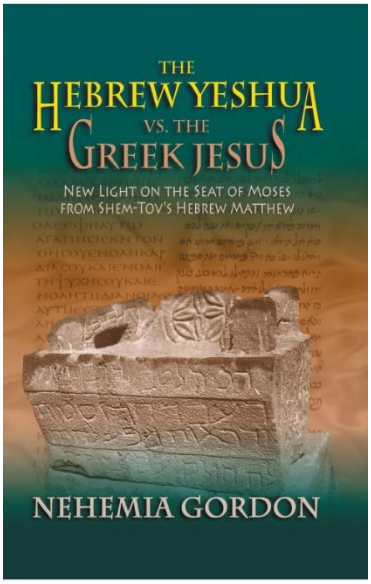
A Study of Matthew 23:2-3 And More

"[2]Saying, **The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: [3]All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe,** *that* **observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not**." (KJV)

In my studies as Abba Yah leads me, I learned about six years ago the real truth about Matthew 23:2-3. It showed me that I cannot always rely upon our Greek manuscripts. At that time I also learned that there is a Hebrew version of the book of Matthew known as "Shem-Tov's Hebrew Matthew." I was unaware that there was any Hebrew versions of any of the New Testament books. Needless to say, I would not be surprised if there are some others out there that have not made it to the main stream.



Nehemia Gordon who is a Karaite Jew lives in Jerusalem. He wrote a book titled *"The Hebrew Yeshua vs. The Greek Jesus—New Light On The Seat Of Moses From Shem-Tov's Hebrew Matthew."* I recently re-read his book and had forgotten the significance of Matthew 23:2-3.

You may be asking yourself "What is a Karaite Jew?" Karaite Jew's are different than the main line Orthodox Jews we are all familiar with these days. A Karaite Jew is one who uses the Tanakh (Old Testament) only. They do not use nor believe in the "Oral Torah" that the Orthodox Jews believe in. Nor do the Karaite's use the Talmud, Mishna or Gemara or any other Jewish writings outside the Tanakh. Karaite means "Scripturalist." They do not believe that the Messiah has come at this point. They, like the Orthodox Jews, are looking for the return of Messiah.

I personally had a chance to meet Nehemia Gordon a few years ago when he came to the Dallas area with Michael Rood. I found Nehemia quite different from some of the Jews I have met and heard about. Some Jews have the attitude that they are better than everyone else and if you are not a Jew, you are a second class citizen. I still love them right where they are even though we have our differences.

After re-reading Nehemia's book, I wanted to pass on to everyone what he wrote in his book. For some of you, you already know this information, but for others this will be new information. Quite interesting and revealing. I encourage everyone who has not purchased Nehemia's book to do so. You may purchase his book or DVD at www.hilkiahpress.com.

The story all started out by a "Torah Keeping Christian" who had some issues with Matthew 23:2-3 and he was given information that he needed to contact Nehemia Gordon on this. So he contacted Nehemia and after a meeting or two Nehemia agreed to look at the text to see what he could find.

As Nehemia compared the Greek translation of Matthew's Gospel to the ancient Hebrew text, he was astonished at the clarity of Yeshua's words in the original Hebrew language. The Greek text contained common 'Hebrew to Greek' translation errors that have caused the words of Yeshua to become critically distorted from what was accurately recorded in Hebrew. Yeshua's brutally

honest and precisely chosen words in the Hebrew version of Matthew are nothing less than revolutionary.

WHATSOEVER THEY BID YOU OBSERVE

I personally checked seventeen different translations I have including Jay P. Green, Sr.'s edition of The Interlinear Bible Greek/English translation and all but one of the translations I have on hand translate these verses the same. Let's take a look at the King James Version of Matthew 23:2-3—

> "[2]Saying, **The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: [3]All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe,** *that* **observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not**." (KJV)

If we take the time to look closely at this text and keep it in context, we will see that we, as believers in Messiah Yeshua/Jesus, are to obey what the scribes and Pharisees tell us to do. Did you catch that? Read it again. Specifically verse 3 "**All** therefore whatsoever **they bid you observe**…" Amazing!!!

The Torah Keeping Christian explained to Nehemia that it appears to him that Yeshua seems to be saying that the Pharisees teach with authority because they sit in "Moses' Seat" as it is written in verse 2. Nehemia stated he was not familiar with this concept of "Moses' Seat" and asked what it meant.

The Torah Keeping Christian explained to Nehemia that there are two main opinions on the meaning of the phrase "Moses' Seat." Some said that in every synagogue there was an actual chair called a "Moses' Seat" in which the leaders of that congregation would sit and teach with authority. The other opinion was that "Moses' Seat" was a figure of speech indicating someone who teaches with the authority of Moses. Either way, the statement that the Pharisees sit in "Moses' Seat" meant that they have some kind of Mosaic authority. The way the text of the Greek version of Matthew is written seems to be saying that the words of the Pharisees should be followed but because of the hypocrisies of the Pharisees, we should not be doing what they do. This makes no sense to me when I read it. Why would I listen to a Pharisee and do as he instructs me and yet not do as he does? I just did not understand why Matthew was telling us this. It looked to me like this may be one of those two faced text that says one thing on one side and another thing on the other side.

