

Back to Biblical Basics

Introduction: The Bible (Latin: Biblio) is a collection of 66 books inspired by the Spirit of God and written down by the men He selected to do so. We must remember that most of the Bible was written down 2 to 3 thousand years ago by Jews for Jews, and is primarily about Israel and the Jewish people. The Bible is absolutely relevant for every person, no matter what his or her racial background or the time in which they live. However to understand the Bible and glean truth from it, it must be read with a Hebraic mindset, not a Greek mindset, which sadly has not been the case for the last 1900 years.

After almost 2000 years of a Greek based understanding of the Bible, we have a situation today where much of the Christian world has little, or wrong understanding of the Scriptures, leading to most of the Church being disinterested in Israel, or even standing against Israel's right to the **Promised Land**, and to the abomination of the tolerance and even support of same sex relationships, even in Church leadership. The return of Yeshua to set up God's Kingdom is not far off and it is time for a change. It is time for a **Paradigm Shift** in the way we read and understand the Bible.

To rightly divide the Word of God and discover Biblical truth we need to read the Bible in the correct context. As I said earlier it is written by Jews about Israel and the Jewish people. Unless we read it in that light we can never know the real meaning of what we are reading. For instance, the passage about giving someone a cup of cold water or washing someone's feet is only relevant if the reader understands the rigors of walking a long distance in the dust and heat of the Middle East.

Another example is, that unless a person understands the **Jewish celebration of Passover**, it is unlikely that he or she can understand the deeper relevance of the **Lord's Supper** or **Communion**.

In his book, Clash of the Kingdoms, Bible translator and teacher Victor Schlatter wrote ...

Unfortunately, most Westerner and not the least, much of the presumed Bible-believing, no-nonsense Christianity within the Western World, have become such scrambled eggs of syncretism into a Hellenistic lifestyle that they are oblivious to the fact that their train has long ago whistled past their station. Sadly, the next stop is not exactly where they had intended to get off !

I believe that is a very true and very serious statement. To follow is my understanding, from a Jewish perspective of the following issues

Who is the God of the Bible ?

What is a Covenant ?

Who is Yeshua ?

What is the 'Trinity' ?

What Does 'Israel' Mean ?

What is the Church ?

The Torah & the Festivals

Who is the God of the Bible ?

Who am I to describe YHVH ? I will let His Word do that: His name in Hebrew is **Yud Hey Vav Hey or YHVH**. (LORD in English Bibles) Because there are no vowels in the ancient scrolls, we can not be sure how that is pronounced. It is most probably **Yehovah** or **Yahvey**.

The word which is used many times in the Bible for God is the Hebrew word **Elohim**, which is the plural form of Eloha (singular meaning God) and is thought to be closely related to El. Elohim can mean masters, judges, nobles, high or exalted ones which does describe **YHVH** (the Creator of the Universe), but **YHVH** is much more than the meaning of Elohim. I dont think we have a word to adequately describe who or what **YHVH** is - in any language. It will most probably remain a mystery until we enter into His Kingdom. We often use the word Trinity or Godhead to refer to God, but at this point of time no human can know or explain to others what exactly is the composition of **YHVH** or God as we call Him.

YHVH is the One and Only Creator of everything that has, is and will ever exist **Genesis 1:1** *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

YHVH is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob **Acts 3:13** *The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*

YHVH is the God of Israel (In German and Swedish Bibles it is written that **YHVH** is Israel's God) **Exodus 5:1** *Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the **LORD God of Israel**: 'Let My people go.*

YHVH is the God and Father of Yeshua the Messiah **Romans 15:6** *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

YHVH is a covenant making God **Genesis 6:18** *But I will establish My covenant with you*

YHVH is a covenant keeping God **Deuteronomy 7:9** *Therefore know that the **LORD your God, is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for thousand generations***

YHVH is our Father in Heaven In **Matthew 5:16** Yeshua prayed ... *Our Father in Heaven*

YHVH is a loving God **Deuteronomy 7:7-8** *The **LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; "but because the **LORD loves you*****

YHVH is a merciful God **1 Chronicles 16:34** *Oh give thanks to the **LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.***

YHVH is a forgiving God **Numbers 14:18** *The **LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression***

