the pagans ultimately left only one free major seat of authority remaining within Christianity, and this of course was the Roman Catholic Church. Certainly the Eastern Greek Church did not vanish and go away but from a prominence and influence perspective it most assuredly was reduced in stature.

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As we saw with the recounting of the story of Balaam and the Israelites, the pursuit of personal power, authority, wealth, etc. worked hand in hand with the degradation of the holy ways declared by G_D being mixed with the defiled ways of the pagans. As it pertains to the Church era being addressed by Yeshua we will have to review Church beliefs and practices to see if we can historically identify paganism mixing with the ways of G_D's chosen people.

In beginning the reader will once again be reminded by the start of this Church era, 313 Ce, the Church of Messiah was in effect de-hebraicized. The council of Nicaea and Constantine's epistle most certainly cemented this decision although as we have seen the separation had been underway since the middle of the second century Ce!

Furthermore, as previously detailed, the Church of Messiah was just at this time period beginning earnestly the process of developing what we would consider to be official Church doctrine. The Church was embarking upon this endeavor in a manner which quite frankly was devoid of the foundational truths inherent in G_D's Torah and being undertaken at a time when the growing religion was being folded into the workings of the pagan Roman Empire. From an objective perspective this would have to be viewed at best to be a most precarious position!

From a historical perspective it would seem clear we can conclude pagan influences were certainly absorbed within the ecclesiastical structure itself. We know from historical records that often positions of prominence within the Church were dependent upon one's inclinations to agree or at least tolerate the policies of the secular Roman power base. We know the emperors and other secular power wielders interfered in the Church's religious affairs up to and throughout the "middle ages" time frame.

From a broader Christianity perspective however what does history tell us about the developing religion's practices and beliefs? From a practice and doctrinal perspective much could be exposed and discussed but the author believes that discourse relevant to a few key issues should suffice in painting a clear picture.

Regarding Holy Days we have already seen evidence that pagan holy days were being rendered over to Christian holy days. It was Theodosius who decreed "pagan holy days that could not be Christianized were to be eliminated and made work days." This certainly indicates there was a systematic attempt by the Empire to basically integrate the population and subsequently paganism into Christianity. It is also known the pagan holy days for the most part would have centered upon "astrological" events. We also know that major holy days such as Easter and Christmas most assuredly have pagan traditions associated with them. We have learned from

previous discourse herein that the Roman calculation for celebration of Easter was based upon the first full moon after the spring equinox and not by setting the Easter Feast according to alignment with the Hebrew “Passover” date. In essence celebrating the Resurrection of Yeshua on Easter would ultimately not be so grave an issue or inconvenience for the Roman pagan who was used to celebrating the Spring festival of “re-birth” in alignment and association with the equinox and full moon. Essentially the Christian Easter festival would have been viewed in all probability by the pagans as an “astrological” celebration. In similar fashion the celebration of Christmas, not even a scripturally ordained Festival, would be no problem for the Roman pagan who was accustomed to observing the “birth of the sun” at this time of year. In fact the festival of the birth of the “Unconquered Sun,” (or Dies Natalis Solis Invicti), was celebrated when the duration of daylight first begins to increase after the winter solstice—the “rebirth” of the sun. Again a festival premised upon “astrological” configuration. It is quite strange that the “birth of the Son—Yeshua” Festival was set to be celebrated during the period when the pagans themselves would have celebrated the “birth of the sun” festival. Hmmm!

Regarding Christmas the reader should be aware the Church of Messiah admittedly declares December twenty-fifth is not historically Messiah’s actual birth day. On the other hand there is definitely evidence to suggest Yeshua was born in the late September to early October time frame, putting his blessed birth in the time frame of the Festival of Sukkot. This of course would make perfect sense if one just considers it even momentarily. Just look at the Scriptures to see that John the Baptist was born at Passover and he was born six months before Yeshua ... putting Yeshua’s birth at Sukkot.

G_D, as believers know, does not act in an arbitrary or coincidental manner! Keep in mind when G_D set Messiah’s “appointed time” of deliverance at Passover, this set in motion the perfect fulfillment by Yeshua of the next three festivals. To the author it seems a ridiculous notion that Yeshua’s birth would not coincide with one of G_D’s appointed times or “Moadim” as declared in Holy Scripture. The logical festival period would have most certainly been “Sukkot”—the festival of G_D’s indwelling with mankind!

The author must declare that inherently there is of course nothing wrong with festivals to honor Yeshua the Messiah. But the reader must be aware and understand in the context of Holy Scripture the great and awesome G_D has already provided these eternal festivals for all people. In the case of Messiah's sacrifice and resurrection we have already been given the Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruit Holy Days. In the case of Messiah's birth, G_D has provided us with the Festival of Sukkot or G_D's in dwelling.

Ultimately the author does not believe these Christian Festivals were instituted because of some evil and sinister conspiracy. These feasts were instituted because of ignorance, anti-Judaic tendencies, secular political pressure and the ease of integrating the vast pagan culture of the Roman Empire into Christianity. Regardless of the rationale adopted by the Church of Messiah however the net result was to mingle the Feasts of Messiah with the abominations of paganism.

Unforgivable however is that the Church erroneously separated the people from the unified G_D by establishing feasts contrary to those ordained in Scripture. Ultimately the leadership of the Church of Messiah created an environment whereby the rank and file membership of the Church is not even in a position to recognize Messiah in G_D's eternal festival cycle as ordained in Scripture. How could it be otherwise when we have already proven historically within this work that the same Church leadership itself failed to recognize Yeshua within the Biblical festivals? From the author's perspective this is a most grievous failure.

Regarding holy days it is crystal clear if the Church of Messiah had understood the relationship between Yeshua and the Biblical festivals and instituted only the Scriptural mandated Holy Festivals of G_D, when the Church had the opportunity to do so, a significant component of paganism would have been completely eradicated. For reasons exposed within this work we know why the Church failed to do this.

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The next practice to be discussed would be the issue of icon veneration, or from the alternative perspective idol worship. The reader is probably aware this was an issue that literally rocked the Church of Messiah for approximately 100 years in the mid eighth to ninth centuries.

With roots dating back to early Christianity this discord was essentially an issue of “sacred reverence” vs. “blasphemous idolatry.” One faction saw no problem with icon reverence, (statues, painting, crosses, relics, bones, etc.), while the other side viewed all of this as working against the Scriptural mandates forbidding such activities.

Sometime between 726 and 730 Ce, under the auspices of the Emperor Leo III, icon worship was essentially banned while under his son, Constantine V, an ecumenical council forbidding image veneration was held at Hieria near Constantinople in 754 Ce. Image veneration was later reinstated however by the Empress Regent Irene, under whom another ecumenical council was held reversing the decisions of the previous iconoclast council and taking its title as Seventh Ecumenical Council.

The council anathemized (excommunicated) all who hold to iconoclasm, i.e. those who held that veneration of images constitutes idolatry. Then the icon ban was enforced again by Leo V in 815 Ce. And finally icon veneration was decisively restored by Empress Regent Theodora who would ironically become sainted in recompense for her zeal on behalf of the restoration of icons as objects of veneration.

The two sides (generally segmented along Eastern and Western Church segment lines) were of such strong conviction that uprisings, riots and unfortunately even deaths resulted. As the modern reader is probably aware those favoring icon reverence/veneration eventually prevailed.

The author will declare human desire for remembrance and commemoration is without doubt very strong. As well intended as motives for icon veneration may be however there is no Scriptural basis for this practice and in essence then icon veneration is of pagan roots.

From a Scriptural perspective any type of icon veneration is essentially prohibited. G_D has made things quite clear throughout Scripture what specific objects can be made holy and sanctified and under what conditions and uses. Any objects therefore not meeting these Scriptural qualifications must be deemed as a convention of man and not G_D. It is irrelevant if one pursues an argument that the icon is not actually being worshipped but only venerated or used as a reminder. Such arguments are made on behalf of human interests and not G_D's interests. The reader is certainly invited to investigate Scripture but rest assured there are no loop holes.

Exodus states: And G_D spoke all these words, saying: I am the Lord thy G_D, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy G_D am a jealous G_D, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love me and keep my commandments. (Exodus 20:1–5)

Deuteronomy states: I (Moses) call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over the Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. And the Lord shall scatter you among the peoples, and ye shall be left few in number among the nations, whither the Lord shall lead you away. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But from thence ye will seek the Lord thy G_D; and thou shalt find him, if thou search after him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. (Deuteronomy 4:26–29)

As can be seen from Scripture, the commandments of G_D are clear regarding the matter of idol worship. Essentially we are to make no manmade images of anything resembling things from heaven, the land or the seas which would be used in a religious setting. It should also seem obvious that G_D would be referring to man-made images of himself since he of course is in heaven. Given the details we have in Scripture about so many things, it would seem obvious if G_D wanted exceptions regarding this ordinance in conjunction with himself he would have specified as much.

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The next practice the author would like to briefly review is the veneration or worship of Yeshua's mother Mary and the broader practice of venerating saints; another tradition instituted within the Church.

In all fairness to the Church of Messiah the only reason there is even an issue regarding Mary is because of the questions the early Church was dealing with regarding the nature of Yeshua. The issue was addressed at the third ecumenical council held in Ephesus, Asia Minor in 431 Ce under Emperor Theodosius II, grandson of Theodosius the Great. To make a long story short the council declared that Mary, by virtue of Yeshua's divine nature was to be considered "Theotokos, Greek for the 'Mother of G_D' and not Christotokos, Greek for the 'Mother of Christ.'" This designation may have indeed contributed to a false perspective regarding Yeshua's mother and her status within the Church of Messiah.

The reader must be made aware however that this "Mother of G_D" construct has indeed become equated with a "Queen of Heaven" construct within some Church segments. The reader should be aware as well that this "Queen of Heaven" convention is fundamental to the myriad false religions of paganism. Historical records clearly depict the pagan mantra of the deified triunes which invariably contain a "queen mother/goddess" entity. Notable is Astarte, Ashtoreth, Ishtar, Diana, Isis, Shiva which were all critical components of ancient false religions and mythological lore representing the embodiment of love, fertility and sexuality.

Although Catholic orthodox doctrine would claim Yeshua's mother is special and not a deity and that the veneration is not adoration, one must be objective and accept the fact in many cultures and places Mary is indeed worshiped with the pomp and circumstance worthy of a "goddess." For any individual who has ever attended a "May Procession" in honor of Yeshua's mother there can be no doubt the inferred "Queen of Heaven" status is prevalent.

The author, without attempting in any manner to detract from the obvious unique and blessed nature of Yeshua's human mother, must insist that any convention even insinuating a "queen of heaven" status or title for Yeshua's mother, or any woman, is quite dangerous and assuredly blasphemous.

So how did this reverence for Yeshua's mother unfold within the Church? We get our best information from the records of the Second Council of Nicaea which was the seventh ecumenical council of Christianity; it met in 787 Ce with a major issue at hand being "icon veneration." It was determined that "As the sacred and life-giving cross is everywhere set up as a symbol, so also should the images of Yeshua Christ, the Virgin Mary, the holy angels, as well as those of the saints and other pious and holy men be embodied in the manufacture of sacred vessels, tapestries, vestments, etc., and exhibited on the walls of Churches, in the homes, and in all conspicuous places, by the roadside and everywhere, to be revered by all who might see them. For the more they are contemplated, the more they move to fervent memory of their prototypes. Therefore, it is proper to accord to them a fervent and reverent adoration, not, however, the veritable worship which, according to our faith, belongs to the Divine Being alone—for the honor accorded to the image passes over to its prototype, and whoever adores the image adores in it the reality of what is there represented." (47)

The clear distinction between the adoration offered to G_D, and that accorded to the images may well be looked upon as a result of the iconoclastic reform. The twenty-two canons drawn up in Constantinople also served ecclesiastical reform. Careful maintenance of the ordinances of the earlier councils, knowledge of the Scriptures on the part of the clergy, and care for Christian conduct are required and the desire for a renewal of ecclesiastical life is awakened.

The Papal legates voiced their approval of the restoration of the veneration of icons in no uncertain terms, and the patriarch sent a full account of the proceedings of the council to Pope Adrian I, who had it translated (the translation Anastasius later replaced with a better one).

Although it seems clear from this council that attempts were made to stress the fact only the unified G_D could be worshipped, the author must make it perfectly clear there is a very fine line between worship and adoration as can be seen from the definition of “worship:”

wor-ship: n., The reverent love and devotion accorded a deity, an idol, or a sacred object, The ceremonies, prayers, or other religious forms by which this love is expressed, Ardent devotion; adoration.

To honor and love as a deity, to regard with ardent or adoring esteem or devotion. (48)

As we can see the review of the Second Council of Nicaea also is specifically relevant to the issue of “saint” reverence/adoration. Regarding the elevation of saints, a point must be made on behalf of the Church that there are a few passages within Scripture wherein “saints” and “prayers” are mentioned within the context of G_D.

Revelations states: And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. . . . And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before G_D out of the angel’s hand. (Revelations 5:8–8:4)

Still further there are numerous passages discussing saints relative to G_D’s presence. It would seem then the obvious allusion is that “saints” are a “special” group of individuals and still further their prayers are prayers of intercession on behalf of the living.

Conversely it should be noted however the vast majority of usage pertaining to “saints” in both pre and post Messiah testaments is done so when describing true believers and followers of G_D. In most cases the use of the terms “saints” is done so to describe people who are actually alive. Ultimately then the best way to describe a Biblical “saint” is to view them in terms of being a “faithful person” from the ranks of chosen people.

Another point is there are no Scriptural indications that the prayers of the saints are anything more than their own prayers which were crafted when they were alive on Earth. The point then being there is no indication the “saints” act as intercessors or helpers for those alive on the Earth at any given time frame.

So what we do know is saints are Scriptural entities, but it would seem there is little evidence to indicate they serve as intercessors for humans. Still further one must seriously consider the inherent nature of “saint veneration/adoration” within the construct of paganism if one were to be objective. In a broad context the elevation of individuals to a position whereby they act as “go-betweens” is indeed similar to the “major god” and “lesser god” construct evident within most pagan faiths. Although Christians may not go as far as to claim these “saints” to be divine, it is clear saints represent an elevated state of being within the Church—a saintly state whereby they purportedly have access to the throne of G_D and can petition him for the benefit of those Earthly individuals calling upon the saint’s name.

It should also be admitted in some Christian faiths these “saints” have full blown societies and organizations affiliated with their person which must objectively be viewed in a “cult” like context. The subsequent adoration, imploring and praying to these elevated individuals simply is not a productive practice and cannot represent righteous doctrine. Undoubtedly these practices were not deemed allowable or valid by the Hebrews even though there are numerous passages relative to “saints” in the Tanakh. It should also be noted the Hebrews failed to initiate such practices for thousands of years while essentially the Church of Messiah saw fit to proceed down this path within a few hundred years.

Ultimately these practices do nothing but detract from Yeshua as mankind’s sole intercessor. G_D has made it quite clear through his Word that he is the G_D of the living and not the dead. The treatment of those sleeping in the dust and the stipulations against communications with the dead, as found in Scripture, does not support any of these Church of Messiah practices.

G_D has made it completely clear he and he alone is the source of human reconciliation and salvation. The Church's fixation upon reverence to people, though commendable and thoughtful, is simply not supported in Holy Scripture.

Isaiah states: Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me shall be for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion. And when they shall say unto you: "Seek unto the ghosts and the familiar spirits, that chirp and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their G_D? On behalf of the living unto the dead for instruction and for testimony?" (Isaiah 8:18–20)

Matthew 22:32 states, "I am the G_D of Abraham, and the G_D of Isaac, and the G_D of Jacob? G_D is not the G_D of the dead, but of the living."

This topic could of course be pursued to much further extremes, but the author would simply declare there is but one G_D and he, through the Earthly life of Yeshua the Messiah, is the sole intercessor for mankind. From a simple and logical perspective it should be noted that what is not of G_D's way is not from G_D but rather the conventions of men. Subsequently these conventions of men which are contrary to the way of G_D are by their very nature "pagan."

When looking at the practices of the developing Church of Messiah more closely it is quite frankly difficult not to see vestiges of paganism. Once again when the Church of Messiah's activities are viewed in a proper Hebraic context their miscues become readily apparent.

Also noteworthy is the fact these pagan practices were not just rolled into the Church without significant objection and even rebellion. Obviously there were significant Church segments and notable early leaders which vehemently disagreed with the stance the Church took on these issues. Many in fact were willing to shed their own blood and die to keep the Church from proceeding down this path.

Ultimately one needs to question the derivative source pushing these initiatives. History tells us it was in no manner a result of Hebrew influence. If not Hebrew influence then what? It would

seem clear Scripture would not support such practices as well. So if not Scriptural influence then what? The author believes by now the reader can answer this question on their own given the evidence provided herein.

The author knows this issue of mingled paganism into Christianity must surely be a sore point for many readers. It certainly is a sore point for the author and is in no way approached in a light hearted manner. Beyond the few examples made herein the reader can readily find numerous and comprehensive works detailing the pagan cultural influences on Christianity. There just is no doubt the connections are numerous and real.

Regarding this mingling of the ways of the heathens with the ways of the chosen people the author would go so far as to liken the failure of the Church of Messiah to purge paganism from their midst with the Israelites' failure to root out and utterly destroy the heathens upon entrance to the Promised Land as ordained by G_D. The Hebrews were warned that failure to utterly destroy the indigenous peoples would lead to a mingling of the things of the heathen with the things of the chosen people. This is indeed what happened and became a stumbling block for Israel. A similar stumbling block now exists for the chosen people of the B'rit Chadasha renewed covenant.

* * * * *

The last major point of discussion identified in the opening of this discourse to be addressed will deal with the issue of Satan's seat or dwelling place. As we have exposed, Pergamon easily fits the "seat of Satan" construct when viewed in the pre-Constantine time frame; but what about after Constantine? How do we view this in light of the fall of paganism and the elimination of the pagan temples and cults throughout the Roman Empire? A most difficult issue indeed and one which constitutes perhaps the most difficult and perplexing aspects of Scriptural interpretation encountered within the entire work. The author will ask the reader to keep their thinking caps on during this review because using the word "provocative" to describe this ensuing review would be a dramatic understatement. In the author's opinion we must step back for a moment and initially

begin by evaluating the potential scenarios which at least represent viable options for this “seat of Satan” construct.

The first option is the seat of Satan in Pergamon, clearly symbolic of pagan Rome and its blasphemous anti-G_D treachery, in fact never departed Rome at all and maintained its presence there after the fall of paganism.

The second option follows a logic wherein, similar to the fall of the Babylonian Empire, the seat of Satan migrated to an alternative location with the decline of Rome where a foot hold could be established and the works of the usurper begin anew.

The reader must also be aware that we are only concerned with this Church era time frame and will not be necessarily attempting to locate Satan’s seat in either the current or end days. This issue will however be touched upon later in this work.