I begin to understand a little better when I reflected back upon some of Yeshua's confrontations with the Pharisees in the four Gospels. He came down on them all for obeying their own man-made laws and not being obedient to the Written Torah/Law.

Going back to the Greek Matthew, it is implying that a true believer in Messiah Yeshua would need to do whatever the Pharisees taught in order to faithfully obey Yeshua's instructions. If we stop here and think about this, this would imply that we as true believers in Messiah Yeshua would need to follow all the rules and regulations which the Pharisees invented without any Scriptural backing what so ever. There are many man-made Rabbinic laws that are NOT backed up by Scriptures. These man-made laws are not to be confused with nor do they have anything to do with Yahweh's Written Word, the Torah/Law. We are talking apples and oranges here. Night and day.

Let's take a look at one of these man-made laws the Rabbi's have made up. This will help you understand what I am talking about here.

> This Rabbinic instruction we will first look at is on "how to tie your shoes."

> A person must first put on their right shoe, but not tie it. Then they must put on the left shoe and tie it and then go back and tie the right shoe. (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 2:4)
>
> Rabbi Moshe Isserles who is an Ashkenazie Rabbi added an additional note to the above reference for those who do not wear lace up shoes. He added that the sequence of putting on their shoe is still the same even though there are no laces. The person still must put on the right shoe first and then the left shoe.

I also learned a few years ago that all these "added" man-made laws act like a "fence" around the Torah so no one can break the Torah. When I read this, it immediately reminded me how I have seen and heard others give testimony of this very same thing happening in different Christian Churches. They have made up their own rules and regulations on what can and cannot be done in their churches. How sad! This is the "very" thing Messiah Yeshua spoke against in the Gospels and yet our Christian Churches have not made the connection. I can guarantee you that if Yeshua were here today He would rebuke the Christian Churches like He did the Pharisees because they put more emphasis on their "traditions" than they do in obeying His Absolute Written Word.

Nehemia shared with the Torah Keeping Christian that he understood his dilemma but if this is what Yeshua taught then perhaps he ought to obey the Pharisees. Nehemia stated he did not see what the problem was. Then the Torah Keeping Christian said that when we continue to read the rest of Matthew 23, Yeshua is warning his disciples ***not*** to follow the errors of the Pharisees. For example:

> Matthew 23:13 "**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**." (KJV)

We have to ask ourselves here "Could Messiah Yeshua be instructing us to obey these Pharisees who are clearly shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against all men?"

The Torah Keeping Christian said we need to look at Matthew 23:27 where it is written:

> "**Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead** *men's* **bones, and of all uncleanness**." (KJV)

In this Scripture we see where Yeshua is describing the Pharisees as "**whited sepulchers** (tombs)" which contain every type of unclean thing in them. Could Yeshua really be telling His followers to obey the instructions of those He was calling hypocrites and "**whited sepulchers** (tombs)?"

Nehemia stated here that perhaps Yeshua recognized the Rabbinical prerogative to invent new laws, but on the other hand He was accusing them of not following their own man-made rules. To Nehemia this seemed to be the meaning of the passage in English. The Torah Keeping Christian said there is another reason he had a hard time accepting that Yeshua would instruct his disciples to obey the Pharisees. He pointed Nehemia to Matthew 15 which is the story about the disciples setting down to eat bread and not washing their hands. The Pharisees explained to Yeshua that His disciples were violating the traditions of the elders and Yeshua responded that it was the Pharisees who were violating the Torah by imposing these man-made traditions.

A CONTRADICTION IN THE GREEK MATTHEW?

Nehemia shared with his Torah Keeping Christian that the textural problem was quite clear. In Matthew 15 Yeshua seems to be telling His disciples to stay away from the man-made commandments of the Pharisees while Matthew 23:1-3 he was telling they to obey whatever the Pharisees teach because they sit in the seat of Moses and have his authority.

Nehemia stated that the first "solution" he came across was from a so-called Bible Critic. The Bible Critic said that Matthew 15 was written by an anti-Pharisee disciple of Yeshua while Matthew 23 was written by a pro-Pharisee disciple. Each of these disciples simply heard in Yeshua's words what he wanted to hear based on his own preconceived notions. Nehemia stated he did not rule this out but he was not impressed by it either. Nehemia said this appeared to be more speculation to him than anything else. Nehemia asked himself "Were there really pro-Pharisaic and anti-Pharisaic factions in the early Church?" He said that he has yet to come across any historical documentation to prove that there is any such thing.