YHVH never changes **Malachi 3:6** *For I am the **LORD, I do not change;***

YHVH is a God of war **Exodus 15:3** *The **LORD is a man of war; the **LORD is His name.*****

YHVH is a God of hate **Zech 8:17** *For all these are things that I hate,' says the **LORD.***

YHVH is a God of judgement **1 Samuel 2:10** *The **LORD will judge the ends of the earth.***

YHVH is a God of wrath **Deuteronomy 29:23** *which the **LORD overthrew in His anger and His wrath.'***

YHVH is a consuming fire and a jealous God **Deuteronomy 4:24** *For the **LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.***

Like it or not the God of the Bible is all of the above and more. Yes He is a loving Father, but He is also a consuming fire. Let Hebrews chapter 12 have the last word on this subject **Hebrews 12:28-29** *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire. (NKJ)*

and one more very important thing **YHVH is NOT** the Allah of the Koran

What is a Covenant ?

Hebrews 8:6-7 *But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.* (NKJ)

Most Christians understand that the death and resurrection of Yeshua brings us into the **New Covenant**, but many people don't really know what a **covenant is**. I have been attending services for more than 30 years, now and I can't remember ever hearing a message on this very basic and what should be a very foundational subject.

A **Covenant** is a contract or arrangement between at least 2 parties. The **New Testament** is **NOT** the **New Covenant**. The **New Testament** is the writings about the **New Covenant**. In English the word **testament** or **will** is the legal document to inform others what a deceased person has decided to do with his or her earthly belongings. It is not the belongings, but just a paper document about the belongings. Thus it is correct to call the latter part of the Bible, **The New Testament**, but it is not correct to call it **The New Covenant**. It is the **document** about the **New Covenant**.

These two names are often used to describe the same thing, but they are very different things. A **covenant** is a pledge or promise, like a contract. A **testament** is usually a document that is left behind to make a declaration, like a person's **last will and testament**. We are blessed by the LORD to have been personally invited into the **New Covenant** (**Brit Hadashah** in Hebrew – **Jeremiah 31:31**), sealed by the precious **Blood of Yeshua**.

The New Covenant - I hear many Christians, even pastors, preachers and Bible teachers mixing **New Covenant** and **New Testament** up. To further clarify the confusion, the **New Covenant** is the updated way to be in a **righteous relationship** with **YHVH - the God of Israel**.

The Old Covenant way to be in that relationship was to keep His commandments, and when a person failed or sinned, they would go to the Temple to sacrifice a spotless lamb or goat. The **New Covenant** way to be in relationship with the God of Israel is to do our best to live by His commandments. When we fail or sin, we pray and apply the **Blood of Yeshua**, which makes atonement and maintains our righteous relationship with our **Heavenly Father**. This is the **New Covenant** for Jew and Gentile alike.

The New Testament is the book we have that contains the writings left behind by the authors of the four Gospels, and the letters of Paul and one or two others. There is nothing new in the **New Testament**, which is simply comprised of the four Gospels that tell us about the life and ministry of Yeshua, and the letters which follow, which were primarily written by Paul, a 1st century Jewish rabbi and theologian, to explain the previous **testament** to the new **non-Jewish followers** of the **Jewish Messiah** who are now in a **blood covenant relationship** with the **God of Israel**. Also it is important to understand that the **New Covenant** promises of God, and the **New Testament** writings do not stand alone or apart from what went before. The **New Covenant** is the **replacement and fulfillment** of all the **covenants** that went before, and the **New Testament** is the written testimony of **Yeshua's** life and ministry, and the explanation of what most people call the **Old Testament**, or the earlier part of the Bible.

Sealed by blood. In the past most people groups had some form of covenant and often sealed their covenants with blood. In today's world we like to think we are civilised people and we seal our covenants with a rubber stamp and / or our signature. When we make a purchase of significant value or borrow the money to buy it, we usually have to fill out many forms and the documents are not legal until we sign or rubber stamp it.

The God of Israel does not sign or rubber stamp His covenants. He seals them with **Blood**. That means something has to die to provide the blood, And blood is holy to God because the life of the flesh is in the blood (**Leviticus 17:11**)

It is very easy to break a covenant - ask Neville Chamberlain, the British prime minister who returned home from Germany with a signed pledge of peace from Adolf Hitler - more than 80 million people died as a result of WW 2. Blood sealed covenants are not entered into lightly, and are not so easy to break as they are sealed in the spiritual realm by the blood.