Before evaluating any specific scenarios it would be helpful to first closely look at this “Satan’s seat” passage in the hopes of finding any clues that can more definitively pin down what we should be looking for. Revelations 2:13: I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

It should seem clear when viewing the entire passage in context that the scenario of Antipas provides some helpful insights. To begin we should understand the scenario in which the Church of Messiah believers would be in during this Church era is one where there is pressure to reject their faith in Yeshua in similar fashion to Antipas. As this relates to our own endeavors herein we could then presume that where Satan’s seat is located will be a place where believers are being forced to apostatize or accept martyrdom. Given the fact official Roman paganism will not be the persecutor this can certainly assist our search.

Secondly we should realize the place or geographical proximity where the believers are situated is one which should readily be identified as being under the territorial influence of the

“seat of Satan.” The author says territorial influence because just as pagan Pergamon is easily representative of the Roman Empire itself we could project a similar scenario to be prevalent elsewhere.

Unfortunately it would seem that the passages cannot be gleaned for any additional insights. As we turn our gaze to Rome in an attempt to draw some feasible connections to the seat of Satan the reader should realize Babylon (Tower of Babel) is ultimately the root of all paganism and false idol worship. Could it be when Babylon fell from prominence, to be replaced by Rome on the world stage, that Satan had his minions high tail it out of Babylon and move to where he could work his deceit and corruption?

As indicated it would seem apparent a move west to Pergamon and the general Mediterranean Sea region by the cultic Babylonian priests did in fact take place. We also know historically if Satan did not move his base from Babylon his poison fruit could not have yielded much, for by 141 BCE Babylon ceased to exist as a physical place in history. How ironic that within a decade time frame both Jerusalem and Babylon fell ... hmmm!

Of great coincidence, presuming as valid the migration of the Babylonian Mystery Religion to Asia Minor around the time of Cyrus’ conquering of Babylon in approximately 540 BCE, is the corresponding rise of the Roman Republic which of course was the forerunner of the Roman Empire. Once again in Rome we see the rise of a conquering society where the pagan religion, acting in union with the secular powers, provides the recipe for human subjugation. For all practical purposes the Roman Republic is historically viewed as beginning c. 510 BCE with the overthrow of the embedded regional Monarchy. Once again we encounter the big question: coincidence or cause and effect?

As depicted within this work the Roman Empire had begun the blasphemous activities of emperor deification and worship by the first three centuries CE; it was common practice to deify the emperor. As such it was quite logical the Roman Emperor would and did gain the title of Pontifex Maximus or exalted high priest of the pagan false religion. Pergamon’ position as

provincial capital of the empire and seat of pagan worship then is certainly symbolic to the Roman Empire and of course Rome itself being the seat of Satan.

It must be remembered Satan claims to be the G_D of this world. It is absolutely logical to presume Satan wants to rule this world and how best to do this is to set up his seat in the world's predominant geo-political capital, Babylon or Rome for instance. In fact we see the Apostle Peter weigh in on this matter through antiquity where he writes in I Peter 5:13–14: The Church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Messiah Yeshua. Amen.

So as early as the first century Ce, Rome was being referred to within the Church of Messiah community as “Babylon.” We should then acknowledge that pagan Rome prior to Constantine would have to be viewed as the seat of Satan or symbolic Babylon.

Furthermore we have seen where after the Apostolic Age there was an ensuing marriage between Church and state (the Roman Empire and Christianity) under Constantine where ultimately the bishop of Rome assumed the title Pontifex Maximus. Now one would think this title to be most deplorable to any Christian of any era. By the end of the sixth century however Gregory I became the first Pope to employ “Pontifex Maximus” in a formal sense within the auspices of a broader program of asserting Roman primacy throughout all of the Church of Messiah. (49)

Pontifex Maximus has remained one of the titles of the Pope to this day. It defies logic but this is indeed fact! Coincidentally this Papal or Church of Rome primacy ascended swiftly on the heels of the fall of the secular Roman seat of authority. Again coincidentally the transfer of the Pontifex Maximus or high priest position to the Pope from the Emperor, if viewed as a viable “seat of Satan” construct, would have enabled that old serpent to survive the downfall of the Roman Empire itself; or at least the Roman Empire of antiquity.

What the reader should understand is Satan had set up shop within the Roman Empire long before Yeshua the Messiah had set in motion the shock wave which would impact everything. From a historical perspective, given the nature of the pagan Roman Empire, there should be no

doubt Satan was deeply immersed within the culture. So the big question of course is: did Satan keep his seat within the Empire after the collapse of paganism?

Within this very chapter we have seen clear indications the Church of Messiah was indeed influenced by the pagan culture which it was surrounded by and immersed into. This pagan influence was directly attributable to the refutation of the Church's Hebraic Roots which undoubtedly led the Church astray and subjected it to unwanted infiltration.

We know the Holy Spirit was not to blame for this straying away so it certainly must be logically argued that adversarial forces were indeed at work on the Church of Messiah and most certainly from within the Church itself.

We also know from historical records exposed within this work the Church of Messiah, well after the fall of paganism within the empire, continued down a path of doctrinal and practices development which was contrary to G_D's commands and statutes.

Looking still further a very strong argument could be made that Satan would endeavor to stay within the Empire while the developing Church was emerging. What better way to destroy the enemy than from within?

Still further yet the immersion of the Church of Messiah and the secular power base fits very well the historical model which Satan apparently prefers. We know this was Satan's preferred "modus operandi" in Babylon; we know this was Satan's preferred "modus operandi" in pagan Rome, and we know from Revelations this will be Satan's preferred "modus operandi" during the last days.

Subsequently at first glance we would not be able to refute Rome as being a viable "seat of Satan" construct based strictly on this evidence. Of course the implications of Rome being the seat of Satan are quite distasteful and distressing from a Church of Messiah ramifications perspective. Certainly if a contention is made that Satan's seat resides in Rome under the auspices of the Pontifex Maximus then one must address the issue of the nature of the Church of Messiah and its

leadership. How could the Church of Yeshua be mixed up with the seat of Satan? A quite distressing construct even to consider! Certainly no less distressing then considering the unbelieving Jews to be of the “synagogue of Satan!”

Since Rome represents a very viable post-pagan option as Satan’s seat we should at least attempt to apply the insights that we gleaned from our previous exercise wherein we should expect to see persecution of believers to the point where apostasy or rejection of Yeshua is forced. We should also expect to see this persecution take place either in Rome itself or at least within Rome’s sphere of influence. So did post pagan Rome put people under the pressure of loss of life if they would not give up their faith in Yeshua?

What we do know with certainty is beginning with the Donatist communities in the early fourth century Ce and proceeding through the Crusades and into the Inquisitions, the Church indeed authorized and employed the use of force in dealing with both schismatics and more prominently Catholic deemed heretics.

Undoubtedly there were many, many torments and deaths. Catholic apologists attempt to downplay the significance of the Inquisitions, saying relatively few people were ever directly affected. While debate and controversy rage around the number of victims that can be claimed by the persecutions, non-Catholic conservative estimates easily place the count in the millions. The author believes the numbers are probably far higher than Catholic apologists would admit to and far less than what Catholic detractors would admit to. The bottom line from the author’s perspective is the Roman Catholic Church did indeed engage in militant fashion to deal with non-conformity and disunity within the faith. This is irrefutable! Now the really big question: “Was the Roman Catholic Church utilizing force in any manner to force persons to deny the basic tenets of Christian belief? Specifically in light of this Church era message was the Roman Catholic Church in any manner forcing persons to apostatize by revoking their faith in Yeshua Christ the Messiah of mankind?”

For the Donatists, the Arians, the Cathars and a host of other religious groups within the Church, which were subjected to militant Church actions, there would probably be no doubt they

viewed the Roman Catholic Church as being wrong and very possibly corrupted by the Roman Empire which it had become so entangled in. Conversely the Roman Catholic position would be that the supreme authority of suppressing heresy and eradicating non-conformity within the body of Messiah was not only their singular right but their responsibility regardless of the utilized tactics.

So it would seem there would be a significant difference of opinion on this issue. It should be noted in modern times there are millions upon millions of Christians who obviously are not what one could consider to be in “communion” with the Roman Catholic Church and many which hold the position that the Roman Catholic Church itself is already apostatized from an “institutional” perspective. These individuals would contend the Church, in forcing persons throughout the ages to accept unconditionally the Church’s self-proclaimed infallible views on doctrine and practice, would certainly be guilty of forcing persons to deny the Lord Yeshua or apostatize. The Roman Catholic Church’s position on this matter is that regardless of the tactics employed the Church in no way shape or form subjected persons by force to revoke their belief in Yeshua. The Roman Catholic Church’s position would be, that in spite of any regrettable militant activities undertaken, those individuals or groups which were subjected to “inquisition” were targeted specifically for the serious heresy which they were spreading.

The author is admittedly befuddled by this paradox because the issue of denying Yeshua is not a very easy answer due to diverse perspectives. If a person, for instance, is forced to accept the defined dogma of the Church as an institutional authority and some of that dogma can be found to conflict with basic interpretation of Holy Scripture, then what in fact is one agreeing to and could one actually deny Yeshua via agreement with the Church? On the other hand if the Church is contending with heresy or schism over basic faith, such as denying the divinity of Yeshua for instance, could the Church be accused of forcing persons to deny Yeshua?

As the reader can understand this is no simple question at all. Ultimately the author must simply point out the Roman Catholic Church without doubt utilized militant methods in dealing with dissenters and did so in grave error. Although Church apologists will point primarily to “Old Testament” Scripture as supporting its militant causes, the author will note this mind set only works when the Church believes it is “replacement Israel.” Any believer in Yeshua should

understand that the battle waged on behalf of the Church of Messiah is not a battle of flesh but of Spirit. As such there is no authority or command for the Church of Messiah to spread the gospel message in any manner other than through love. Still further the author within this work has demonstrated the Church of Messiah did in fact significantly stray from the ordained path which G_D designed for his Church.

Although the author cannot definitively convict as guilty, or find as innocent, Rome, via the Catholic Church as being the “seat of Satan,” it should be noted herein that an extremely substantial body of circumstantial evidence would support a guilty accusation that post-pagan Rome did retain the “seat of Satan.”

Even though it may seem further review would be anti-climactic there is the issue of fairness and objectivity which dictates we at least exhaust all reasonable alternative explanations. Regarding then the possibility that Satan’s seat may reside in some place other than Rome, what can we say? To begin we have already discussed Satan’s lack of omnipotence and omnipresence, meaning that when the Western Roman Empire was collapsing Satan would not have known what would befall the Empire or even the city of Rome itself. As such one could conjecture Satan very well might take leave of Rome as was the case in Babylon upon its demise from the world stage.

In looking at the other scenario is there any other location within the empire which could realistically be viewed as the “seat of Satan?” It would seem the most logical option would entail a review of the Roman Empire’s Eastern seat of power which would be Constantinople.

There seems to be no consensus on the starting date of the Byzantine period. In any case by 330 Ce, when Emperor Constantine inaugurated his new capital, the process of further Hellenization and increasing Christianization was already underway and the real authority within the empire lay in the city of Constantinople which was home to the emperor. From the mid fourth century onward Constantinople would essentially rise to become the “new Rome” within the Empire as the Empire experienced the continued degradation and ultimate collapse of its Western segment.

Constantinople was one of the largest and richest urban centers in the Eastern Mediterranean during the late Roman Empire, mostly due to its strategic position commanding the trade routes between the Aegean and the Black Sea. After the fourth century, when Emperor Constantine I relocated his eastern capital to Byzantium, Constantinople would remain the capital of the eastern Greek speaking empire, barring several short periods, for over a thousand years. As the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire the Greeks called Constantinople simply “the City,” while throughout Europe it was known as the “Queen of Cities.” In its heyday, roughly corresponding to what is now known as the Middle Ages, it was the richest and largest European city, exerting a powerful cultural pull and dominating economic life in the Mediterranean.

Visitors and merchants were especially struck by the beautiful monasteries and Churches of the city, particularly the Hagia Sophia, or the Church of Holy Wisdom once the world’s largest cathedral. The cumulative influence of the city on the west, over the many centuries of its existence, is incalculable. In terms of technology, art and culture, as well as sheer size, Constantinople was without parallel anywhere in Europe for a thousand years.

Constantines assured that the “Bishop of Constantinople,” who eventually came to be known as the Patriarch of New Rome, was elevated to the same rank as the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. They were “first among equals,” a situation which would eventually lead to an East-West Schism that divided Christianity into Western Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

Constantinople was the heart of an empire which was distinctly Greek in culture, and became the center of Greek Orthodox Christianity. As the seat of the Eastern Empire it must also be noted that Constantinople was the primary reason Christianity was not completely overrun by infidels when the Western Roman Empire collapsed. It most assuredly was Constantinople which had to deal with the meteoric rise of the new Islamic movement which, beginning in the seventh century, wreaked havoc across the Empire leaving vast numbers of Christians slaughtered in its wake. Ironically however it would be Christian Rome that would initiate the beginning of its end when, in 1204 Ce under the auspices of the fourth Crusade, Constantinople was savagely attacked and rampaged. (50)

The legacy of the Fourth Crusade was the deep sense of betrayal the Latins had instilled in their Greek coreligionists. With the events of 1204, the schism between the Catholic West and Orthodox East was complete. As an epilogue to the event, Pope Innocent III, the man who had launched the expedition, thundered against the crusaders thus: “You vowed to liberate the Holy Land but you rashly turned away from the purity of your vow when you took up arms not against Saracens but Christians . . . The Greek Church has seen in the Latins nothing other than an example of affliction and the works of Hell, so that now it rightly detests them more than dogs.” (51)

Although Constantinople would be retaken in 1261 after more than fifty years of Latin rule its fate was already determined. The empire would never regain the strength of its former glory and upon its conquest in 1453 the city became the third capital of the Ottoman Empire (1290–1922).

Now that we have a brief history of Constantinople on record does this information help us locate the city as a realistic candidate for being the “seat of Satan?”

Given the information we must acknowledge: this city was every bit as prominent within the Roman Empire as Rome ever was; this city is every bit as lavish from an antiquity perspective as was Rome; this city was the seat of a combined secular and religious culture wherein politics were inter-mingled with the faith though to a far lesser degree than in Rome; that the ecclesiastical organization of the city was held in no less esteem than were the Romans; this city and realm of geo-political influence was certainly pressured by infidels with the threat of death if believers would not recant the faith of Yeshua and that the city continues to be a seat of spiritual authority to this day.

In looking at Constantinople it must also be noted the Eastern Church, though split from Rome, is only minimally different from an overall doctrine and practices perspective. Separated though they are it must be recognized that the fundamental differences contained within their respective: Creeds, interpretation of “original sin,” Eucharistic Consecration, belief in purgatory or lack thereof and indulgences hardly represent tremendously significant variances. What is of a

major difference is the agreement upon the primacy of the bishop of Rome over the Church of Messiah.

Viewing the situation from the outside and objectively looking beyond the cultural differences of the two Church segments, it is quite frankly difficult to tell the two apart from a practical theological and liturgical vantage point. In fact it would seem ecclesiastical reform on the part of Rome would be the primary changes needed to bring the two back together once more.

Based strictly on the information reviewed it would seem Constantinople could not be summarily dismissed as a potential “seat of Satan” locale. The author must impress upon the reader it is quite amazing that any other locale could even begin to qualify for consideration of this odious distinction but the historical evidence would apparently support at least the plausibility for making a case that Constantinople did in fact become the “seat of Satan.”

Despite the evidence which would more strongly support Rome was indeed this prophetic seat of Satan location within this Church era, the author would point out once again this horrendous designation does not mandate that Constantinople/Istanbul or Rome, essentially represented by the Vatican, necessarily represents the seat of Satan during the end days as depicted in Revelations chapters seventeen and eighteen. As indicated more on this issue will be addressed during a later portion of this work.

In any event there should be no doubt that strong supporting evidence can be developed which indicates the “seat of Satan,” set up in Rome after the fall of Babylon, did in fact continue its perch upon a “seven hilled city” within the Roman Empire even after the fall of the official pagan religion.

With the interpreted primary attributes of this Church era having been dealt with in a historical perspective there still remains Messiah’s warning and reward portions of this Church message to be reviewed.

We see in Revelation 2:16 where Yeshua declares that without Church repentance he will come quickly and fight against the Church with the sword of his mouth. The reader should make note of this for in the next Church era Yeshua will make good on this promise. As we have previously exposed the sword of judgment from the perspective of Yeshua the Messiah is representative of the Word of G_D or essentially Yeshua himself, the Living Word. From a practical perspective then what this will translate to is a scenario in which Yeshua will fight against his wayward and sinful Church with the sword of truth.

In verse seventeen Yeshua promises hidden manna and a white stone with a new name upon it for those that overcome. From the author's perspective we cannot escape the continued connectivity and similarities with the chosen people Israel. Just as earlier elements within this Church message traced back to the Hebrews' travels to the Promised Land so too does this promise of reward.

It must be remembered it was in the desert where G_D provided manna to the Hebrews to sustain them. It must also be remembered the manna of life is Yeshua the Messiah and man will not live by bread alone but by the very Word of G_D, or Yeshua the Living Word. Within this context the author sees yet another exhortation from Messiah to remain close to his Word so we can be sustained in a most perfect way.

Since the reward of manna is affiliated with overcoming the sinfulness of this Church era it must be logically deduced that the transgression is directly related to not listening or obeying the Word of G_D and remaining faithful to the revealed truths within Holy Scripture. As we have seen throughout this entire chapter the consistent theme of the Church deviating from G_D's Word is irrefutably prevalent. Under the guise of Church tradition, we see in this Church era the development of doctrine and practices which can only be considered to be non-Scriptural or essentially pagan rooted.

Regarding the reference to the white stone with a secret name upon it; we must certainly find this quite intriguing. The author has combed Scripture and the possibilities are many in as much the use of stones appear most notably relative to: the delivery of the Ten Commandments, the

memorial stones engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel contained on the ephod of the High Priest, and the use of stones in construction of altars and memorial monuments. There is also much speculation that the Urim and the Thummim of judgment utilized by the Hebrew High Priest during a process whereby G_D himself was requested to directly reveal either the guilt or innocence regarding a particular person or issue very may well have employed stones or crystals and presumably of a black and white variety.

Exodus 28:30: And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually.

To the author the common element amongst these leads is the idea of a "sacred memorial." Still further within the context of the judgment relative to the Urim and Thummim it is reasonable to conclude the "white stone" with a secret name upon it is representative of G_D's judgment that an individual is faithful to the Word of G_D.

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Letter to Pergamon Conclusion

Undoubtedly the author was compelled to significantly condense the volume of details relative to this Church era message simply because the era itself spanned such a long period of time and comprised so many activities and movements prophesied by Messiah. If by chance the reader felt the supporting documentation was insufficient please be advised that due to the quantity of available information it was a most difficult task in condensing the material.

As the review detailed, while seeking historical evidence of the defined Church era attributes, the time frame in question spanned the period of 313 Ce, Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan,

through at least the first of the four major inquisitions dated to approximately the mid thirteenth century Ce and perhaps even later.