The God of Israel is a covenant making and a covenant keeping God. Deuteronomy 7:9 *Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;* (NKJ)

I pray that this explanation will help many of you to understand these very basic tenants of **true Christianity**, and to realise that we must read and understand the **New Testament** in light of the **Old Testament** and not the other way around as I have often heard it taught by preachers.

Who is Yeshua ?

John 1:1-3 *In the beginning was the Word (Mithra), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.* (Pershitta Aramaic Bible)

Over the centuries there has been and continues to be much discussion, often leading to arguments and worse, over the exact relationship of **God** and **Yeshua**. This is a very controversial subject, and we need to let the Word of God be the only source of where we search for truth. I am not attempting to make a concrete statement of who **Yeshua** truly is, as I am not qualified to do that and, nor do I believe is anyone else, because no human being can not know who and what God is. It is impossible to explain, for He is a mystery, and the incarnation of Yeshua as the Son also remains a mystery.

However the Bible does give us a picture, actually several different pictures of who Yeshua is. Again I am not making a concrete statement, I am just presenting what appears to be the Biblical options. I will leave it to the Word and the Holy Spirit to lead you to the truth. Please keep in mind that all Bibles have less than perfect translations of certain words. Some translations, such as the Shack and the Message, are only paraphrases and should not be regarded as equal to a literal translation. In fact the Shack is blasphemous. In a number of instances, the person making the translation did so from their own perspective of what they want the passage to say. I believe that one of the most accurate New Testament versions is the **ESV** version and I want to recommend that you use this version to check what I am saying in this series. You can also look at the **Pershitta Aramaic Bible**.

So who is the person most people call **Jesus** ?

His real name is **YESHUA** in Hebrew - the meaning of that Hebrew name is **Salvation**. Now let us look at the two main pictures that the **Bible** presents of who **Yeshua** is

Picture # 1: Yeshua is the Son of God but He is not equal to the Father John 14:28 *My Father is greater than I* (Yeshua's own words)

Hebrews 1:1 - 2 *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;* (NKJ)

Hebrews 1:4 - 5 *For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"?*

Yeshua is the image of God the Father Colossians 1:15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

Colossians 2:9 *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;*

Hebrews 1:3 *who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person*

Yeshua is seated at the right hand of the Father Hebrews 1:3 *when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*
Hebrews 8:1 *Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,*

Yeshua is the Lamb of God John 1:29 *Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world !*

Yeshua is the only way to God 1 Timothy 2:5 *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,*

John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

In almost every New Testament reference to the Father and Yeshua, there seems to be a separation between the Father and the Son

Galations 1:1 *Paul, an apostle not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead.*

1 Thessalonians 1:1 *To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

Ephesians 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*

1 Timothy 1:2 *To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Picture # 2: Yeshua is Divine and possesses all of the characteristics and of God. He is the expression of God in the flesh. John 1:1-3 *In the beginning was the Word (Memra in Aramaic), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

John 20:28 *And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"* (NKJ)

Hebrews 1:8-10 *But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions."*

This verses seems to go on to say that **Yeshua** created the Heavens and the Earth **Hebrews 1:10** *You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. (NKJ)*

In **Zechariah 12** verse 8 begins with the **LORD (Hebrew YHVH)**, so it is definately speaking about the Father, but then in verse **YHVH** says that He will pour out a **spirit of grace and supplication** on Israel, but then **YHVH** goes on to say *that they will look upon ME who they pierced and mourn for Him. Zechariah 12:8-10 "In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; verse10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. (NKJ)*

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (NKJ)* This verse seems to me to clearly say that a human baby is born, but the names that are then used to describe the son are all references to the **YHVH**.

Colosians 1:15-19 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, (NKJ)*

Phil 2:5-11 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

So what is my conclusion to the question **Who is Yeshua** ? I can't come to a concise definition. Based on the above verses no one honestly can. I often use the example of a block of ice - apply some heat and you have ice and water. Apply some more heat and you have ice, water and steam - three different elements but all from the exact same substance. One thing I can say with surety is that the God of Isael, the Creator of the Universe, is so limitlessly powerful that He can manifest Himself or appear in any way, shape or form that He desires. There are many instances in the Bible where God appears to varies people in different forms.