From a Church of Messiah perspective it is unfortunate the vast amount of leads pursued were what one would have to typify as negative, but such is the nature of the Church message issued by Yeshua himself.

From a historical perspective one could view this in very different contexts. From one perspective it could be viewed as a tremendous triumph for the Church in as much the Church became the dominant historical institution, not just of the era but most likely of modern history. From the other perspective it could be argued that the Church while rising to dominance did so at great costs and will forever be indelibly linked with arguably the most brutal, famous and infamous secular powers in history, the Roman Empire.

With regard to holding fast the name of Yeshua in faith there is no doubt a major difference in opinion must exist between Roman Catholicism and the rest of Christianity. For the Roman Catholic Church there is assuredly a firm belief that their actions, within this Church era, in asserting supreme authority and essentially the will of the Apostolic Institution throughout the body of believers would represent the victory of Yeshua across the empire. Conversely the opposite view would undoubtedly contend the Roman Catholic Church essentially lost the true faith in Yeshua and opted instead to elevate the institution of the “Mother Church” over Yeshua himself.

Although the traditional Roman Catholic apologists would most likely consider this Church era discourse to be a direct assault upon the Mother Church, the author makes no apologies for what should be considered a fairly objective assessment. As indicated numerous times throughout this work it is not the author’s place to judge the Church of Yeshua the Messiah.

In all fairness it was not the Church that manufactured the dream of Emperor Constantine which purportedly led to his military victory and subsequently his change of heart regarding Christianity. It was not the Church that asked the Babylonian Mystery Religion to relocate to Asia

Minor and Rome as seems to be the case. It certainly was not the Church that asked its members to create heretical doctrines. The Church certainly did not want Papal scandals and ecclesiastical abuses. Most certainly the Church did not want to have to deal with an encroaching and competing Islamic religion.

However in light of history it would be irresponsible within this Church era to ignore that:

- The Church of Messiah had indeed become the judge wielding the power over the people; initially through political fornication with the Roman Empire and then through political fornication of its own contrivances.
- The Church of Messiah displayed irrefutable evidence of a Nicolaitane ecclesiastical bureaucracy wherein the laity was conquered both spiritually and physically.
- The Church of Messiah was plagued with notable leaders which followed the doctrine of Balaam of antiquity and pursued their own desires rather than the desires of G_D.
- The Church of Messiah was absolutely infiltrated and impacted by vestiges of Roman paganism upon the fall of paganism within the empire. Just like the first chosen people the mingling of the ways of the heathens with the ways of G_D was not avoided.
- The Church of Messiah absolutely purged violently from within their midst those brethren that would not conform to the acceptable ways.
- The Church of Messiah was most certainly at war with the un-believers while on their way to the land of promise, which for the Church of Messiah is the successful spreading of the gospel of Yeshua to all ends of the Earth.
- The Church of Messiah was indeed operating alongside the “seat of Satan” which clearly exerted influence upon the Church of Messiah because the Church failed to cut itself off from the secular world as commanded by Yeshua. Not only did the Church of Messiah fail to cut itself off from the secular world but the evidence is clear the Church of Messiah was a willing participant in this secular fornication.

It is important to remember what Satan desires most is what is not his, but G_D's. Satan as the constant adversary, believing he will ultimately prevail, seeks only to ruin G_D's plan for

humanity and unity with G_D. To this extent he has no supreme authority to exert over mankind as does G_D, so he must act using guile and deceit to seduce, cajole and conquer.

The author believes for the most part mankind is savvy enough to reject Satan outright if he were to present himself as he truly is: the ravenous wolf, the old serpent and the father of all lies. So Satan seeks to destroy subtly from within. In this scenario does it not make sense his plan would be to infiltrate the Church of his adversary Yeshua the Messiah? Does it not make sense Satan would seek to instill within the Church of Messiah destructive elements which would actually keep people from coming to G_D as prescribed in Scripture? Of course this makes sense! What better way for anti-Christ to usurp Yeshua's position than to defile and usurp his Earthly bride. Remember Satan wants to replace G_D in the hearts and minds of men. Subsequently Satan will not overtly rape the bride but rather he will seduce the bride.

Satan as depicted in Scripture will essentially come in the name of the redeemer in the end times and use wondrous works to deceive all the nations of the Earth. What better way to achieve this then to subvert the hearts and minds of the chosen people? What better way than to separate the people from the truth of G_D's Word. In this manner the people will become dull and not recognize the foul beast for what he is when he comes in the name of the most high. Failure to admit this as his plan is akin to burying one's head in the sand. The infiltration by the wicked was certainly understood by the earliest of Church fathers who warned repeatedly of this most prominent danger. There is no way Satan will go head to head against G_D for the love of humans because he will only fail outright.

In fairness the author must also point out that for all the problems clearly alluded to by Yeshua within this Church era message—employment of unchristian methods, doctrinal imperfections, mingling of pagan customs and the development of a Lording ecclesiastical body—at the end of the day the Church ultimately held fast in never denying the name of Messiah. Regardless of the faults of the Church of Messiah, the ultimate objective and command to the Apostolic Church of preaching Yeshua to all the nations throughout the Earth did in fact continue. Critics of the Church of Messiah may argue that within this Church era the means do not justify the ends. The author would counter that this would be a logical viewpoint from a human perspective but not perhaps

the viewpoint of G_D. The fact G_D would permit to operate the Earthly Church of Messiah, undeniably responsible for the inflicting of pain, suffering and death during this Church era, simply proves how truthful and righteous G_D is. In spite of all the evident wrongs, the Church will in fact be what people make it to be by reason of free will and choices. Just because the Church is not a perfect or even good Church, does not by rule make it a no-Church!

Once again we must not lose sight of the eternal covenant and the concept of the chosen people. Modern believers must understand that even when the Hebrews had strayed and corrupted their religion with unorthodox traditions/doctrines they were still the representative kingdom of G_D with all their imperfections. They were still the apple of G_D's eye. It was only when Yeshua revoked their evangelical authority did he declare the Jewish Institutional leadership to be "dead." The modern believer needs to understand the same rules apply to the expanded group of chosen people that make up the Church of Messiah. It is only when Yeshua declares the Church to be dead will it be so. As we have seen thus far throughout these prophetic Church era messages Yeshua has yet to make such a declaration.

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Church Messages-Thyatira

(18) And unto the angel of the Church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of G_D, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; (19) I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. (20) Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. (21) And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. (22) Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. (23) And I will kill her children with death; and all the Churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. (24) But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. (25) But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. (26) And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: (27) And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. (28) And I will give him the morning star. (29) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. (Revelations 2:18–29)

Letter to Thyatira Components

Image of Yeshua: Son of G_D, eyes like fire and feet like fine brass

Positives: works, charity, service, faith, patience and thy works (the last to be more than the first)

Negatives: Thou tolerates Jezebel, the so called prophetess who teaches and seduces Yeshua's servants to eat things sacrificed to idols.

Extras: Yeshua gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

Warning: Repent of their deeds or Yeshua will cast her and those that adulterate with her into bed and bring upon them great tribulation. Yeshua will kill her children with death.

Extras: Yeshua searches the reins and hearts and will give unto each person according to their works. But those that are not of this doctrine and have not known the depths of Satan as they speak no other burden will be put upon you.

Reward: He who keeps the works to the end Yeshua will give power over the nations and they shall rule them with a rod of iron as they are like the shattered pottery vessels. And Yeshua will give them the morning star.

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Letter to Thyatira Commentary

In beginning this Church era message it should be noted the previous Church era spanned an approximate time frame between 313 and 1250 Ce. The author is cautious in the latter dating because it is not so clearly definitive given certain identifiable activities during the third Church era, such as the crusades and inquisitions, continued to a later date. As we will see however in reviewing this fourth Church era, this latter date will be clarified more succinctly.

The city of Thyatira known as the “City of Purple and Trade Guilds” was a great commercial center, in particular of the wool trade and of the dyeing industry. Lydia, seller of purple, came from Thyatira, Acts 16:14. The province was called Lydia, as was the purple garment woven whole at Thyatira. Purple dye was extremely expensive; it was made from the madder root, which grew prominently around Thyatira, as well as from the murex shellfish. Thyatira subsequently was a place of great commercial prosperity and wealth. It was distinguished by its number of trade guilds, which threatened the existence of the Church in Thyatira. The present name of the city is Ak-Hissar, “white castle,” and today has a population of about 30,000.

The symbolic connection between Thyatira and the Church era to be reviewed would seem then to be one of commerce, wealth or to an even broader extent simple materialism.

In looking at verse eighteen we are provided with the image of Yeshua as being the Son of G_D with eyes of fire and feet like fine brass. As we have seen throughout each Church era message, these redundant elements of the blessed vision of Messiah are meant to provide contextual application to each specific Church era being depicted and are not simple introductions. As such we will begin by reviewing this image of Yeshua.

Interestingly enough the “Son of G_D” is not a declared literal element of the vision of John and is in fact not used in a literary string at all within the Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah. The only direct reference to Yeshua being the Son of G_D can be found in Revelation 1:6 where Yeshua is the one who makes us priests and kings unto G_D and his Father. We can conclude then this is certainly a presentation deviation and is probably significant with regards to fully understanding this Church era message.

We have already covered in much detail the issue of Messiah’s divine nature and unity in G_D, and we have already covered the nature of heresies which attempted to defile this truth. This being the case however it should be noted that heresies, primarily of Gnostic nature contrary to G_D’s plural unity doctrine, i.e. Socinianism, Tritheism, Albigenses, would re-emerge once again in the late Middle Ages. Yeshua’s introduction then as the Son of G_D could be viewed as an emphatic declaration against these heresies foreseen during this Church era. This is one viable interpretation!

There is another likely possibility which should certainly be considered; this scenario would deal with Yeshua the Messiah declaring to his Church it is he and only he who is head of his Church and the Scriptural cornerstone upon which the Church has been built.

In light of the developing Church it should be noted the issue of Papal primacy and Apostolic Catholic Institutionalism as briefly discussed in the previous discourse, was a major issue which

ultimately was the basis for the Great Schism between the Latin/Western and Greek/Eastern Church components in the eleventh century. As the reader is probably aware Papal primacy by the Roman Vicar/Bishop is exerted out of the belief that this position and authority was divinely ordained by Yeshua and passed along to Peter the Apostle and subsequently to those succeeding Vicars that hold “the seat of Peter” as head of the Universal Church of Messiah.

Although both of these interpretations seem plausible it should be noted the latter interpretation is the only one of the two which is directly applicable to the Church angel or messenger, more broadly defined as the Church authority. Taking the construct one step further it may not be too much of a jump to consider this introduction by Messiah as a direct declaration to the ecclesiastical institution and more specifically the Papacy itself. This will be discussed in greater detail within this chapter.

Regarding the eyes of fire, as previously detailed during the “Messiah as Judge” discourse, we saw the association with fire and judgment and how the fire is used to clean out the sinful, as in “burning the chaff” and “making the fat lean.” It would seem the clear indication would be a judgment of sorts was impending upon this Church within this historical era.

Finally in verse eighteen we have the reference to Yeshua having feet like fine brass. As was previously detailed in the “Messiah the Righteous One” discourse, the predominant symbolism is representative of cleansing and purification through obedience to G_D and self-sacrifice. In essence being dead to this world!

We could certainly look at this last reference to be conjunctive or connected with the previous reference regarding the judging eyes of flame. In this context it would make sense to interpret the judgment to be against the Church then for lack of pure and righteous behavior.

We cannot however ignore verse nineteen where Yeshua applauds what we can only translate as pure and righteous behavior: faith, charity, patience and works. So it would seem then the reference of the righteous Yeshua with feet like fine brass is indicative of or at least noteworthy to activities or elements of this Church era.

As such then it would seem we should be able upon historical review to see a historical era where the Church will exhibit these pure and righteous behaviors while at the same time suffer a judgment for sinfulness. Continuing with the judgment theme briefly we must not forget Yeshua warned the previous Church era he would come quickly and fight against them with the sword of his mouth if the Church did not repent.

We certainly did not see any real indications that Yeshua made good on this promise within the previous Church era so we could only presume either the Church repented or it would be this fourth Church era in which Yeshua would come quickly and fight against his Church.

Because we have history to tell us there were no major changes regarding the issues needing repentance, relative to the third Church era, we could logically presume then Yeshua will come and fight against his Church during this fourth era. Or at least this is how the author is interpreting “quickly.”

But what does Messiah really mean by this reference? We really can only look at it in two likely perspectives. First it could mean physical and brutal warfare, or secondly it could be a symbolic fighting in which case we would have to understand how this symbolic fighting would take place. During a previous discourse regarding the two-edged sword we saw where the symbolic nature of the sword protruding from Yeshua’s mouth was to be translated as judgment and more specifically judgment by his truthful word.

So thus far during this discourse, without even getting into the main body of the Church era message, we see tell-tale leads which a historical review will either uphold or refute.

Moving attention now to the positives we have already exposed in verse nineteen where this Church era should in significant respects be associated with great works of faith and charity. It would seem of course this should indeed be the very nature of the Church’s output, regardless of time era, but the fact Yeshua so notably applauds these activities leads the author to believe the nature of these Church era works to be extraordinary.

Conversely the primary negative declaration by Yeshua for this Church era concerns the tolerance of Jezebel, the so-called prophetess, who leads the servants of G_D astray by fornicating and eating things sacrificed to idols. As was the case with Balak and Balaam, it will be prudent to at least summarize the Scriptural account of Jezebel so that we have some contextual reference.

The account of Jezebel is recorded in 1 Kings around the 870 BCe time period. Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians whom King Ahab of Israel had married. According to Scripture Ahab was a very bad King and did not rule in accordance with G_D's Ways. Jezebel had seduced Ahab to introduce the false god Baal into their midst. In fact the true prophets of Israel had come under persecution while the prophets and priests of Baal had been elevated.

As the account progresses we see G_D call to service the prophet Elijah, who curses Israel with a severe drought. This puts Elijah on the death list and sets the stage for a confrontation which takes place a few years later between Elijah and Jezebel's prophets of Baal. Ultimately Elijah prevails with the miraculous intervention of G_D. The prophets and priests of Baal are executed by a reinvigorated lay population. As for Jezebel and Ahab?

Another story is recounted in Scripture which has a direct bearing on their respective fates. Apparently Ahab was covetous of a particular man's property, more specifically a vineyard which belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. Naboth cared not to sell the property to the King. So Jezebel had conspirators bring a false case against Naboth. This did happen, and Naboth was stoned to death by the elders, the nobles and the people. Jezebel then sent Ahab to take possession of the land.

For this activity Jezebel and Ahab were personally cursed by G_D specifically through Elijah: "The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the moat of Jezreel," and as for Ahab—"In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (1 Kings 21:23–24). These things came about and ultimately the extended family of the King and Jezebel were utterly wiped out as foretold by Elijah.

In reviewing this message component it is impossible not to also consider Church message verses twenty-one through twenty-three as well where we see how Jezebel was given space to repent but repented not. The result was she would be cast into a bed with those that commit adultery with her and then will be subjected to great tribulation. Ultimately her children would be killed with death! Then all will know that it is G_D who searches the reins and hearts of people and gives each according to their individual works.

Needless to say this Jezebel construct needs to be reviewed for contextual understanding given the prominent nature of the content within this Church message. To begin we see from Scriptural review the warnings within the message have quite the literal connotation with regards to Jezebel and Ahab. We see where Ahab and Jezebel were literally given opportunities to repent; in the case of Ahab the kingdom was tormented with drought and famine whereas Jezebel had her prophets humbled by G_D during the “test of the sacrifice.” We literally see where Jezebel’s children, heirs to the throne, end up executed and wiped out. We also see where Jezebel’s idolatrous children, the prophets and priests of Baal, are executed and wiped out. We see where the individual actions of Ahab and Jezebel literally bring personal judgment and punishment.

From a Church of Messiah perspective however what does the account of Jezebel and Ahab imply? How should we view the references to Jezebel in a symbolic fashion regarding the Church of Messiah?

In looking at the workings of Jezebel we see where she successfully usurped the chosen people by political conspiracy. It was not through a religious movement or efforts that she wooed the children of Israel but through the sexual seduction of the kingship.

In the case of Balak we saw a direct seduction of the men of Israel by the Moabite women. In the case of Jezebel this attack or seduction of Israel was not direct but indirect. Jezebel in essence “back-doored” the Israelites by political conspiracy with Ahab! The idolatrous practices passed along to Ahab then filtered down by practice and decree most assuredly from the kingship. The author believes the fornication of Jezebel referred to in this Church message should be viewed as an illicit league or “politic” between the secular and the religious sectors.

We also see in Jezebel and Ahab for that matter, the desire and covetousness for wealth and material. It would seem that leading the sheep of Israel astray was not the only problem with their reign. It is apparent greed and usury, among other faults most likely, was their modus operandi.

So how then can we translate this context into some definable aspects which the Church within this era might exhibit? For one thing we certainly need to look closely for any potential Church and secular power relationships which developed to determine if we see this Jezebel construct emerge, or not. Secondly we need to look for historical evidence where wealth, power and usury, etc. are traits which can be associated with the Church, or not. The author would note politicizing of the Church as well as wealth accumulation should certainly qualify as fornicating and eating things sacrificed to idols in the symbolic sense of not following G_D's Ways.

If the author has developed an accurate construct we then also would need to seek historical evidence of a scenario where the Church is given a definitive and identifiable chance to repent of the sinful aforementioned activities.

The last real lead provided within this Church message that can assist us in discerning the proper era, is the aspect of great tribulation and the children being killed with death. Within the construct the author has developed, the reality of this reference would translate to great tribulation for both the Church and those political co-conspirators with the Church. The reference of "killed by death" seems odd in as much that being killed of course means death is the result. The reference seems to be indicative of something far more ominous and in all probability indicative of some sort of catastrophic event wherein the cause of death is the result of something horrible or perhaps unexplained. We should therefore seek within this applicable Church era a situation where we can find evidence of such an event or events.

Objectively it should be noted there is no absolute conclusive indicator this horrible retribution from G_D will take place during this specific Church era. Subsequently it might be necessary to examine multiple potential scenarios in which the scenarios reflect a present and future Church era punishment.

In review then we will be seeking historical evidence for the listed leads below to help us identify this fourth Church era time frame:

#1 A time period where elements of the Church need to be reminded that Yeshua is the Son of G_D and the cornerstone upon which the Church is built;

#2 A time period where elements of the Church are in political league/conspiracy with secular powers;

#3 A time period where elements of the Church are accumulators of wealth and power;

#4 A time period where elements of the Church exhibit great works of charity, service and faith;

#5 A time period where the Church is given clear opportunity to repent of their specific Church era sins but does not;

#6 A time period where members of the Church and members of the secular political realms will be killed by some ominous “death”

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Issues #1–3 The Imperial Church

As the author previously indicated it would seem this “Son of G_D” declaration by Yeshua was strictly meant as both a reminder and a rebuke to the Church that it is he alone who is the Son of G_D. As a modern day believer this would seem to certainly be an unnecessary declaration by Messiah, but the reader must remember that Papal primacy within the Church was and remains to this day a source of contention and separation within the greater body of Christian belief systems. There are many Christians that quite frankly view the Papacy as an affront to Yeshua the Messiah.