That is the best I can do to answer the question

What About the Trinity ?

This subject is closely connected to last weeks issue about the identity of **Yeshua (Jesus)** which the Scriptures seem to indicate that Yeshua is at least the Creative Arm of God.

The issue of the **Trinity** has been a very divisive subject in the Body of Messiah for a very long time. As well as being a controversial issue for the Christian world, the concept of a Triune God is a problem for Jewish people. From childhood we learn to recite the **Shema**, which is the foundational Jewish declaration of faith. "**Shema Yisrael, Adonai Elohienu, Adonai Echad**" - "**Hear O Israel, YHVH our God is One God.**" Because of the way much of the Church has communicated the **Trinity**, most Jews think that Christians worship 3 Gods.

It is important to realise that the word **Trinity** is **not** in the Bible. However several scriptures point to the fact that God seems to have more than one manifestation. The strongest evidence of more than One eternal being is in **Isaiah 48:12-16 (1st person speaking)** "**Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last. Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand up together. (1st person still speaking) I, even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him, I have brought him, and his way will prosper. 1st person still speaking)** "**Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord GOD 2nd person = YHVH the Father) and His Spirit (3rd person) have sent Me.**"(1st person still speaking) Seems to me that the I and the Me is Yeshua.

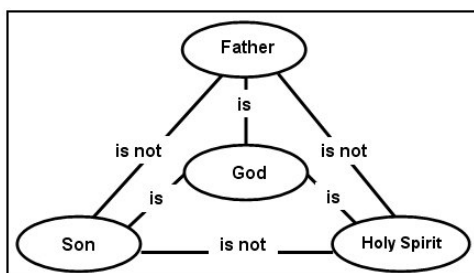
My opinion is that the above scripture and others support the existence of a **Triune God** or **three person God Head**, please note the word **Godhead** is the English translation of the Aramaic / Hebrew word **Elohim**.

But that begs the following questions

- 1/ Are the 3 Eternal Entities different manifestations of the same being ?
- 2/ Are the 3 Eternal Entities independent individuals ?
- 3/ Are the 3 Eternal Entities really persons as we understand that word to mean ?

The quick and easy answer to these questions is **God knows** - in fact **only God knows** - we mere mortals can only speculate as to the makeup of God. And speculate we may, but we should not break fellowship with other Believers over this issue as NO ONE can be sure he or she is right. So let's stay in fellowship with those whose opinions differ from ours and let's get on with the real task at hand **make disciples of Yeshua in every nation**

the following illustration was kindly sent to me by Walter in Calgary Canada - I think it explains God as best as anyone can



What Does 'Israel' Mean ?

Judges 5:3 *Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes! I, even I, will sing to the YHVH; I will sing praise to the God of Israel. (NKJ)*

The **God of the Bible** is the **God of Israel**. There can be no doubt about that as there are hundreds of verses which say that very clearly. However there is much confusion in the Body of Messiah as to what exactly 'Israel' means today. To be able to fully understand the verses which speak about Israel we need to be sure which Israel that particular verse is referring to. I have found **five** different applications of the word 'Israel' in the Scriptures

Israel # 1 = the man Jacob who had his name changed to Israel after he wrestled with the angel **Genesis 32:28** *And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." (NKJ)*

Israel # 2 = the 12 tribes of Jacob - collectively called the 'Jewish People' today . **Genesis 49:28** *All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing. (NKJ)*

Israel # 3 = the Land of Israel The **Land of Israel** should occupy the territory from the **Nile** to the **Euphrates** - **Genesis 15:18** *On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates-- (NKJ)*

Israel # 4 = every Born Again person grafted into the Olive Tree **Romans 11:17** *And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, (NKJ)*

Ephesians 2:19 *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (NKJ)*

Israel # 5 = the yet future, but soon coming Kingdom of God - this final meaning of **Israel** is prophetic as it is still yet to be fulfilled. However the modern state of Israel is the embryonic form of the coming **Kingdom**. **Israel** is still in her unperfected form, but the **Creator of the Universe** - the **God of Israel** is at work to fulfill His promise to restore **His Kingdom** to the Earth, and **Jerusalem** the undivided capital city of **Israel # 3** is the location. **Zechariah 8:3** *"Thus says the LORD: 'I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain.'*

Now when we read the Scriptures that speak about **Israel**, we can be sure that we know exactly which form of **Israel** is being spoken about and can thus more rightly divide the **Word of the Lord**.

One other important point concerning Israel. **Zionism and Zionists** get a lot of bad press these days, but the names '**Israel**' and '**Zion**' are interchangeable - they mean exactly the same thing. **Psalm 149:2** *Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. (NKJ)*

Lets continue to stand with and pray for Israel / Zion - #2, #3, #4 & especially #5

What is "the Church" ?

Matthew 16:18 *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

The first thing we need to realise is that the word '**church**' is not in the original text of the Bible. The Greek word translated into English as '**Church**' is '**Ekklesia**', which means the **called out** or **set apart** ones. For hundreds of years the English-speaking world has used the same word 'church' to describe both the people and the building that the people meet in. In most of the other Latin-based languages the word for the building is different to the word used to describe the people. An even more serious issue, is that almost 2000 years, there has been a division between the words '**Church**' and '**Israel**'. However in the **Bible**, which is the written expression of God's perspective, **Israel** and the **Church** are the same entity. Please read on to discover why I say that

If we consider the very beginnings of faith in the **Messiah, Yeshua of Nazareth**, for the first 100 years the majority of people who believed that He was the Messiah were Jewish people living in Jerusalem or other parts of Israel. They did not cease to be Israelis and it did not cease to be Jewish. In those days they were sometimes referred to as **The Way**, and because they separated themselves from those who did not believe in Yeshua, they were also referred to as **The Called Out Ones** or the **Ekklesia** in Greek. These were the initial followers of Yeshua. Therefore the very foundations of what we call in English today **The Church** were a large number of Jewish people living in Israel who lived through the life, the death and the resurrection of Yeshua, and came out the other side of that believing that He was the Messiah. Then the Jewish apostles and disciples followed the last command that they were given by Yeshua **in Matthew 28**, and went out to make disciples in all of the nations, bringing them into the faith of Israel and the Jewish people.

What I have written in the above paragraph is confirmed in Romans Chapter 11 and Ephesians chapter 2. **Romans 11:17** *And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and became a sharer of the root and the fatness of the olive tree with them,*

Ephesians 2:19 *Now therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,*

From these verses it is clear to see that when anyone enters into a covenant relationship with the God of Israel through the blood of his Son, Yeshua, that person becomes a fully fledged part of Israel. I know that this may sound radical, but I believe that for every true Bible believing Christian, the future and destiny is forever locked together with Israel and the Jewish people.

One of the most dangerous errors in the Church is Replacement Theology which teaches that God had finished with the Jewish people and the Church is now Israel. That is NOT what the Bible says. Over the last 1900 years and even today Churches have been full of people who called themselves Christians, but hate the Jewish people and use the teachings of Replacement Theology to justify their arrogant attitude towards the Jews. Paul gives a very serious warning about this ... **Romans 11:21** *Do not boast against the branches: For if God did not spare the natural branches, do not be arrogant lest He also not spare you either*

I have come up with a new theology it is called **Expansion Theology**. In the times of the **Old Covenant** Israel consisted of the physical descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel, but on

the day that Yeshua died on the cross, and His blood sealed the **New Covenant**, Israel got expanded to every tribe and tongue on the earth. Everyone is invited in, however there is only one door and His name is Yeshua.

As we can see from events taking place in the Middle East in all around us, the time of the second coming of Messiah is getting very close. We need to warn those around us, both believers and unbelievers. Multitudes of people enjoy being in the Church, but the only way for a person to ensure the eternal salvation is to be grafted in to the **Olive Tree (Israel)**. And the only way for Jews and Gentiles to be grafted in, is to accept the blood sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

Torah and the Feasts

Psalm 19:1 *The TORAH of YHVH are perfect, restoring the soul*

This is the final part in the **Back to Biblical Basics** series, and it is perhaps the most controversial of all the subjects I have covered. For almost 2000 years, now one of the most often heard declarations in the Church has been ***we are not under the law, but we are under grace*** ! The first point I want to make is that the Hebrew word **Torah** which is usually translated as **Law**, should be more accurately translated as **instructions**. The **Torah of YHVH** is His perfect instructions for a perfect life. Some time back when I was writing about the issue of the **Torah**, I quoted the title of a booklet written by the leader of a Messianic congregation in the USA. The title of his booklet is "**the Torah is NOT the Law**" and the subtitle is "**the Torah is a set of instructions from a loving Father to His children, to get the best out of their lives**". I believe what King David wrote in the above Psalm, and the title / subtitle of that booklet perfectly sums up what the **Torah** really is about, and should encourage everyone who wants to live a blessed life in the kingdom of God, to do their best to adhere to the instructions of our loving Father. Therefore the **Torah** is the **grace** of the God. And we all need to see it as such.