As previously detailed herein by the end of the sixth century the Institutional Church, through the Papacy, had in effect declared its primacy outright and we saw with Gregory I the first formal

use of the title Pontifex Maximus. We saw further yet how this declared Papal primacy did not really sit well with the eastern sector of the Church of Messiah and certainly provided fuel to the fire of separation which became official in 1054 Ce.

Unlike the leader of the Church in the east after the schism, whose adopted common title is “First Among Equals,” the Latin Pope, Papa, is without doubt a higher profile position and certainly more distinctive from a titular perspective. We have already covered the use of the title Pontifex Maximus but there are numerous other titles which have emerged throughout the course of history for the Pope!

The Pope’s full title is “Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City, Servant of the Servants of G_D.”

Vatican II (1962–1965) confirmed the titles “Vicar of Christ” and “Successor of Peter.” The term “Sovereign Pontiff” can be traced back to the end of the fifth century. The title, which has its origins in the title for the Roman emperors of an earlier era, was initially applied to all metropolitan bishops. Again it was in the eleventh century that the title came to be applied exclusively to the Bishop of Rome.

The Pope’s signature is usually in the format “NN. PP. x” (e.g., Pope Paul VI signed his name as “Paulus PP. VI”). The “PP,” stands for Papa/Pope or according to unofficial sources, Pater Patrum/Father of Fathers. The Pope’s name is frequently accompanied in inscriptions by the abbreviation “Pont. Max.” or “p.m.,” an abbreviation of the ancient title Pontifex Maximus, but usually translated as “Supreme Pontiff.”

Other titles used in some official capacity include “Summus Pontifex” or “Highest Pontiff;” “Sanctissimus Pater” and “Beatissimus Pater” or “Most Holy Father” and “Most Blessed Father” respectively; “Sanctissimus Dominus Noster” or “Our Most Holy Lord;” and, in the Medieval period, “Dominus Apostolicus” or “Apostolic Lord.” This last title however was not abandoned

altogether: the Pope is still referred to as “Dominum Apostolicum” in the Latin version of the Litany of the Saints, a solemn Catholic prayer, and in some translations of it. Writing informally, pious Catholics will often use the abbreviation H.H. or “his Holiness,” as in H.H. John Paul II.

The Pope’s official seat is the Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano, and his official residence is the Palace of the Vatican. He also resides in a summer palace at Castel Gandolfo. Historically the official residence of the Pope was the Lateran Palace donated by the Roman Emperor Constantinus I. (52)

Beyond the development of titles it should be noted such esteem was a direct result of the political power wielded by the Papacy or bishop of Rome dating back to Emperor Constantine. Historically we know the Western Empire had declined in power significantly with the collapse of the Roman Western Empire. By the end of the eighth century however the West would begin its inevitable climb back to power with an odd alliance of the secular and religious, known more commonly in history as the Holy Roman Empire.

Again this is a topic which really deserves a work of its own to adequately address. In short however this Empire was a confederation of the Latin Western Church and feudal state(s) whereby its organization and integration became so entwined that by 1356 Ce a decree known as the “Golden Bull” was issued to formalize the college of Kingly Electors. In order to be elected king, a candidate had to first win over the electors. This was usually achieved with monetary or land favors.

The empire comprised any feudal lands whereby ultimate authority of said lands was acquiesced to the Holy Roman Emperor. These feudal lands were spread throughout Croatian, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Polish, Serbian, and Slovene territories. Meanwhile during these geo-political turn of events there was also activity specific to Italy whereby the Papacy and Church itself were in effect rulers of large territories by virtue of the Church’s ownership of the “Papal States.”

In general there were three types of feudal land designations within the Holy Roman Empire:

- Feudal Territories governed by a prince or duke, and in some cases kings.
- Feudal Territories led by a clerical dignitary, who was then considered a prince of the Church. In the common case of a Prince-Bishop, this temporal territory (called prince-bishopric) frequently overlapped his often larger ecclesiastical diocese (bishopric), giving the Bishop both worldly and clerical powers.
- Imperial Free Cities—was a city formally responsible to the emperor only.

Overall the number of territories at times was significantly large, rising to several hundred at the time of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. ⁽⁵³⁾

Once again the author simply cannot begin to provide a disclosure adequate enough to paint the full picture regarding Church geo-political activities during the thirteenth through seventeenth centuries simply for lack of space. The author will contend however the alliances between Church and feudal realms during this period are historically unquestionable. Furthermore, during this period, what little dispute there may have been regarding Papal primacy outside of the eastern empire would have collapsed in this environment because the Bishop of Rome had ascended to a position which was arguably more influential than that of the “emperor.”

History more than suggests in many sectors the ecclesiastical authorities in fact reigned like Lords and princes over geographical territories. In accordance with their positions, numerous clergy did indeed live in great splendor and wealth unlike the feudal peasants who made up the vast majority of the general population. The author believes at the height of the Holy Roman Empire historical evidence clearly depicts a Church of Messiah in which political conspiring with the secular realm and accumulation of wealth, land and power are prevalent beyond any reasonable doubt. It should be noted that the extreme excesses associated with the fourteenth century Italian Renaissance have not even been exposed herein and just mentioning this lavishness should suffice in bolstering the author’s contentions.

The author also is convinced that Messiah's declaration as the Son of G_D is meant specifically as a rebuke to the Church ecclesiastical organization of this era. An organization where a bureaucratic empire had emerged and where the position of the Papacy itself had far eclipsed the position of authority meant for any individual but G_D himself.

This author quite frankly shudders to think of a Church titular position that grants the holder of the office a palace to live in, actually multiple palaces, and even further yet accords such dignitary prominence to the position where words such as "Lord," "blessed" and "holy father" are mentioned in affiliation with the position.

Within Scripture Yeshua himself tells us that not one person is good and in another instance to call no man father but G_D himself. Throughout Scriptures we see instances where Yeshua chastises the proud, the mighty, the powerful, etc. We saw where Yeshua chastised the Jewish religious establishment for seeking the best seats and desiring prominence. It would seem that many members of this Church era ecclesiastical body did not recognize themselves when reading or hearing the Gospel. Within this Church era, having the clergy seek out the best seats at gatherings would have been the least of problems when we see numerous records of clerical fiefdoms and palaces being administered in the name of G_D.

The author genuinely believes Messiah was sending a clear message to the Church authorities to get things under control and remember who is really in charge and what the purpose of the gospel mission is meant to be. It would appear during this period in history that some prominent wings of the Church of Messiah had forgotten these most basic of truths and in fact capitalized upon their position in a mode that can simply be described as "usury."

The author must also point out that the late middle ages is well known for construction of some of the most lavish and grandiose Church structures ever erected. Perhaps the most notable of these edifices was the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris completed in approximately 1345 Ce. The building spree undertaken by the Church of Messiah in many ways epitomizes the commercial and imperial nature of the Church during this period. Still further the fundraising modes of the

Church of Messiah—taxes, sale of indulgences, etc.—must unfortunately be looked upon as supporting a modus operandi akin to “usury.”

In completing this “Imperial Church” discourse the author must objectively note from a positive perspective, that despite the rebuking given to the Church by Yeshua in this message, it was undoubtedly the Roman Catholic Church which primarily provided any sense of harmony, order and humanity in an otherwise lawless and barbaric society.

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Issue #4—The Faithful Church

In light of these political contrivances of the Church era it certainly seems most strange that Yeshua would applaud the Church for its works of charity, service and faith but this he did.

As the reader may be aware the beginnings of the Church’s monastic movement can be traced back to the third century. The nature of monasticism is the religious practice of renouncing all worldly pursuits in order to fully devote one’s life to spiritual work. In essence the modus operandi of the monastic individual would be: piety, obedience to G_D’s Word, poverty and of course works of faith, charity and love.

Up until the thirteenth century the monastic movement was primarily restricted to separated communities where those pursuing a monastic life, usually referred to as monks or brothers (male) and nuns or sisters (female), would live secluded and usually solitary lives sheltered away from the outside world. Around the twelfth century, mendicant orders chose to live in city convents among the people instead of secluded in monasteries.

The Mendicant (Begging) Orders are religious orders which depend directly on the charity of the people for their livelihood. In principle they do not own property, either individually or

collectively, and have taken a vow of poverty, in order that all their time and energy could be expended on G_D's work. Essentially then evangelism through love and exemplary living was a major aspect of the monastic movement. The mendicant orders spent their time preaching the Gospel and serving the poor. Both of the two main new orders founded by Dominic and Francis during this Church era offered a model of service to G_D within the community which rivaled the works of the Cathars.

These orders attracted a significant level of patronage, as much from townsfolk as aristocrats. Their focus of operation rapidly centered on towns where population growth historically outstripped the provision capabilities of local parishes. In the Middle Ages there were four great monastic orders; Franciscans founded in 1209, Carmelites 1206–1214, Dominicans founded 1215, Augustinians founded 1256 Ce. Beyond these four, numerous other orders arose to meet the needs of the general laity during a period when the established diocese or parish could not meet the demand. (54)

What ultimately ensued was a situation where there were two distinct Churches operating within the realm of the empire. One Church was the general ecclesiastical arm of the Holy Roman Empire while the other Church was pounding the streets and in the business of ministering to the sheep. Perhaps this might be an over simplification of the overall dynamic which existed but it would seem the observation might not be unfair.

There is much historical evidence regarding the great works of charity and service performed by the members of these orders. With the movement of these orders to the population centers there is no doubt the late middle ages represent the great age of monasticism. The author believes Messiah's accolades to the Church for its works of charity and service directly correlates to this great monastic period of the late middle ages. From a historical Church of Messiah perspective the works of charity, piety and love of others within this great age of monasticism would have to indeed be recognized as extraordinary.

When the public works of these mendicant orders are placed side by side with the overall political activities of the Church, as well as the life styles between the poor friars and the bishop

princes and other favored ecclesiastical members, it is easy to see how there can be a Church era being applauded and rebuked at the same time for seemingly opposite activities.

The author would also point out this “diversity” within the Church of Messiah between the “secularized ecclesiastical clergy” and “mendicant evangelicals” would have certainly had a tremendous influence on the general Church laity. The author would go so far as to contend these vast and visible differences within the Church itself would prompt much of the laity to question the integrity, sincerity and morality of the traditional secular clergy. From an objective and common sense vantage point it would seem the average person would have to view the situation as grossly unfair.

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Issue #5—The Call to Repentance

In fairness to the Church of Messiah it would seem safe to presume that the rise of the mendicant orders and their simpler more humble way of life could in effect constitute an internal call for reform. If not a call to reform then most certainly a call to remember the basic tenets of the apostolic traditions handed down from Yeshua the Messiah.

We know from history however the call to reform the Church from within would grow for centuries finally reaching a crescendo in 1517 Ce when Martin Luther, a Roman Catholic Augustinian Monk and German Theologian, posted his now famous Ninety-five Theses on the doors of the “Castle Church” requesting an open debate of the issues he perceived to be at hand.

Luther’s Theses in summary condemned greed and worldliness in the Church as an abuse and asked for a theological disputation specifically on what “indulgences” could grant. It should be noted objectively Luther did not challenge the authority of the Pope to grant indulgences, or the validity of the Papacy itself in any of these posted theses.

As history relates the following three years of back and forth parlance between Luther and the Church resulted in Luther taking stronger doctrinal positions, different than those of the Church, as well as Luther pointing out vociferously the need to reform an abusive and failing secularized Church clergy. On June 15, 1520, the Pope warned Martin Luther with the Papal bull “Exsurge Domine” that he risked excommunication unless he recanted forty-one points of doctrine culled from his writings within sixty days. In October 1520, at the “instance of Miltitz,” Luther sent his “On the Freedom of a Christian” discourse to the Pope, adding the significant phrase: “I submit to no laws of interpreting the word of G_D.” This last effort for peace was followed on December 12 with Luther burning the Papal bull, which was to take effect on the expiration of 120 days. Pope Leo X excommunicated Luther on January 3, 1521 Ce, in the bull “Decet Romanum Pontificem.” The Reformation had in effect become an official movement within history.

In summary Martin Luther, more than the reformers who preceded him, most assuredly shaped the Reformation movement. Aided by the advent of the printing press, his pamphlets were well-read throughout Germany certainly influencing many subsequent Protestant Reformers and thinkers and giving rise to diversifying Protestant traditions in Europe and elsewhere. Protestant countries, no longer subject to Papal primacy, exercised their expanded freedom of thought facilitating Protestant Europe’s rapid intellectual advancement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; ultimately giving rise to the Age of Reason.

In reaction to the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Reformation, as well was a part of this intellectual advancement, for example, through its scholastic Jesuit order.

On the darker side, the absolute power of the feudal princes over their subjects increased considerably in the Lutheran or Reformist territories, while Catholics and Protestants waged bitter and ferocious wars of religion against each other. A century after Luther’s protests, a revolt in Bohemia ignited the Thirty Years’ War, a Catholic vs. Protestant scenario, which ravaged much of Germany and killed about a third of the population by most historians’ estimates. And of course there was the damage done to greater Jewry by Luther who in frustration over failure of his writings

and teachings to convert the Jews led him to a point of calling for open persecution and oppression of them. (55)

The author does not feel compelled to address in detail the doctrinal issues raised by Luther or responded to by the Church. The primary reason is because the author has already made a strong case that the doctrinal exegesis of the Church was already fundamentally flawed dating back to the second century Ce. Ultimately the challenges which Luther made from a doctrinal perspective would in the grand scheme of things have to be considered minimal from the author's perspective because the ideology put forth by Luther would fail as well to acknowledge the Hebraic roots of the faith and practice.

This being declared however, it must be noted the importance of Luther's actions in challenging the Church to ultimately reconcile purported Apostolic Tradition, evident within doctrine and ecclesiastical structure, with Holy Scriptures cannot be understated. Luther's actions in essence changed the course of history and ultimately led to another schism within the Church of Messiah. A second great schism, which although exhibiting more doctrinal discord than the first schism, once again boiled down to a rudimentary level of "ecclesiastical primacy" and even more specifically "Papal primacy" over the Church.

The author strongly suggests the reader perform their own research regarding the reformation attempts by Luther and others. Objectively it would seem Luther made a great effort to get the Church to reform internally and initially had no intentions of parting from the Church. Irrespective of Luther's theological positions it would seem historically apparent the Church of Messiah was badly in need of reform. It would also seem apparent the mingling of the Church of Messiah with secular politics is ultimately not a good union.

As it pertains to this topical discourse Yeshua's reference to "space for repenting" can readily be applied to the politicized and worldly ecclesiastical bureaucracy of the late middle ages. There should be little doubt the call for Jezebel's repentance is indeed the call for Church reformation of the sixteenth century.

The reader should recall Yeshua had indicated he would fight the Church with the sword of his mouth which the author contends is his Word or Holy Scripture. In light of Luther's stance calling for reconciliation of Church tradition and doctrine with Holy Scripture, it would seem Yeshua made good on his promise to fight the Church with his Word! Of course such a position would be deemed ludicrous and perhaps even blasphemous by Catholic apologists, however the author will note that Catholic Apostolic Tradition, being held in esteem equal to and even greater than Scripture is no less blasphemous than Orthodox Jewry which holds Talmudic Rabbinic Tradition in the same esteem.

The author must also note the ironic symbolic similarities between the stories of Elijah and the burning of the bull while battling the false prophets of Baal and Luther's burning of the Papal bull. From a purely coincidental perspective the reader should note it was G_D who burned the bull during the test of prophets to confirm Elijah's authority, while in the case of Luther the burning of the Papal bull could in some way be viewed as a condemnation of the Church's false prophets who preached tradition over Scripture.

The reader however should not infer the author is agreeable or amenable with the many diverse and numerous notions which came out of the protestant reformation efforts. In many cases the reformist movement resulted simply in replacing one wrong with another; this happened simply because the reformist themselves failed in fundamentally viewing Scriptures from the correct Hebraic context and perspective.

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Issue #6—Killing by Death

The last discourse relative to the six detailed issues, will deal with the "killing of the children by death" reference made by Yeshua in this Church era message.

What should come as no surprise to the reader is the author's contention that the "killing with death" scenario within this present Church era time frame is potentially a direct reference to the devastating pandemic of disease which swept across Eurasia beginning in approximately 1347 Ce. This disease, known in later years as the "Black Death," would wreak havoc initially for a five year period 1347—by 1352 Ce and reduce the population in Europe from 75 to 50 million people and change the course of Asian and European history.

Black Death continued to strike parts of Europe throughout the fifteenth century, the sixteenth century and even into the seventeenth century with varying degrees of intensity and fatality. Researchers still do not agree on why large outbreaks of the infection have not returned to Europe.

Ultimately Black Death would kill an approximate 237 million victims throughout Eurasia during the many years of infection and constitute the largest death toll from any known epidemic in human history. According to popular opinion the disease was transported from the East, most likely China, to Italy via the standard commercial trade routes. Once in Italy there of course was no stopping the spread of the disease throughout all of the Empire.

Unfortunately one of the greatest tolls throughout this recurring pandemic was paid by the mendicant religious orders where large numbers perished because of their steadfast and charitable efforts in assisting the poor and the ill.

Ironically but sadly there is historical evidence which suggests Jews were blamed for the plague and were accused of having intentionally poisoned the waters. Supposed clear evidence of the conspiracy was shown because they did not fall prey to the plague in similar numbers as the Gentiles. The Jews were ruthlessly persecuted because of these false conspiracy accusations. We know today the Jews were not hit as hard communally by the plague simply because of the dietary and purity laws they maintained in adhering to G_D's Torah. The net result of these persecutions was a significant migration of Jewry into Eastern Europe. (56)

From a religious context the author is naturally uncomfortable with the notion the Black Death was some form of judgment from G_D. Uncomfortable or not the author would point out to the

reader on multiple occasions did G_D smite large numbers of Hebrews with a plague of death because of disobedience and transgressions. G_D also made it quite clear that failure to adhere to his Ways would ultimately result in catastrophic punishment by plague and disease.

Numbers states: And the people rose up all that day, and all the night, and all the next day, and gathered the quails; he that gathered least gathered ten heaps; and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. While the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. And the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people that lusted. From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed unto Hazereth; and they abode at Hazereth. (Numbers 11:32–35)

Numbers states: “And your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years, and shall bear your strayings, until your carcasses be consumed in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my displeasure. I the Lord have spoken, surely this will I do unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me; in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.” And the men, whom Moses sent to spy out the land, and who, when they returned, made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up an evil report against the land, even those men that did bring up an evil report of the land, died by the plague before the Lord. (Numbers 14:33–37)

Numbers states: And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying: “Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.” And they fell upon their faces. And Moses said unto Aaron: “Take thy fire-pan, and put fire therein from off the altar, and lay incense thereon, and carry it quickly unto the congregation, and make atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord: the plague is begun.” And Aaron took as Moses spoke, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people; and he put on the incense, and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. Now they that died by the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides

them that died about the matter of Korah. And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tent of meeting, and the plague was stayed. (Numbers 17:9–15)

Numbers states: And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto the Baal of Peor; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses: “Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them up unto the Lord in face of the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.” And Moses said unto the judges of Israel: “Slay ye everyone his men that have joined themselves unto the Baal of Peor.” And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, while they were weeping at the door of the tent of meeting. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from the midst of the congregation, and took a spear in his hand. And he went after the man of Israel into the chamber, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died by the plague were twenty and four thousand. (Numbers 25:1–9)

Deuteronomy states: If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and awful Name, the Lord thy G_D; then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. (Deuteronomy 28:58–59)

Should we then think Christians are more noble “chosen people” than the Hebrews? Or by chance should we think G_D no longer smites his own children? Certainly a true believer knows the answer to both questions must logically be “no.” Therefore we must dare not even consider sitting in judgment of G_D. How G_D works is G_D’s business and not man’s.

From a historical perspective there can be no argument the pandemic experienced throughout the empire represented great tribulation and killing with death. Killing with the Black Death to be more precise! Still further, when viewed in the context of G_D’s issuance of a “white stone” to

bestow favorable judgment, this plague was dubbed the “black death” or perhaps it more appropriately could be called the “black judgment.”

From a Scriptural and Covenantal Continuum perspective it should seem quite obvious the expanded “chosen people” are in no uncertain terms subject to the same punishments and judgments which befell the Hebrews when they alone represented the children of the covenant. Coincidentally the author would note in the Tanakh we saw how the instances of plagues were stayed because of intervention by people to appease G_D through actions. This Black Plague we know mysteriously ended in the seventeenth century. We also know “The Peace of Westphalia” in 1648 effectively broke the power of the Holy Roman Empire. It would seem coincidental that both the Holy Roman Empire and the plague had run their respective courses to the end within the same time frame. Then again perhaps it was not a coincidence!

The author must confess however there exists another very real potential scenario that fits Messiah’s reference of “killing with death” which cannot unilaterally be discounted.

When Martin Luther in 1517 initiated what would later be known as the Reformation, many local dukes saw the chance to oppose the Emperor Charles V. The empire became fatally divided along religious lines, with the North and East and many of the major cities becoming Protestant, while the southern and western regions largely remained Roman Catholic. Religious conflicts were waged in Europe for a century. When Bohemians rebelled against the emperor, the immediate result was the series of conflicts known as the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648), which devastated the Empire.

A net result of the Reformation efforts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a state of war between the weakening Holy Roman Empire and the Reformist Territories as well as peasant revolts within nearly all territories of the empire. There was indeed much “death by killing.”

From the perspective of these events being confined to the geo-political realm of the Holy Roman Empire, and subsequently the Church of Messiah, a strong case could be made this scenario, rather than the Black Death, represents a more accurate interpretation of the Messiah’s

warning to his Church. The author will note however that either scenario would be valid and falls within the applicable time frame defined for this Church era. (57)

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Letter to Thyatira Conclusion

With respect to the six listed issues which contextually needed review, it should seem clear the message to Thyatira certainly describes the Church of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance period. When this Church message is applied to the general time frame between the thirteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries one would be hard pressed to refute the body of circumstantial evidence in support of this Church era time frame.

Although the Church era time frame seems definitively established the author will point out there are still a number of Church message elements yet to be reviewed. Of interest specifically are the following three references.

The end of verse twenty-three where Yeshua declares that he is the one who searches the reins and hearts and will give unto each according to their works.

In light of the covered topical material, including a very brief expose of the Reformation, it is quite fascinating that in light of perceived Catholic Legalism, translated in the worst case scenario to read there exists a formulaic method of earning salvation—akin to Rabbinic Legalism, that a major reformist mantra became the doctrine of “faith alone.” To the author it would seem the prophetic response to a major reformist doctrine from G_D is clear and emphatic; “there is no faith without works.”

The author does not believe the conclusion of verse twenty-three should be interpreted in any other fashion at all. Nor should this passage, in light of history, be viewed as coincidental.

In verse twenty-four Yeshua declares those that hold the doctrine of Jezebel represent the depths of Satan. In light of the work herein which establishes the doctrine of Jezebel to be politics and materialism, it would seem clear Messiah is simply pointing out the most basic of declarations. That declaration being: Satan represents this world and those who are of this world, or live to this world, are not dead to this world and are subsequently not Messiah's but Satan's.

In essence all believers must understand G_D's doctrine forbids the acquisition of power and material wealth through conduct outside the auspices of his ways or Torah. Beyond this, and even more important, is that Yeshua has shown us we should not even lust or covet such things. There should be no doubt G_D indeed blesses whom he desires and in many cases those that seem undeserving of blessings. It should be remembered however Messiah told us it is harder for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich individual to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

In verses twenty-six through twenty-eight Yeshua promises to those that overcome he will give power over the nations and they shall rule with a rod of iron and break the nations like a potter's vessel. He will also give to them the morning star.

The reference to ruling over the nations as a reward for obedience, in light of this Church era message, is quite frankly an exhortation for true believers to not fret over those who exercise power in the present. Their power is not the ultimate power that is derived as an inheritance from Yeshua the Messiah. An inheritance that is only available to true believers in Yeshua the Messiah.

The rod of iron is certainly a direct reference to ruling in righteous fashion, ruling with integrity, justice and equity. The insinuation from the author's perspective is that this type of rule is not what is to be experienced in the present but will typify rule in the future when the time of the Son of Man comes again and the Earthly Kingdom of Messiah is in place.

Regarding Yeshua's reward of the morning star, it is not so apparently discerned and as such Scripture will be reviewed for assistance.

Job states: Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast the understanding. Who determined the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who stretched the line upon it? Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner-stone thereof, When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of G_D shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors ... (Job 38:4–7)

1 Corinthians states: But G_D giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of G_D; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:38–52)

Revelations 22:16 states: “I Yeshua have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

With the help of Scriptures we see the reference by Yeshua regarding the “morning star” is an indication of the incorruptible or heavenly form which true believers will take on upon

resurrection. Because true believers share in Yeshua within the earthly realm, they will also share in Yeshua within the heavenly where they will truly take on the perfected form of a “son of G_D.”

Despite the broadness of this Church message to Thyatira it should be noted that the complete body of Messiah’s message can be satisfactorily aligned with the church of the Middle Ages from a historical, cultural and spiritual context.

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Church Messages-Sardis

(1) And unto the angel of the Church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of G_D, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. (2) Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before G_D. (3) Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. (4) Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. (5) He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (6) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. Revelations (3:1–6)

Letter to Sardis Components

Image of Yeshua: He that has the seven Spirits of G_D and the seven stars

Positives: none

Negatives: Imperfect works, a name that livest but thou art dead Warning: remember that thou hast received and heard and hold fast and repent; if not Messiah will come as a thief and thou won't know when.

Extras: Thou hast a few undefiled even in Sardis that shall walk with Yeshua in white for they are worthy.

Reward: Clothed in white raiment and their name will remain in the book of life. Yeshua will confess their name to the Father before his angels.

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Letter to Sardis Commentary

When we look at the image of Yeshua within this Church message we see him as having the seven Spirits of G_D and the seven stars. As we have reviewed previously the seven Spirits of G_D are first indicative of G_D's omnipotence and all seeing nature. In essence the watchful eye that is ever vigilant and sees all things! Secondly we know within the Spirit of G_D is: truth, learning and wisdom. Thirdly we know that persons who find the Spirit will find life. Regarding the seven stars we know this is a reference to the Church angels or messengers. The messengers in turn representing the Church of Messiah leadership or authorities!

Collectively when we view this full introduction in context we see Yeshua declaring to his Church he has seen, and continues to see, how his Church is performing in their duties of shepherding and tending to the needs of his flock. There is nothing which has escaped his watchful eye. Yeshua, in referencing the stars, is declaring throughout the ages he has provided: true counsel, guidance, knowledge and wisdom to his Church leadership in the form of the Church era messages within the Revelations.

It would seem Messiah is once again testifying on behalf of G_D and stating true knowledge and wisdom comes from G_D and through the Word of G_D. We must bear in mind Revelations 19:10 emphatically declares: "Yeshua is the spirit of prophecy." In light of previous Church messages, and the continued coming to fruition of these prophetic events as foretold, it should seem apparent Messiah is exhorting his Church to look introspectively for truth and wisdom.

The reader should also recall the uncanny and remarkable exercise conducted earlier wherein the inverted acronym, (das abis), associated with the modern day cities of the seven Church communities relates directly to the Church receiving both doctrinal truths and prophecies within the Revelation.

As we see however from the completion of Revelation 3:1 the Church has apparently not listened to Messiah throughout the ages. We know this because Yeshua condemns his Church as claiming to be alive while actually being dead in Spirit.

In verses two and three Yeshua informs the Church their works are not acceptable. He implores the Church to remember all the things which were handed down that the Church had received. These things of course would consist of the entire corpus of Hebrew Scripture, both pre and post Messiah testaments. Yeshua warns the Church to repent and if they do not, then they will not be watchful or know when Yeshua will return.

Regarding the need to repent, it is quite clear why the Church needs to repent! Contained within the prophetic messages are clearly defined rebukes relevant to the shortcomings Messiah had been warning his Church about throughout the ages. Clearly defined and understood if the Church had been attentive! Clearly defined and understood if the Church was not of dull senses; being able to hear but not discern and look but not really see.

It would seem the Church of this Sardis era is a Church which has fooled itself. A Church which is confident that it is righteous and alive but does not understand it is grossly imperfect and lacking in Spirit and the humility to accept the healthy and deserved rebukes Yeshua has lovingly provided throughout the ages. A Church era that is devoid of the spirit of prophecy!

Ironically there is a clear and distinct message regarding this Church era which comes not from Messiah but from historical records. Traditionally Sardis appeared as a gigantic watchtower and was considered virtually impregnable in ancient times. The city was built on a 1500 foot high plateau with steep cliffs on three sides and a narrow road leading to the city on the fourth side. Additionally five major roads converged below it and contributed to Sardis's status as a great commercial center. The wealth of the city, which had been the capital of the Lydian Empire under the opulent King Croesus, was indeed legendary.

Impregnable as Sardis was it should be noted that when Cyrus of Persia besieged the city (approximately 547 BCE), the populace of Sardis, nestled in their fortress high above, paid little

attention to the invader. Cyrus could not find a way to get up to the citadel and even offered a reward to the soldier who discovered a pathway. Sometime later a vigilant Persian soldier spied a defender who had accidentally dropped his helmet from above. The careless soldier climbed down a secret pathway to retrieve it, and that night the Persians led their troops up the same pathway and to the top. To their surprise, the site was completely unguarded. The watchmen had gone home to sleep, thinking there was no need to keep guard at night—and so Sardis fell. Over confidence had betrayed Sardis.

Incredibly several centuries later the same sequence of events occurred when a Greek general besieged the city. After a year's siege the Greeks appeared to lose all hope of conquering the city. Then one of the Sardian soldiers dropped a helmet and retrieved it. That night the Greeks led some men up the steep cliff. When they reached the top, the place was again unguarded. Sardis's inhabitants had forgotten their lesson, and their city fell again. (58)

It is apparent the historical record of Sardis cries out for the remembrance of lessons learned. Instead of learning from the mistakes of the past, Sardis lapsed readily into an over confident state of mind. The implications of this Church era message to the Church of Messiah indicate it too has lapsed into a state of ignorant over confidence.

Although we can readily ascertain and interpret the problem facing this Church era, the question within the context of this specific work is “what is the time frame relevant to this Church era?” What is the time frame representative of the Church claiming to be alive while being spiritually dead; a Church that claims to be awake but is asleep?

Historically as a direct result of the reformation movement we see the onset and development of the European Age of Enlightenment! The Age of Enlightenment refers to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in European philosophy, and is often thought of as part of a larger period which includes the “Age of Reason.” The term more specifically refers to a historical intellectual movement, “The Enlightenment.” This movement advocated rationality as a means to establish an authoritative system of ethics, aesthetics, and knowledge.

Historical evidence indicates the intellectual leaders of this movement regarded themselves as courageous and elite! They regarded their purpose as leading the world toward progress and out of a long period of doubtful tradition, full of irrationality, superstition, and tyranny which they believed began during a historical period they called the “Dark Ages.” This movement undoubtedly provided a framework for the American and French Revolutions, the Latin American independence movement, and the Polish Constitution. The movement also led directly to the rise of capitalism and the birth of socialism.

The Enlightenment is identified with the high baroque and classical eras in music, and the early neo-classical period in the arts. In his notable 1784 essay “What Is Enlightenment?” Immanuel Kant defined it as follows: “Enlightenment is man leaving his self-caused immaturity. Immaturity is the incapacity to use one’s intelligence without the guidance of another. Such immaturity is self-caused if it is not caused by lack of intelligence, but by lack of determination and courage to use one’s intelligence without being guided by another. Sapere Aude! [Dare to know!] Have the courage to use your own intelligence,” is therefore the motto of the Enlightenment. (59)

As the reader is probably aware this intellectual movement, spurred on by the dictatorial and often times oppressive nature of the Church of Messiah, undoubtedly led to the social, political, scientific and industrial revolutions looming just around the corner in both Europe and the New World. This movement in essence directly shaped the modern world we live in today. A world of: rationalism, nationalism, secularism, humanism and materialism. The Age of Enlightenment for what it is worth in effect created the age of individualism.

For purposes of this Church message discourse this “Enlightenment” cultural movement cannot of course be ignored, but we need to look at the effects of this movement upon the Church of Messiah. We know historically that in light of the Protestant Reformation, which the author will simply deem to mean external reformation, the Roman Catholic Church did in fact undergo what is historically deemed to be the internal “Catholic Reformation.” The author believes it is most appropriate to review the post reformation Roman Catholic Church through the historical perspective of the Society of Jesus or more commonly known as the “Jesuits.”

The Jesuits were founded just before the Counter-Reformation, a movement whose purpose was to reform the Roman Catholic Church from within and then to counter the Protestant Reformers, whose teachings were spreading throughout Catholic Europe. As part of their service to the Roman Church, the Jesuits encouraged people to continue their obedience both to Scripture and also Roman Catholic doctrine.

Ignatius, the Jesuits founder, did recognize though that the hierarchical Church was in dire need of reform, and some of their greatest struggles were against the corruption, venality, and spiritual weakness within the Roman Catholic Church. As a result, in spite of their loyalty, Ignatius and his successors often tangled with the Pope and the Roman Curia. Over the 450 years since its founding, the Society has been called the Papal “elite troops” while at the same time been forced into suppression by the ecclesiastical powers on more than one occasion.

Ignatius, and the Jesuits who followed him, believed that the reform of the Church had to begin with the conversion of an individual’s heart. One of the main tools the Jesuits used to bring about this conversion has been the Ignatian retreat, called the spiritual exercises. During a four-week period of silence, individuals undergo a series of directed meditations on the life of Yeshua. During this period, they meet regularly with a spiritual director, who helps them understand whatever call or message G_D has offered in their meditations. The retreat follows a Purgative-Illuminative-Unitive pattern in the tradition of the mysticism of John Cassian and the Desert Fathers. Ignatius’ innovation was to make this style of contemplative mysticism available to all people in active life, and to use it as a means of rebuilding the spiritual life of the Church.

Unfortunately after early success and explosive expansion the Jesuits were suppressed primarily because they were seen as growing too prominent and interfering with the running of various political entities. By 1773 following a decree signed by Pope Clement XIV, the Society of Jesus was suppressed in virtually all Catholic countries. The notable exception was Russia and to a lesser extent some other “Orthodox” countries where the authority of the Papacy was not recognized. In fact it was Russia that provided to the suppressed order a safe haven and in effect enabled them to survive. (60)

It would seem the Jesuits' call to personal spiritual development and commitment as a means of breathing life into the Church's members and communities did not sit well with the secular and humanist movements which had permeated Europe. In essence the Jesuits were just not politically or culturally popular. The suppression of the Jesuits, in light of the lack of any theological differences with the Church, is indicative of politics defeating religion. Obviously the suppression of the Jesuit order within Europe must have been hailed as a political and cultural victory for the secular champions of "the Enlightenment."

During the Age of Enlightenment, in spite of a significant difference in the world view adopted by the Church and a marked different approach to how the Church interacted with its members, there was in no way a movement away from Church doctrine and traditions. Conversely during this period the development of doctrine and practices within the external reformist movement, being influenced by the Enlightenment culture and freed from the authoritative bonds of the Roman Catholic Church, seemed to have no end.

From the author's perspective it is apparent the reformation had spawned a religious environment whereby the societal mood and culture of the period could readily be adapted into a religious framework. As such various regional or national movements could and would directly impact the developing reformist Churches. Putting this issue into an overly simplistic summary, it would seem the reformation had spawned an age where any group of people could ultimately be able to define doctrine, practices and in essence their own Church.

To support this point of view the author would refer to the Reformists' reference to specific Reformist Churches and groups as "denominations" to imply that they are differently named parts of the whole Reformist Church. This so called "invisible unity" is apparently imperfectly displayed as some denominations are certainly less accepting of others, and the basic orthodoxy of some is questioned by most of the others. Individual denominations also have formed over very subtle theological differences while other denominations are simply regional or ethnic expressions of the same beliefs. The actual number of distinct denominations in the contemporary era is hard to calculate, but has been estimated to be over thirty thousand. Various ecumenical movements have

attempted cooperation or reorganization of Reformist Churches, according to various models of union, but divisions continue to outpace unions. Many denominations do share common beliefs in the major aspects of the Christian faith, while differing in many secondary doctrines. According to the World Christian Encyclopedia (2001) by David B. Barrett, et al, there are “over 33,000 denominations in 238 countries.” Every year there is a net increase of around 270 to 300 denominations. (61)

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Letter to Sardis Conclusion

It is within this Enlightenment historical epoch where we really see the true meaning of Messiah’s message to the Church. While the Roman Catholic Church in essence remained theologically entrenched with the traditions of the past 1500 years, the Reformists’ Church would set in motion a new order of theological development which would ultimately lead to thousands of diverse congregations and myriad forms of doctrine and practice. All the while within the confines of this Church era message Yeshua was exhorting his Church to remember that real enlightenment comes from G_D alone. Real enlightenment comes from true faith and imbuelement of the Holy Spirit.

Under the auspices of “the Enlightenment” and religious reforms which took place within this Church era, it is apparent that many would consider this a great awakening or re-birth for Christianity. According to Messiah however this “life” is only in name while the real nature of his Church is one that is spiritually dead.