Basically the instructions contained in the **Torah** cover the three most important areas of our lives

- 1/ our relationship with God**
- 2/ the way we take care of ourselves**
- 3/ the way we treat others**

When **Yeshua** was asked what are two most important commandments, He gave number one and number three is His answer. However he was being very Jewish and actually gave three for the price of two. Although He didn't verbalise it, He was also implying number two, because if we don't know how to take care of ourselves, then we won't know how to take care of others.

On more than one occasion, when I have been discussing the **Torah** with Christians, I have had this response, ***why would you want to put yourself under that again ?*** My reply is always the same, ***if I know a little about nature and character of God who loves me and created me, why would I not want to follow His perfect instructions for my life ? Or as King David said if you want your soul restored, keep the Torah.***

Here are a few more verses

Proverbs 3:1 *My son, forget not my Torah aw; but let your heart keep my commandments; for they shall add length of days, and long life, and peace to you.*

Proverbs 28:7 *Whoever keeps the Torah is a wise son,*

Proverbs 28:9 *He who turns away his ear from hearing the Torah even his prayer is an abomination*

Psalms 119:1 *Blessed are the upright in the way, who walk in the Torah of Jehovah.*

Before anybody accuses me of legalism, I believe that we are not obliged by the **New Covenant** to keep the **Torah**. I think that **Romans 7:1 - 4** makes it very clear ***Or are you ignorant, brothers; for I speak to those who know the Law; that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the married woman was bound by law to the living husband. But if the husband is dead, she is set free from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she is married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress. But if the husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress by becoming another man's wife. So, my brothers, you also have become dead to the law by the body of Christ so that you should be married to Another, even to Him raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God.***

When we were born-again into the **Kingdom of God** and were **Baptised**, we died to our old lives. We are now in preparation to become the Bride of **the Messiah** - doesn't it make sense that we should do our best to live as He lived ? **Yeshua** lived a perfect **Torah** based life. He didn't break even one commandment. And in **Matthew 5:17 - 19**, He tells us that whoever breaks the least of the commandments, will be the least in the **Kingdom of Heaven**, but whoever keeps the commandments will be great in the **Kingdom**.

Two final points to sum it up

1/ we don't keep the **Torah** to be saved, we do our best to keep the **Torah** because we are being saved and looking forward to living in the **Kingdom of God** forever

2/ the more of the **Torah** the I manage to keep, the better my life will be, and a better life will be for everyone around me. This includes the food that we eat or dont eat. And I believe that applies to every person on the Earth. Our **Abba / Creator** knows best and the **Bible** is the **Maker's manual** for living a perfect life. If the whole World lived by the **Torah** it would be Paradise already.

Should We Keep the Biblical Feasts ? **Leviticus 23:2 *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, for these are my feasts.***

I just want to cover the subject of the **Feasts** very briefly they are **not Jewish feasts** they are **God's feasts**. He calls them **His appointed times**. The primary purpose of these **Feasts** is to teach the children about who **YHVH** is, but they are a great teaching tool for adults too. The nature and faithful character of **God** and of His **Son Yeshua**, can be clearly seen through the **Feasts**. The pattern and timing of the **Feasts** is connected to the harvest cycle, and their timing portray the prophetic plan that **God** has for **Israel, the Church, and the World**. As we studying the **Feasts**, we can gain a more accurate picture of where we are in prophetic time, and whe we can expect the second coming of Messiah.

To put it very simply, if we truly desire to live a fully **blessed life** in the **Kingdom of God**, why would we be more interested in following a calendar and the festivals that are not of **His Kingdom** ? Again we are not legally obliged to follow the **Feasts of the Lord**, however I think it's a very good idea.