In spite of the evolved self-awareness and individual pursuit of enlightenment spurred on by this cultural period, we cannot overlook that the Church of Messiah came out of this Age of Enlightenment in a separated and devastated form. In spite of the freedom garnered to enable the individual to explore and develop their relationship with G_D in a personal way, (this being a good

thing), it must be noted the potential abuse for the individual, or groups of individuals, to define the ways of G_D in a way which suits their own desires is catastrophic.

The ultimate message Yeshua the Messiah was sending to this Church era was this: the ways of truth and wisdom as set forth by G_D have been provided to people succinctly and clearly within Hebrew Scripture. Yeshua is telling us that individual enlightenment through rationalism and philosophy is just not our path to true enlightenment.

It would seem the failure of the Church of Messiah to repent and seek once again the truths of what had been received by the Church, led to the desire for the seeking of basic truths or enlightenment outside the Church. As such the Age of Enlightenment ensued or as the author would more appropriately refer to this period: the age of self!

The author can best typify the enlightened individual by quoting Descartes: "I think, therefore I am." The author would counter with the following which is more reflective of G_D's plan for mankind: "G_D Is, therefore I am."

To the author it is apparent the Church of Sardis message is indeed associated with the so called "Age of Reason and Enlightenment" spanning the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With the time frame being established we should revisit the message to Sardis and complete the review of the remaining subject matter.

At the end of verse three Yeshua declares he will come upon the Church as a thief and the Church will not know the hour. There can be no doubt this warning is meant for the Church that is ignorant, over confident and lacking the capability to discern the end times. It would seem ironic and quite disconcerting that Messiah could once again be speaking to the Jewish religious establishment who because of tradition, bureaucracy and self -righteousness had also lacked the spirituality to see the coming of Messiah. Just as Sardis did not understand history and let it repeat, so too do the modern leaders of the chosen people; succumbing to the very same fate that befell the Hebrew ancestors!

Regarding verses four through six we see Yeshua providing exhortation for those few who have not defiled their garments. These would be the individuals who do not get seduced by individual enlightenment but remain strong in faith and understand G_D is the source of both enlightenment and life.

By remaining faithful and not defiling themselves with the secularism and humanism, they will be provided by Yeshua with white raiment indicative of the purity they represent in remaining faithful to G_D's wisdom. Sadly enough Yeshua makes it quite clear those worthy of white raiment are few which means conversely the vast, vast majority of so called believers will in fact be blotted out of the "book of life."

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Church Messages-Philadelphia

(7) And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; (8) I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. (9) Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. (10) Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. (11) Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. (12) Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my G_D, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my G_D, and the name of the city of my G_D, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my G_D: and I will write upon him my new name. (13) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. (Revelations 3:7–13)

Letter to Philadelphia Components

Image of Yeshua: He that is holy and true and that has the key of David. He that opens and no man can shut.

Positives: Works and that Messiah has set before them an open door and no man can shut it. Thou hast little strength and have kept Yeshua's word and not denied his name.

Extras: Yeshua will make the false Jews a synagogue of Satan. Yeshua will make them come and worship thy feet and to know that Yeshua has loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of Messiah's patience Yeshua will keep thee from the hour of temptation that will come upon all the world.

Negatives: None

Warning: Behold he comes quickly so hold fast so that no man can take thy crown

Reward: Pillar in G_D's Temple and never more will have to go out. The name of G_D will be written upon thee and the name of New Jerusalem. Yeshua will write upon thee his new Name.

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Letter to Philadelphia Commentary

Wow! What a turn around this must have been, for in the last Church era Yeshua condemned his Church as claiming to be alive yet to be actually spiritually dead. Could it be his Church has indeed repented and remembered the truths which were received from the beginning of time?

The reader should be aware that popular opinion regarding this Church message is the Church of Philadelphia represents the remnant of the Church of Messiah that has not faltered and gone down the path of the general Church and its membership. As such there are hundreds and perhaps thousands of congregations, generally all reformist Church organizations, claiming to be the true "Church of Philadelphia."

Before we can accept or validate the popular opinion we need to evaluate this message in detail and the collective issues facing the Church as detailed throughout the first five messages.

Needless to say the focus of this ensuing recap of previous message issues will exclude the good things the Church is applauded for; after all we need to determine if the Church of Messiah did indeed repent. Subsequently the author must note herein it must not be presumed the Church of Messiah, throughout history, is without merit or value. This presumption would be most incorrect and indeed contemptuous of those true believers in Yeshua the Messiah that have come before us. Believers whose faith and actions enabled the good works within the Church and

provided witness of Messiah to generations of millions of persons whom otherwise would have not known Yeshua at all.

Reconciliation Issues:

- Church of Ephesus: The Church that left the first love which was interpreted within this work as the early Church drifting away from the scripturally ordained roots of the faith. Generally speaking the loss of the original Hebraic roots of the faith!
- Church of Smyrna: The persecuted Church that was not rebuked by Messiah!
- Church of Pergamon: The Church of Messiah itself playing judge; A Church where leaders follow the doctrine of Balaam—pursue their own desires; The Church where we see the mingling of pagan practices with the ways of G_D; The Church where we see a Nicolaitane ecclesiastical bureaucracy that literally conquers the people.
- Church of Thyatira: The Church that needs to be reminded that Yeshua is the Son of G_D and the only cornerstone upon which the Church is built; The Church where elements are in political league/conspiracy with secular powers; The Church that accumulates wealth and power; The Church that is given clear opportunity to repent of their sins but does not.
- Church of Sardis: The Church that is ignorant and over confident, the Church that claims to be alive but is dead.

With the issues facing the Church of Messiah listed in summarized fashion herein, the author's intent is not to launch into any long-winded dissertation relative to what aspects may be applicable to the Roman Catholic Church of modern times or for that matter the Eastern Orthodox Church or even the vast and variant congregations comprising the Reformist Church. What the author will do is challenge the reader to objectively determine if the Church of Yeshua the Messiah has repented of the listed grievances.

We have seen from historical review how the congregational structure of the Church of Messiah is not what G_D ordained in Scripture. Has there been repentance?

We have seen from historical review how basic doctrine and practice within the Church of Messiah is divergent from G_D's declarations. Has there been repentance?

We have seen how the chosen people have refused to accept and understand the basic constructs of the Scriptural and Covenantal Continuum. Has there been repentance?

At the end of the fifth Church age we are basically left with a Church of Messiah that is devoid of spiritual life and consequently its divine power and authority. A declaration made not by the author but by G_D himself!

As we proceed to the review of the message to Philadelphia, the author will declare to the reader this message is to all the individuals who walk the narrow path for their number is few. This message is not to a Church or specific congregation but to individuals who by their own free choice have accepted the ways of G_D and not the ways of man. Messiah's Earthly Church for all conversational purposes has already been declared dead by Messiah!

With the introduction of this message we see Yeshua as: he that is holy, he that is true and he that has the Key of David. He that opens and no man shuts, and he that shuts and no man opens.

Regarding this image of Messiah it should be noted the nature of holy and true, as detailed within this work and supported within Sacred Scripture, cannot be separated from the ordained ways of G_D; in essence G_D's Holy Torah which represents the path or road of holiness. Obviously Yeshua being true is a direct reference to his perfect observance, obedience and human translation of Torah during his Earthly life and ministry.

Regarding the Key of David the author will point out this literary construct seems to be a deviation upon Revelation 1:17 where Messiah declares he has the keys of hell and of death. The variation is quite intriguing and merits further review.

A review of Scripture provides us the following passages which certainly correspond to Messiah's reference.

Isaiah states: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and bind him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a peg in a sure place; and he shall be for a throne of honor to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups even to all the vessels of flagons. (Isaiah 22:21–24)

Regarding this reference it would seem obvious the symbolism of the “House of David” is connected directly with the prophetic, historical and theological reality of Yeshua being the Messiah of Israel. Still further the passage clearly is indicative of the Jews recognizing Yeshua as the heir to the throne of David while placing upon him the glory of his Father G_D Almighty.

So what then can we say about this introductory image of Messiah? The author believes at first glance one can see only Hebrew implications herein. We see clear references to Torah, G_D's Way. We see clear references to Yeshua's true ministry as Messiah of Israel, and we see clear references to the House of Judah or quite simply the Jews. So should it be presumed this is simply a message for Jews? Fear not Gentiles because this construct needs to be viewed in a Scriptural and Covenantal Continuum perspective.

This introduction by Yeshua can only be discerned properly when viewed as a full cycle plan for G_D's chosen people—all of them. In this perspective true believers in Messiah are circumcised of the heart and as such are imbued with the Holy Spirit which grafts them into the root that is Yeshua.

This introduction only makes sense from a covenantal perspective if it includes both Jew and Gentile, and it only makes sense when G_D's plan for humanity is viewed as an absolute—meaning the Torah is valid for all people.

There is no doubt this is a most difficult construct in light of the cultural and theological differences between Jews and Gentiles. Add to this a history which is absolutely horrific, from a relationship perspective, and one can only think this author is jesting or has lost touch with reality. Then again perhaps not!

Moving to Revelation 3:8 Yeshua declares he knows the works of these chosen people. Still further Messiah has opened a door before these people that no one can shut in spite of these chosen peoples' little strength, for these people have kept his Word and not denied his Name.

It would seem the chosen people spoken of will be a people of faithful works. Works having been defined previously as the works of true Torah! The works of faith, charity, love and obedience as lived by Yeshua. Works of spiritual imbue ment!

The open door Yeshua speaks of could potentially be viewed in numerous aspects but the author believes the correct interpretation is that Messiah is referencing the “door of the tent of meeting” which appears in Holy Scripture, by the count of this author at least forty-five times. For readers not familiar with this reference please simply note when G_D first dwelt amidst the Israelites and foreigners within the desert, after he brought them up from Egypt, the Holy Place was no static temple edifice but a tent wherein was the tabernacle which housed the Sacred Ark of the Covenant and the Tablets of the Law handed down from G_D.

To the author the clear implication is Yeshua has opened up the door for the chosen people, both Jew and Gentile to congregate together under the auspices of the “Old Ways” which were declared from the beginning and representative of the eternal covenant. An open door to congregate together to celebrate the Holy Festivals, immerse in his Sacred Torah and be one or as it is defined in Hebrew, “echad!”

The reference to little strength must surely be symbolic of the congregational numbers. Unfortunately for mankind it would seem these numbers will not be large. Certainly this is in line however with all of Messiah's prophecies which indicate most will perish while few will find the narrow path.

The reference to keeping Messiah's word can be boiled down to keeping the statutes and commands. Remember Yeshua exhorted all people: do not call on his name and ignore to do what he said. What Yeshua said was to keep the statutes and commands of G_D . . . follow Torah!

Regarding the reference to not denying Messiah's name, this should be viewed in both a Jew and Gentile perspective. From a Jewish perspective this is clearly indicative of those Jews who have finally accepted Yeshua as the Messiah of Israel. These are Jews who do not fear being ostracized by the so called Orthodox or Conventional Jews. On the other hand the Gentiles who do not deny the name of Yeshua (Jesus) are the Gentiles who recognize Messiah as Y'shua - G_D's Salvation, as the Jew he undoubtedly is. Gentiles who accept the Hebrew nature of their faith not begrudgingly, but lovingly!

In verse nine Yeshua declares that those of the synagogue of Satan, the lying false Jews, will be made to come and worship at the feet of the chosen people because Yeshua will make them know his chosen people have the love of G_D.

The reader will recall the synagogue of Satan and the issue of false Jews was previously exposed within this work. In the context of this Church message however the author is of the conviction this reference includes all elements of those that deny Yeshua and the ways of G_D. This would translate into the Jews who do not accept Yeshua as Messiah of Israel and the Son of G_D. This includes Christians who claim to be the chosen people of G_D but do not accept the Hebrew Scriptural roots of truth as ordained by G_D. This includes those of Islam who claim to be the true chosen people but are not and are actually the enemy of the G_D of Israel. All of these false chosen people have been lured, often times in a most subtle and seductive manner, into the synagogue of Satan. These masses will know however the remnant of G_D is the elect of the true inheritance!

In verse ten we see where Yeshua promises to protect his chosen remnant from the hour of great temptation which will fall upon all the earth and try all people. There is no doubt this reference deals directly with the great tribulation during the end times as described within Revelations.

The author must honestly admit the “being kept from this temptation” passage remains a contentious issue. There is however no reason to divert attention and move into a long and contentious dissertation on the nature of the “rapture.” What Messiah means is simply that the chosen remnant will be spared the temptation to revoke their faith when the option is to take the mark of the beast or be an outcast to this world. The Scriptures, specifically Revelation depict the plight of individuals that have both the testimony of Messiah and keep the commandments of G_D ... these individuals will be subject to persecution ... some for captivity, some for death and even some for survival. As such it seems apparent that true believers will be present during and subject to the trials of the great tribulation.

In verse eleven Yeshua exhorts the chosen remnant to hold fast because his return is imminent. He does not want his chosen remnant to lose their crowns which readily translates into “inheritance.” Inheritance as in being Kings and Priests unto G_D!

Finally in verse twelve Yeshua declares to the remnant the bounty of the victory: to become a pillar in the temple of G_D (a leader and teacher), to receive the secret Name of G_D, the Name of New Jerusalem and the new Name of Yeshua written upon their person. Amen!

Most readers are probably thinking then no one really has to worry about the end times being imminent. After all this co-mingled Jew and Gentile congregation sounds like sheer fantasy which can't possibly happen any time soon, and perhaps we should be thinking about Messiah not coming for another thousand years!

The author is assured then most readers need to prepare themselves for an incredible shock, for the time of the congregation with the circumcised hearts consisting of both Jew and Gentile is

already upon us. The reader may know these people as Messianic Jews, Apostolic Jews or perhaps Christian Hebrews or any number of names which are in use.

In any event the Hebraic Roots Movement is “historically” a recent development, having been purportedly started by Christians as an evangelical movement to bring Jews to Christian beliefs. In 1866 the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Great Britain was organized with branches in several European countries. In the United States the Hebrew Christian Association of America (HCAA) was organized in 1915. The International Hebrew Christian Alliance was organized in 1925 to later become the International Messianic Jewish Alliance. Additional groups were formed during subsequent decades.

In fact the Hebrew Christian Synagogue recognized as “the first distinct Jewish Christian house of worship in the United States” was founded by John Zacker, a Russian Jew. It opened not coincidentally in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on February 25, 1922. ⁽⁶²⁾

In 1973 a motion was made to change the name of the HCAA to the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA), and the name was officially changed in 1975. The name change was significant because it represented an evolution in the thought processes and religious and philosophical outlook toward a more fervent expression of Jewish identity. In essence the name needed to more accurately reflect the movement.

The modern organized Messianic or Hebraic Roots Movement consists of congregations in thirty-five of the United States and at least eighteen countries. The Messianic Movement comprises a number of diverse streams but in general all consider it important to express their belief in Yeshua in a way consistent with Biblical Hebraic culture. The Messianic Movement as a whole can be seen somewhat as a proverbial mixed bag, with some Messianic organizations drawing more heavily from Jewish tradition while others from Christian sources, in varying degrees.

The two largest Messianic organizations, the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) and the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC), accept from both Jewish and Christian sources anything they see as scripturally verifiable. The writings of theologians Dan Juster, and

Paul Liberman two of the founders of the UMJC, and especially of David H. Stern have helped shape the direction of the mainstream within the Messianic Movement: Evangelical and somewhat Trinitarian in doctrine, but drawing on Hebraic roots to interpret the B'rit Chadasha (New Testament) as well as the Tanakh (Old Testament).

Messianic believers share with most Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians a belief that Yeshua will someday return to the earth and establish his kingdom here in accordance with Scripture. The Spirit of prophecy is a fundamental truth amongst the Messianic communities. A growing interest within the Messianic movement is evangelism among gentiles, as well as Jews, in order to fulfill what is G_D's original purpose for the Hebrew people. Essentially for the Hebrews to be G_D's model people and reveal the knowledge of the true G_D to the whole world! This coincides also with an increasing attraction to the Messianic movement on the part of Gentiles, many of them devout Christians, who feel the movement represents the true faith and belief system as ordained by G_D within Holy Scripture.

Conversely there are messianic evangelical activities which take place from Gentile to Jew as well in accordance with the exhortations of the great evangelist Paul who wanted Gentile believers to drive the Jew to jealousy. This of course can only occur however when the Gentiles themselves embrace the Ways of Torah, and do so in the context of Yeshua the Messiah of Israel. After all one cannot logically expect the Jew, who is Torah observant, to go and follow a Christian belief system if the price of admission is to abandon the ways of G_D as set forth in Holy Scripture. This would not make sense!

The reader should note despite varying degrees of Hebraic/Judaic practices amongst messianic communities, the trend has been moving to a more fundamental and Torah centric position over the last few decades. In the grand scheme of things it would not make much sense if the mingling of Jew and Gentile resulted in a compromise of belief systems. Ultimately there can and should not be any form of syncretism and as such the movement is better defined as being Jewish centric.

As exposed within this work this syncretism is already what has happened to the Church of Messiah. There can be only one belief system and that is the belief system ordained by G_D in Sacred Scripture; not the overt traditions of the Rabbi, or the overt traditions of the Christian Clergy, when either tradition conflicts with Sacred Scripture.

While many Messianic Jewish believers are ethnically Jewish (and as such would be considered Jews even by traditional Jewish standards), Messianic Judaism is not recognized as a legitimate form of Judaism by traditional Jewish organizations or leaders. Mainstream Jewish denominations and organizations contend Messianic Jews are not practicing Judaism, but a form of Reformist Christianity. Messianic Judaism is held to be non-Jewish by Reform, Orthodox, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Judaism. Most Jewish groups consider the movement to be an evangelizing tool created and supported by larger Christian denominations. This is a natural reaction by communities that simply do not accept Yeshua as Messiah of Israel and of course remain suspicious of the Christian's motives. To these mainstream Jewish congregations everything to do with Yeshua is a Christian conspiracy! Unfortunately 2000 years of discord and persecutions have not helped matters from an objective view point!

Numerous messianic leaders are admittedly ordained clergy of some Christian denominations and a number of the messianic clergy certainly have no ethnic connection to Judaism. A growing list of Christian denominations, such as the Southern Baptist Convention and the Assemblies of G_D movement, actively participate in establishing messianic congregations as part of their efforts to evangelize the Jewish people.

At the present time, more than ten different Christian denominations count messianic congregations as members of their denomination. These congregations, almost by definition, begin at the far evangelical pole, (if they can be considered Messianic at all), but inevitably move towards the conservative or fundamental Torah submissive pole.

Another organization critical of the Messianic Movement is the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington. In 1997 this group, comprising liberal Christian, as well as Jewish and Muslim leaders, put out a strongly worded statement, condemning the proselytization efforts of

the Messianic Movement. Most Evangelicals reject the criticism and defend evangelism among Jews and Gentiles. Some Evangelicals however have criticized the Messianic Movement on entirely different grounds; some consider the movement to be “too Jewish” for holding on to parts of the Old Testament that many Christians believe are not applicable today. This criticism is not widespread in Evangelical circles, but appears to be growing, especially as the movement becomes more defined as Biblical Apostolic Judaism. Conversely as messianic communities mature and become more scripturally conservative the tendency is to grow apart from less fundamental Christian communities. In essence there is a growing intolerance within many messianic communities for practices and beliefs which are generally not hebraically or scripturally rooted. [Source Materials] (63)

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Church of Philadelphia Conclusion

So as the reader can see this Messianic/Hebraic Roots movement is not really new but certainly small and under duress from all sides. In many respects the differences that exist between Jew and Gentile, as well as the fears by kinship reaction to those who do cross the line of separation, certainly keep the movement expanding at a slow pace.

Most readers are likely aware of the brotherly love translation which is associated with “Philadelphia.” Ironically this true Church of Philadelphia is the only Church which is ultimately brotherly. It is non-denominational, it is non-institutional, and it is the only belief system where both Jew and Gentile are genuine brothers in Messiah. It is the only belief system where brothers are bound together by faith in Messiah and compliance with G_D’s sacred statutes and commands: the Torah!

Not coincidentally it is only the love that is Yeshua the Messiah which enables the two to mingle. Just as Yeshua declared “He has opened the door and no one will be able to shut it.” This

movement, as foretold by Messiah himself, will never take charge or become a popular belief system so one need not fear the Messianic movement supplanting any of the established belief systems. But in the end the real question is; “does one want to be with the popular crowd or does one want to be with the true and faithful crowd?”

To assist readers in making up their minds let us review what happens to each segment of people.

- The popular crowd gets to worship at the feet of the unpopular crowd because the chosen remnant is loved by G_D.
- The popular crowd gets the gift of eternal separation from G_D and utter destruction of both body and soul.

And for the unpopular true and faithful crowd:

- Will eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of paradise!
- Will not be hurt by the second death!
- Will get a crown of life!
- Will be given hidden manna!
- Will be given a white stone with a new name upon it!
- Will be given power over the nations, and they shall rule them with a rod of iron!
- Will be given the morning star!
- Will be clothed in white raiment!
- Will have their name remain in the book of life!
- Will have Yeshua confess their name to the Father before his angels!
- Will be made a pillar in G_D's Temple and never more will have to go out.
- Will have G_D's Name written upon them!
- Will have Yeshua's New Name written upon them!
- Will have New Jerusalem's Name written upon them!
- Will be one/echad with G_D and bask in the eternal light that is the glory of G_D!

So once again the questions are: To be with the popular crowd or the unpopular crowd? To be of this world or to be dead to this world? Unfortunately for the masses G_D's gift of free choice will become their curse as they exercise their free will to choose death rather than life!

In light of this Church era message and the review just completed, the reader should be aware we in fact are living presently within this Church era time frame today—right now as you read this. In the author's perspective this Church era will last even into the great tribulation of the end days. As the author has previously indicated the issue of the last days, as foretold in verses of Revelations subsequent to the Church messages, is worthy of a detailed work of its own and unfortunately must be covered under the auspices of a separate work.

You the reader however are the only one responsible for your own soul; not the Rabbi or Priest or Presbyter or whomever. Wake up and look around the world and see what is going on. Do not be like the people of the Church of Sardis who are ignorant and over confident. If you are, then Yeshua will come upon you like a thief in the night and you will not be prepared. Then it will be too late! Instead be like the believers from the Church of Philadelphia. Revisit Sacred Scripture with an open mind and let the Holy Spirit seize you and speak to you. You may be very surprised with what you discover!

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Church Messages-Laodicea

(14) And unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of G_D; (15) I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. (16) So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. (17) Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: (18) I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see. (19) As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. (20) Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (21) To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (22) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. (Revelations 3:14–22)

Letter to Laodicea Components

Image of Yeshua: Faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of G_D

Positives: none

Negatives: neither hot nor cold but lukewarm

Extras: spewed out of Messiah's mouth, thou sayest that thou art rich with increased goods and have need of nothing but thou are poor and wretched miserable and naked. Buy gold of Yeshua tried in the fire so that thou may be rich and clothed in white raiment and have thy naked shame covered up and have thine eyes salved so that thou may see. As many as Yeshua loves he rebukes and chastens.

Warning: Repent; Yeshua stands at the door knocking. If any one hears his voice and opens the door Yeshua will come in to him and will sup with him.

Reward: sit at the throne of Yeshua

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Letter to Laodicea Commentary

Let us begin by reviewing Messiah's introductory image to Laodicea. As the reader will recall much space within this work has been dedicated to detailing the meaning of Yeshua as the "Faithful and True Witness." It is Yeshua who bears witness relative to: G_D, Satan and people.

In the context of this Church message Messiah's role as the faithful and true witness is Yeshua's declaration the "end days" have come. In these last days will be the time when Yeshua invokes his own inheritance from G_D and acts as judge over all the nations and peoples.

Yeshua's reference as being the "beginning of the creation of G_D" serves as a declaration to mankind that his coming will signify the end of the present age and the beginning of the new. Just as all things were created through him and for him in the beginning, so too will the new things be created through him and for him.

The reader should admit when this last Church era message introduction is viewed in proper context, it becomes irrational to contend this is not specific to the last days. The symbolism of death and resurrection/renewal, the very heart of the faith of true believers, should be self-evident even to the non-discerning reader.

When we look at verses fifteen through nineteen it is unfortunate, but not surprising, that we do not find this Church era receiving any applause at all from Yeshua. In fact the declarations by

Messiah are strictly damning. At the very heart of the issue with the purported believers is their situation of being “lukewarm” or in other words “on the proverbial fence.”

Let us look a bit closer at the term lukewarm before being to presumptuous:

Mildly warm; tepid.

Feeling or showing little interest or enthusiasm; “a halfhearted effort” (64)

As one can see Yeshua is openly declaring that a half-hearted job, devoid of sound and faithful commitment, is going to result in rejection. Messiah declares: “I will spew thee out of my mouth.”

The obvious implication here is “half-hearted” literally refers to individuals who do in effect claim to be believers of Messiah. The reader should understand this has huge ramifications for the masses who mistakenly believe they are right with G_D because “in their minds” they accept the truth of Yeshua as the World’s Savior. What they fail to realize is their lack of follow through and commitment in living this belief results in their faith being relegated to a false faith. Essentially they have no spiritual salt within them!

It is incumbent upon each and every individual to understand that being a “good” person, being kind and charitable for example, simply for the sake of brotherhood or mankind just will not get the job done. The author has exposed time and time again within this work the necessity to perform works in the Name of and for the glory of G_D and G_D alone. If the works described in Torah are done for any reason other than a conviction of faith that these works will glorify G_D then the individual has already received their just reward.

Yeshua further points out the general condition of the Church era in verse seventeen; he speaks of a time of prosperity when materialism abounds. He speaks of a time of wealth where things are plentiful and the population is not in need of basic necessities.

Certainly we live in an era today where the standard of living has improved significantly in nearly all parts of the globe, and without question this is the case within Western Culture. Certainly we live in an era today where commerce is king. When we view in proper context the connection

between Messiah's Church on Earth and Western Civilization, is it not definitive it is a culture and society of comfort? Is it not definitive this is a culture which has become married to materialism?

Sadly enough the author would like the reader to think about the Christian holiday of Christmas for a moment. Think about the commercial and material aspects of this supposedly Holy Day. Now attempt to reconcile the commercial reality of this Christian holiday with the life, ministry and mission of Yeshua the Messiah.

There is no better example of how lukewarm fits this modern era than how the masses across the globe celebrate this purported Holy Day. What is supposed to be a tribute marking the birth of the Savior of the World must in effect be a stench in the nose of he who died for the sins of all people. Yeshua wants the world to forego wealth accumulation and materialistic pursuits and follow him. Instead we live in a time where people have in effect turned the supposedly holy and solemn day of Yeshua the Messiah into the greatest commercial and material event in the history of mankind.

Lest the reader get the wrong impression, the author is not condemning people for providing for their families and loved ones. Nor is the author putting down the traditional Western societal dream of being economically self-sufficient. The author is also aware Westerners can be very charitable. We must remember however that Western Culture has been on the whole extremely blessed by G_D. So in the grand scheme of things do we really use these blessings wisely? Do we as a society use these blessings as a systematic means of blessing the unfortunate in a manner that gives glory to G_D and recognizes his blessing upon our own society? Scripture is clear that to those who are given much; much will be expected!

Apparently in the words of Messiah the answer to the questions above is "no" because our modern community of purported believers is in effect wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Obviously this description speaks to the spiritual wealth of society. Of the things of this world we have much; of the treasures set aside in the Kingdom of G_D we have nothing and in essence are bankrupt.

Most regrettably, in many religious circles, there is little difference between the behaviors of the “world out there” and the believing community. It cannot be denied that divorce, child abuse, drugs, alcohol, and sexual immorality plague our religious communities. From a statistical perspective this must be true for the number of instances far exceeds the numbers of persons who are purportedly unbelievers. Therefore these problems are rampant among purported believers as well.

But even in these late times G_D holds open the opportunity for salvation. Yeshua exhorts individuals to purchase from him the gold of faithful works which have been tried in the fire and are righteous. Then we will not bear the shame of being spiritually bankrupt. Then we will have riches that won't rust or fade away. Then Yeshua will uncover our eyes so we won't be blind and then we can readily see the perfection of G_D's ways.

Yeshua continues to guide all people in verse nineteen when he declares it is all people whom he loves that he rebukes. Yeshua rebukes so that we can repent! The reader must understand however that one must see the rebuking in order to repent. How many congregations sit back and declare “this is not us;” we most certainly are not the Church of Laodicea! Worse yet there are numerous congregations that simply refuse to accept the fact these Church messages are even prophetic and pertinent to history beyond the first century Ce. Unfortunately people need to understand all congregations not meeting the standards of the Church of Philadelphia, by default, are indeed members of the Church of Laodicea!

So we should readily see the merging of the Church of Sardis and the Church of Laodicea. The latter is a natural result of the former and the over confidence indicative of the former has been transformed into nonchalance in the latter. This is indeed a fair spiritual depiction of modern Western culture from the author's perspective.

Finally we see Messiah, with tremendous mercy and love, holding out the invitation one last time. All he wants is for people to listen for his voice and ask him to come into their lives. For those who take Yeshua up on his offer, the gift is the opportunity to supper with the Lord and sit with him at his throne. Not a bad deal is it?

* * * * *

Conclusion

The author opened this work with a few basic elements which in essence defined the objectives being endeavored herein.

One objective was to make a case the Church of Messiah, representative of the chosen people, is centric to the history of mankind from the time Messiah came until he comes once more.

Another major objective was to make a case the Seven Church Messages represented a historical path or road that would be traveled by Messiah's Church throughout the ages, more specifically a path to be traveled from the time Yeshua first came to the time when he will come again.

The last major objective was to use the keys within this blessed Revelation of Messiah to get past the trappings of traditions and cultures so the eternal truths of G_D's ways for mankind could be exposed in the most concrete fashion.

To facilitate or more accurately to enable these endeavors, the author brought forth a contextual framework which consisted of historical, cultural and theological perspectives. The net result of this framework exposed the following key concepts:

- The Scriptural Continuum
- The Covenantal Continuum and
- The Scriptural World View

The Scriptural Continuum mandates believers accept the contiguous nature of the Holy Hebrew Scriptures. There is no disconnect between them; there is only “pre” and “post” Messiah testaments with Yeshua being the common denominator that binds the two together.

The Covenantal Continuum construct mandates believers accept the fact the chosen people of G_D were first Hebrews, and then under the auspices of the B’rit Chadasha were all people brought into the fold of G_D through Yeshua. Consequently there is no rationale for a Jew only chosen people construct nor is there a rationale for a Gentile only chosen people construct. Under the eternal covenant all true believers are one/echad with G_D through Yeshua the Messiah.

The Scriptural World View construct declares human history is nothing more than the activities by and of the chosen people of G_D and the interactions with others as divinely declared within Holy Scripture. In the pre-Messiah era, history is defined as the history of the Hebrews. In the post-Messiah era, history is defined as the history of Yeshua’s Gentile Church on Earth.

Because of these various constructs it forced the subsequent review of these Church messages, as well as the doctrinal exegesis, to be performed under the auspices of a Hebraic context. As was seen this was a critical step in being able to strip aside the cultural and traditional trimmings and trappings of the past 2000 years which in essence are non-Hebraic and Gentile in nature.

Still further yet the author did not just create this framework from thin air. This contextual framework was developed using a methodical approach wherein Asia Minor, the Seven Church Communities and John the Apostle were reviewed in first an observational and then a contextual light. It was the author’s position to let any reader understand the source of reasoning or at least follow the thought process.

Although the author will naturally contend the contextual framework is built on a solid foundation, the author of course must defer to the reader with regards to assessing how well or poorly the framework ultimately holds up.

Regarding Yeshua and his Earthly Church playing center stage to the history of modern man, it should be declared with little or no contention that the history of modern mankind has been dramatically forged, for good and bad, by the Church of Messiah. When the broader perspective of Western Christian Culture is taken into account, this historical centrality can be seen as being prominent even to this present day.

The author in no way desires to belittle or ignore the rich and diverse history of the other cultures that influence our world. Ultimately however any conclusion regarding cultural prominence in relation to shaping modern history must account for the overwhelming influence exerted on this World by Western Culture. A culture which is unquestionably rooted in the Church of Yeshua the Messiah and the political vestiges of the Roman Empire!

Ultimately when one views the development of modern history there should be no doubt the role of the chosen people, expanded to include peoples from all nations and historically represented by the Church of Messiah, has been most profound. In fact it cannot be refuted that history as we know it is a direct result of the actions of the chosen people or conversely the reactions by the chosen people in response to those outside the body of Messiah.

Regarding the “Church era message” objective; it is certainly clear the introduction of the contextual framework enables a much different view of these seven communities—first from a collective vantage point and then from a message content vantage point. The application of a Hebraic context as it pertains to evaluating these Seven Church Messages introduces key supporting components which shed much needed light in supporting the “Church era” theme.

The author feels confident, in light of the provided materials contained herein, that the “Church era” prophetic theme is a fundamentally sound and even necessary approach. In the past, other works utilizing a Church era model were unable to stand up to the test of thorough analysis simply because the messages were not viewed in the proper Hebraic and theological contexts. Not so with this work where we see these Church messages neatly fitting into a historic era framework while being supported by the all the clues provided within each of the respective messages.

Furthermore it should be noted the interpretive analysis which ensued was conducted in a manner wherein all components of each individual Church message were reviewed entirely. These reviews were undertaken accounting not just for the historical record but the theological and cultural aspects as well. From the author's perspective this methodology enabled the validation of the respective Church eras in a complete manner. The interpretation did not utilize only selected passages which were complimentary or useful to support a specific historical era affiliation. Essentially this author will not only contend but vow that the interpretive analysis essentially defined the historical periods as opposed to the reverse scenario where a period framework had been established and the interpretation made to fit said framework.

The author would go so far as to contend that the historical interpretive framework defined within this work in all probability could not even have been developed without utilizing the Hebraic root methodology employed by the author.

It should be noted the importance of understanding the theological context contained within the Salutatory Address of Revelations is critical to proper interpretation of the messages. Additionally exposing the meanings of the complex symbolic nature of the Vision of the Son of Man is equally important. By combining the theological context within Revelations with the symbolic context of the Vision components, and applying this framework to the individual messages, it is possible to arrive at a more meaningful and supportable interpretative exegesis.

From a resultant output perspective the messages to the Church of Messiah creates within the author a deep sense of sadness yet exhilaration simultaneously. Sadness because the myth surrounding the Church and the accompanying comfort that comes along with being "right with G_D" for members of the Church is most assuredly negated for most people within the Seven Church Messages.

Surely the author pulled no punches but remained objective in spite of the need to expose glaring failures by Messiah's Earthly Church. When a person opens up their eyes to see the historical record of the Church and then reviews this history within the context of the seven Church

messages, how can one not see the historical record as validating the prophetic revelations by Yeshua?

Needless to say this reality, if recognized, is indeed a disappointing reality. For in this reality the Church of Messiah is a weakening and fading entity. In this reality the true believing body of Messiah represents only a small number of end time people who will be strong enough and blessed enough to “come out” from the bondage of “institutional religion.” From a humanitarian perspective this is indeed a frightening proposition.

As was detailed in this work by analyzing the full realm of integral components; culture, history and theology, the exposure of the failings of the Church of Messiah are not a subjective matter. Nor should there be lingering questions as to how or why this condition developed! At a very early stage in its development the Church of Messiah, for reasons put forth within this work, pursued a cultural and theological path which was premised upon a false belief Yeshua had come and done away with all things Jewish/Hebrew! In essence the opposite was true and this fundamental fault would prove catastrophic to the Gentilized Church of Messiah.

What ultimately must be understood is Yeshua came to fulfill and perfect the foundations of all truth as contained within the Hebrew Tanakh. Naturally this mandated the refutation of much rabbinical tradition by Messiah and most certainly the elimination of the Legalistic Culture which had enveloped Israel.

But incorrectly the Gentile Church of Messiah looked to purge all things associated with the Jews. Like the process of chemotherapy where the treatments kill the good cells as well as the bad, the Church of Messiah purged just about everything! While doing so it failed to recognize the “proper elements” of the Hebrew Religion and ultimately left the developing Church without the foundation upon which the B’rit Chadasha (renewed covenant) had been built by G_D.

Without accepting the valid and eternal nature of the everlasting Hebrew Covenant, the Hebrew Torah and G_D’s ways for man ordained therein, the Church of Messiah was consequently forced to reconstruct the path to G_D. Unfortunately as we can see from Holy Scripture this was

unnecessary but worse yet, with history for support, we can see how this endeavor was greatly influenced by Pagan Gentile Culture as the developing Church systematically removed the vestiges of its Hebraic roots.

Historically we also can see that not only did the Church remove these Hebraic roots but did directly and indirectly systematically engage in persecutions of the Jewish people for many centuries. The net result of these activities created a cultural chasm between what should by design be a cultural unity of Jew and Gentile within Yeshua the Messiah according to Holy Scripture.

Regarding more modern times, a strong case can be made that the Reformation has in many ways created just as many problems for Christianity as it attempted to fix. It must be pointed out however that in all likelihood without the Reformation there would probably not be a serious Hebraic Messianic Movement of which Gentiles are an active component. In essence the great gift of the Reformation was the escape from the shackles of the Gentilized Apostolic Church which was, and is still, in no condition to lead its sheep back to their scripturally ordained roots.

The reader at this point might correctly presume the author was raised in the Western Society and reared in a Christian household—a Roman Catholic household to be more specific! Obviously this work is not in all likelihood going to be viewed in a positive light by most Christians and certainly not by the vast majority of Roman Catholics who may read this work. The author presumes most conventional Jews will not be thrilled as well! But the author's loyalty is to G_D, and the author's responsibility is to his kingdom, not any institution. Subsequently this work does create angst and leave the author disconcerted, but at the same time G_D's plan is simply what it is and no wants or desires by the author, or anyone else for that matter, will change what has been divinely revealed in Holy Scripture.

As for the fully anticipated howl of rejection from those critics who espouse a divergent outcome or interpretation, or those critics who refute the valid prophetic nature of the Church messages, the author can simply state all the cards have been laid on the table. This author assuredly cannot be accused of getting from points A to Z in a mysterious or enigmatic method. There are no secrets, and the author has laid bare the thought process from start to finish. There

have been no historical revision attempts, nor has the author proposed any contradictory theological contentions contrary to Scripture just to make this work generate a desired output.

Ultimately the author may not be correct in all cases or deductions, but potential mistakes are certainly not a result of the process or utilization of information not generally available to anyone willing to perform some basic research.

From a positive perspective the author genuinely believes this work brings to light a truth which has unfortunately been obscured through the contrivances of people for nearly 2000 years. Contrivances rooted in culture, politics and the influences of Satan and his minions who seek the destruction of all people at all costs.

As the author has detailed within this work, the path to enlightenment and salvation is not a path premised upon the intelligence and traditions of mankind. Although it is certainly a path which ultimately must be made by the individual and for the individual, the fact remains it is a path clearly defined by G_D within Holy Scripture and a path which must begin with true faith in Yeshua and result in genuine imbue ment by the Holy Spirit.

Our biggest stumbling block has been getting to the root of this scripturally defined path! Working our way through the contrivances of men and peeling back the onion to get to the root. The author has attempted to do just this within the work and is satisfied the contentions made herein have been made objectively, carefully and without malice.

Still further these contentions are supported within Sacred Scripture and support from any other source the author will add is support quite frankly from an unwanted source.

In approaching these first three chapters of the blessed Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah, the author has made a case this last Divine Word to mankind was much more than an apocalyptic view of the end times. This Revelation in fact represents a prophesied historical path of Yeshua's Earthly Church as well as a "Doctrinal Summary" for G_D's chosen people if one were to recognize it as such.

As the work detailed the theological leads provided to us by G_D, when viewed in the proper Hebraic context, establish definitively in the author's perspective the validity of Holy Hebrew Scripture.

It would seem clear if one were to begin a review of Holy Scripture and start this review from this blessed Revelation, one would in essence be forced to follow the leads provided to the extent where every major point of theological doctrine could be settled. As this work displayed when this process is undertaken one essentially is mandated to review Holy Scripture as a continuum. As a continuum it is then impossible to not see Messiah as integral to the true Hebrew Religion as evident in the Tanakh. Subsequently it is impossible to not see Yeshua and the B'rit Chadasha as the fulfillment or completion of the Hebrew faith.

Ultimately the author finds it quite ironic from a Christian perspective, that in the grand scheme of things, the nature of true faith and practice can be reduced to simply accepting the basic tenets of the Hebrew Religion as ordained by G_D in Scripture alone and applying these tenets under the loving auspices of Yeshua the Messiah.

When the Scriptural Hebrew Religion is viewed in the prospects of Yeshua, and cleansed of all Talmudic Mysticism, Legalistic Doctrine and extraneous traditions, it should be evident the Hebrew faith becomes complete and perfected. Is this not what Yeshua said? Did he not come to fulfill and complete what was lacking, but promised, in the Hebrew faith as depicted in the Tanakh? Did Yeshua not declare that the tenets and principals of the Hebrew faith were valid for all time and for every person?

What is most uplifting is that through the Hebraic Roots movement we are seeing the fulfillment of G_D's grand design. We are seeing the chosen people, Jew and Gentile alike, come together in a manner which is only possible through the perfection of Yeshua the Messiah.

We are seeing history unfold before our very eyes as the Hebrew/Jewish remnant come to terms with their destiny and accept their role as "the light to the nations."

As the figure below depicts, the seat of evangelical authority is once again shifting, this time back from Rome to Israel as the time of the Gentile draws to a close.

What cannot be overlooked as well is the validation of G_D's blessed Revelation in light of historical events. As was detailed in this work the prophetic nature of these Church messages should be considered above suspicion and therefore valid. From a perspective of Scriptural integrity the fulfillment of this prophetic path of Yeshua's Earthly Church should only reinforce a true believer's commitment to the sanctity and infallibility of Sacred Hebrew Scripture. Quite simply the truth is to be found in the Book!

The author whole heartedly exhorts the reader to really digest the positions and arguments put forth in this work. The only reasonable conclusion is the contentions put forth in this work are worthy of consideration when viewed in the context of Scripture and history. The only reasonable explanation is that G_D's plan is eternal, perfect and valid for all people of all ages. It is time for believers in Yeshua the Messiah of Israel to wake up and embrace the reality which has been defined within Sacred Scripture from the beginning of time. Failure to do so will maintain the status quo in which the components of the body of Yeshua the Messiah remain separated over divergent beliefs that in essence are not reflective of the ways G_D has ordained for all people!

When and will we ever as a unified body of Messiah realize the gift of the Holy Spirit is not some fanciful concoction of the religious radicals? When will believers of strong and true conviction, imbued with the Holy Spirit, stop being looked upon as the fringe element, the whacko segment?

Unfortunately Holy Scripture and Yeshua himself declare this will not be a scenario which changes. Consequently it is up to the individual to breach the confines of their cultural and theological heritage so they can grasp the one true heritage; the heritage of the chosen people. A heritage won for us by Yeshua of Nazareth and open to both Jew and Gentile alike.

We all must understand that within various Christian belief systems there inevitably seems to be individuals who overcome the stumbling blocks which have been placed before believers. There

always seem to be persons who through true faith, and nothing else, are gifted with the Holy Spirit. These blessed ones are unmistakable and not hard to recognize. We see from Scripture numerous examples of G_D's mercy and love in blessing believers in similar fashion. Unfortunately we must accept the fact most of us purported believers are not blessed so abundantly. Most of us are in a position where we must prepare ourselves to be a proper sanctuary for the Holy Spirit and strengthen our faith accordingly. For most of us the gift of the Holy Spirit in abundance is a gift which we must seek and find. It is from this perspective the author believes G_D in his love and mercy has provided us with Holy Scripture.

G_D has given us his Sacred Word so we have a tangible guide to see how a believer behaves in response to "in dwelling" by the Holy Spirit. We have a tangible guide which provides wisdom and truth. We have a guide that if utilized helps us travel the straight and narrow path as we walk in the footsteps of Yeshua who showed us the ways of G_D! We should consider Hebrew Scripture then as our map and objectively determine if we as individuals are staying on, or straying off, of the course.

Ultimately the implications of this work may cause the reader to doubt the conviction of one's faith. The reader must understand however that you know if the Holy Spirit is within you or not. There is no mistaking this test for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit provides confidence and shalom (peace and contentment) in a believer predicated upon the: acceptance of grace, commitment to turn away from sin, immersion into G_D's Word, conformance to the sacred commandments, dying to this world and ultimately living a relationship with G_D through Yeshua.

For those who know the Holy Spirit is not within ... or if you indeed do not experience the shalom and joy of the Holy Spirit, you should be concerned but have hope! Our G_D above all things to us humans is a merciful G_D who will accept our genuine repentance in the blink of an eye. Remember while we still breathe there is opportunity for redemption through the blood of Messiah. The author prays earnestly the readers of this work will defy statistics and be counted as one of the remnant! We must take heed of the rebukes Messiah has lovingly provided to us and repent!

As can be seen from the interpretive analysis within this work there should be no denial the prophetic messages to the seven Churches of Asia accurately depict the historical and spiritual path taken by the Earthly Church of Yeshua, the Messiah of all mankind. If the reader can find no way to escape this conclusion there must be the lingering question, what then will be the fate of the Church and the vast numbers of those congregants throughout the Christian world?

The simple answer the author can provide is to tell the reader to delve into the complete Book of Revelations because chapters four through twenty-two provide all the leads and information anyone needs to know regarding the end times.

But then again we have been through much in this work and the author would be remiss if the conclusion did not provide insight into what ultimately befalls Messiah's Earthly Church.

To begin the author will point out the institutional Church as well as the vast majority of Christians essentially represent the Church of Laodicea. It is a dead Church, a dull Church wherein complacency and ignorance abounds and true spirit and faith are lacking. A people who accept the historical reality of Yeshua the Messiah but will not commit to the life which comes with genuine faith! In reality then this purported Christian body of Yeshua is not the true bride awaiting the Groom's return. In reality this Christian body of Yeshua is something else and will in the near future become something far more odious to G_D the most high.

What then will the Church become? Unfortunately a detailed analysis of the complete Book of Revelations would certainly be in order to adequately address this issue and as such cannot be realistically covered within this work. However the author will provide the reader with the short answer.

Ultimately the Gentilized Earthly Church of Messiah, like all other institutional religions not operating under the authority and fullness of the Holy Spirit, will be defiled and adopted into the family of harlots and brought under the wing of MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH in whom the blood of saints, martyrs, prophets and all the slain of the earth could be found.

The reader must realize that socially, Babylon the Great is representative of that union between the religious and secular whose aim is to subjugate people under the serpent. Spiritually, Babylon the Great is that movement which seeks through all means to seduce and defile the peoples of the world so they lose sight of the one true G_D. The great whore of Revelations then is the mother of defilement that is rooted in Babylon and the Chaldean Mysteries.

She is who defiled Judaism, she is who defiled Christianity, and it is she that sits at the base of Islam. It is she who is drunk on the blood of the Hebrew prophets killed long before Yeshua allowed himself to be sacrificed in Jerusalem so that many could be reconciled. It is she who killed the martyrs of Yeshua long before institutional Catholicism was even an idea, and it is she who the blood of all the Earth's slain can be found in.

Contrary to popular opinion then it is clear that Roman Catholicism is not MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Though sitting on seven hills and being a great city of antiquity it is not Rome which is "that great city Babylon." Why not?

We have just seen where Roman Catholicism and the rest of Christianity could be nothing but harlots and not the Mother or whore! We know the anti-Christ will come in the name of the Lord, performing miracles and deceiving the peoples of the Earth with his wondrous works. The son of perdition will come pretending to be the promised Messiah of Israel!

But Christians already know that Yeshua the Messiah has come and that anti-Christ is prophesied to come in his name before Yeshua himself returns. The reader would say there is no chance Christians would be fooled by such a ruse! You dear reader would then be wrong!

2 Thessalonians states: And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the

truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause G_D shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:8–12)

The Gospel of Matthew states: When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Messiah, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Messiahs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matthew 24:15–24)

Additionally we can see in Revelations wherein the adversary will come against those true believers that have both the testimony of Yeshua and keep the commandments ... or in other words are Torah submissive. At such time the lukewarm purported believers will in no way be counted amongst the enemies of the adversary ... and in all probability will be partaking in the persecution of the true believers.

Unfortunately the adherents of faith systems that are not the one true Biblically rooted Hebraic faith system will simply not be able to see through the delusion. In G_D's plan things are quite simple ... there is his Kingdom and then there is "olam hazeh" or Hebrew for "this temporal world". Satan is the ruler of olam hazeh and Mystery Babylon is the vile underpinning of each and every false faith in this world. As Scripture reveals "the dark cannot even comprehend the light" ... as such the ability for people to see through the delusion is strictly a function of G_D's Spirit and by no means will rational logic or intelligence help an individual discern or recognize the truth.

In closing it must be admitted the apostatized Church depicted in Revelations has been a source of confusion and disbelief in all likelihood dating back to Revelation's origin in the first century Ce. Within this work however we have seen how proper contextual development regarding: Asia Minor, the Seven Church Communities and John the Apostle, have shed much light on the historical and spiritual 2,000 year old path of the Church of Messiah. Light which enables us to better understand the wayward nature of the Church and how the Church of Messiah failed to accept the loving and merciful rebukes provided by Yeshua within the seven Church messages contained in Revelations.

Ultimately it is time for the various denominations within the greater umbrella of Christianity to stop looking for the speck in each other's eye and extract the log which resides within their own. It is time for the faithful within all denominations to listen to the call of the Holy Spirit and respond to that troubled heart. It is time for the faithful to put their trust in Yeshua the Messiah the Lord instead of people and wayward traditions. It is time for people to wake up before Yeshua comes upon the world like a thief in the night. It is time to come out from the Church of Laodicea! It is time to come out from Babylon!

Despite some of the more troubling implications raised within this work with respects to the purported body of Messiah and his believers, the sheer prospect that the prophetic revelations from Yeshua about the Earthly church can readily be applied to the historical record over the last 1,900 years is not just astounding but in many ways comforting. The purpose of prophecy is clearly to display G_D's omnipotence so that we people can be assured that our trust in him is warranted ... that we can trust in G_D because he is indeed in control. As such the faithful should not be attempting to ignore G_D's prophecies because we don't like the outcomes but rather look to see in all cases where G_D's prophecies are being fulfilled. Ultimately then this endeavor seeks to validate the prophecies from G_D simply to show his glory and perhaps in doing so provide some benefit by drawing us people closer to him!

The author hopes and prays this work brings praise, glory and honor to the Great and Mighty G_D of Israel, even though he is above all praises and exaltations emanating from Earth and

Heaven. Blessed be forever our G_D MOST HIGH ... the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit ...
our mysterious and awesome G_D!

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Messianic Core Beliefs

There is one ELOHIM ... G_D, having a compound and complex unity. The all-powerful infinite, invisible and unified G_D ... who is Spirit and has not been seen by man and who has revealed himself mysteriously to humanity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Every divine action in the world is accomplished by the Father working through the Son and in the power of the Spirit. This one true and only G_D of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has revealed himself in creation and in the history of Israel as transmitted in Holy Scripture.

G_D is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He created humanity in the divine image to serve as the creation's priest and ruler. G_D's intention for his creation involves a defined order of differentiation, interdependence, and mutual blessing through steadfast reliance upon G_D and adherence to his divine will.

Through the exercise of free will humanity disobeyed G_D, tarnished the divine image, and abandoned the privileged vocation. As a result of this separation all relationships and even creation itself became subject to violence, disorder and decay.

G_D chose Abraham and his seed through Isaac and Jacob ... Israel-the Jewish people, and entered into an everlasting covenant with them so they might be the first fruits of a renewed humanity, who would mediate intercession, blessing and restoration to all the nations of the world. In gracious love, G_D gave to Israel the holy Torah as a covenantal way of life, and the holy Land of Israel as an inheritance and pledge of the blessing of the "world to come". Israel was established by G_D to irrevocably be humanity's instrument of reconciliation and restoration by, in and through Messiah Yeshua.

The Torah is G_D's gift to Israel. It serves first and foremost as G_D's revelation to humanity about himself ... about his righteous and perfect character, then as the constitution of Israel (the Jewish people) ... and finally as the light through which Israel will draw the Nations back to G_D into his Kingdom.

In the fullness of time, the Divine Word (Yeshua) became a human being—the Messiah, a true and perfect Israelite. Yeshua as prophesied was born of a Jewish virgin and was a perfect representative and one-man embodiment of the entire nation of Israel. Yeshua lived as a holy tzaddik (righteous one), fulfilling without blemish the mitzvot (commandments) of the Torah. Yeshua brings to perfection the human expression of the divine image of G_D ... the living Torah.

Yeshua as Messiah died for the redemption of Israel and the atonement of sins of Israel and of the entire world manifesting G_D's awesome mercy and grace. Yeshua was raised bodily from the dead, as the first fruits of the resurrection promised to Israel as its national-kingdom glorification. Yeshua ascended back to heaven and is there enthroned as G_D's right hand as Israel's Messiah, with authority extending over all nations and even unto the ends of creation.

As a result of Yeshua's atoning sacrifice and redemptive mission, G_D poured out the Divine Spirit, through Messiah, on the community of followers, so that they might be joined intimately to the Messiah as his body and become the expression of the renewed covenant fullness promised to Israel. To the early Jewish community G_D as promised added partners from among the nations, who heard the news of G_D's work through Yeshua and responded to the good news with belief, confession of transgressions, repentance (turning away from sin) and testimony to their re-birth in Yeshua thereby being grafted into Israel through Yeshua.

Forgiveness of sins, spiritual renewal, union with Messiah, the empowering and sanctifying presence of the indwelling of Ruach Ha Kodesh (Holy Spirit), and the confident hope of eternal life and a glorious resurrection are now available to all, Jews and Gentiles, who put their faith in Yeshua, the risen Lord! Through obedience to his Word ... submission to the sacred Mitzvot, we are made holy and joined to him and his Body. Yeshua is the eternal mediator between G_D and all creation ... The High Priest, and no one can come to the Father except through him.

Yeshua's community is a single body expressed in diverse forms within the Jewish community and among the nations. All are called to a dedicated life of worship, obedience to the sacred commandments, community service, and public testimony to Yeshua. Unity, Torah

submission and Love throughout the entire community confirm Yeshua's divine mission as the One sent by the Father to reconcile Israel and all Nations with G_D.

Spiritual and temporal life is grounded in godly family units within the relational framework of congregations-communities, whereby persons are to be encouraged, trained, and disciplined. Families in Messianic Jewish congregations should be strengthened and established in their calling to life under the auspices of the everlasting covenant between G_D and Israel.

G_D's Mo'adim/Festivals (appointed Biblical times) were provided to Israel so that his people could function harmoniously in accordance to the times and rhythm of the Creator. The Mo'adim encapsulate G_D's will and plans for humanity and provide the promise and testimony of complete and perfect fulfillment of the entire festival cycle by, through, in and with Messiah Yeshua. The Messianic Jewish community observes and cleaves to G_D's Mo'adim as an expression of faith in, obedience to and inheritance with Messiah Yeshua.

The seventh day (Shabbat) serves as the foundation of G_D's appointed times and represents Israel's greatest of Holy Days. The Messianic Jewish community embraces and cleaves to this irrevocable sign between G_D and the children of Israel forever. Messiah Yeshua is not just Lord of Shabbat but he is indeed the Shabbat ... the memorial of creation and re-creation.

Messiah Yeshua will return to Jerusalem in glory at the end of this age, to rule forever on David's throne. Yeshua will affect the restoration of Israel in fullness, raise the dead, save all who belong to him, judge the wicked not written in the Book of Life who are separated from his presence, and accomplish the final Tikkun Olam (worldly restoration) in which Israel and the nations will be united under Messiah's living Torah rule forever. This restoration will bring everlasting joy for those who belong to him. They will live forever in an order of mutual blessing and fellowship with G_D, in a cosmos perfected beyond description.

The writings of the Tanakh (Genesis-2nd Chronicles) and B'rit Chadasha (Gospel of Matthew-Revelation) are divinely inspired and fully trustworthy (true), a gift given by G_D to his people Israel, provided to impart life and to form, nurture, and guide them in the ways of truth.

They are of supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and practice and represent G_D's Torah to humanity.

The Hebrew tradition serves as the living link that connects contemporary Jews to the biblical past and provides resources needed to develop a Messianic way of life and thought in conformance with the everlasting covenant and the earliest followers of Yeshua.

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