Most Christian scholars simply admit that Yeshua could not have meant for His disciples to obey the Pharisees but were unable to offer any plausible explanation of the fact that the book of Matthew attributes these words to Him. Nehemia said he checked the original Greek text for Matthew 23:2-3 and found that the standard English translation had faithfully represented what was written in the Greek.

GREEK OR HEBREW?

Nehemia consulted with some of his colleagues and they told him that some scholars were of the opinion that parts of the first three Gospels of the New Testament were originally written in Hebrew. He asked them why they thought this and he was told "Because they are full of Hebraisms." Nehemia explained once he heard this about the Hebraisms that the Septuagint was translated by very bad translators. Rather than translate the Tanach (Old Covenant/Testament) into proper Greek, they mechanically translated the words leaving behind numerous Hebrew thought patterns. To someone who is familiar with the Tanach in Hebrew this Greek is relatively easy to read. However, to a Classical Greek specialist who expects to find elegant Greek syntax it sounds like gibberish. He also went on to state that in ancient times it was no better.

Very often the translators did not even know what they were reading and created nonsensical sentences by translating word for word. There are two types of translations that I am aware of. One is called "translation" and the other is called "transliteration." The breakdown on these two is as follows:

> **What does "transliterate" mean?**
> "Transliterate" is when you take a word from one language to another which involves "**trans-lettering**." This is taking each corresponding letter from the original language and using the closest sounding letters in the target alphabet to **duplicate the exact sound of the word**. <u>The meaning of the word is not involved in this transliteration process</u>.
>
> **What does "translate" mean?**
> <u>To "**translate**" is to **carry over the meaning or interpretation of any word or phrase** from one language to another</u>. Not sounds but **thoughts and ideas are transferred**. What we might call gibberish or confusion is explained and rendered understandable when the sound from one language is equated with a similar idea or

> concept in another. It does not matter if the sound is written or spoken; the objective of translating a word is to convey or transfer the meaning of the word or concept, not the sound of it.

Nehemia found that numerous Greek copyists who did not know any Hebrew tried to "improve" what was clearly poor Greek. The result was a translation which at times mimics the Hebrew word for word and at other times wildly differs from it.

Nehemia said after a quick perusal of the first three Gospels in Greek he could see they contained some Hebraisms. Certainly not to the same extent as the Septuagint, but they were there. He stated that Blass and Debrunner, the standard grammar of New Testament Greek, explains the situation:

> Many expressions which a Greek would not have used were bound to creep into a faithful translation of a Semitic original.

Blass and Debrunner go on to say that these Semitic expressions are "Aramaisms." Nehemia researched this and discovered there was a long-standing debate among New Testament scholars about whether certain parts of the New Testament (especially Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts and Revelation) were originally written in Aramaic or Hebrew. Those in favor of an Aramaic original were by far the majority but as Nehemia gradually worked his was through the Greek of the first three Gospels he kept running into things like "and it was" which could only be Hebraisms and not Aramaisms. Nehemia noted that in Aramaic this phrase "and it was" is just as much gibberish as it is in Greek.

After several weeks of grueling research, Nehemia was no closer than when he started this project to finding the truth.

Before we move on, I thought you may be interested in knowing what a "Hebraism" is. According to the Mirriam-Webster Online Dictionary (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hebraism), a "Hebraism" is "a characteristic feature of Hebrew occurring in another language. The thought, spirit, or practice of the Hebrews. A moral theory or emphasis attributed to the Hebrews."

SHEM-TOV's HEBREW MATTHEW

When Nehemia learned that there is a Hebrew version of Matthew, he went to the Hebrew University library on Mt. Scopus and found a book titled "The Gospel of Matthew according to a Primitive Hebrew Text" written by George Howard who is a competent American scholar. In this book, Nehemia found that it is an English translation of the Hebrew text and it contains linguistic and textural studies.

George Howard explained in his book that this version of the book of Matthew had been preserved by a 14th Century Spanish Jew named Shem-Tov Ibn Shaprut. This Hebrew version of Matthew is not to be confused with the *Ba'al Shem-Tov*, the Rabbinical "miracle worker" who founded *Hasidism* in the 18th Century; the Shem-Tov that preserved the Hebrew version of Matthew lived 400 years earlier. This 14th Century Shem-Tov lived in Spain during the Inquisition. This period was marked by the *Disputatio*, or in English "Disputations." These Disputations were public debates forced on the Jewish people by Catholic oppressors.

To understand what one of these Disputations might have been, we can use the example of a Catholic bishop sending his storm troopers into a nearby Synagogue and dragging the local rabbi into the public square. Then the rabbi would be forced to defend the Jewish faith on the spot. If the rabbi lost, the local Jewish population could be forcibly converted to Catholicism. If he won,

he could be charged with insulting the Catholic religion and be forced to flee for his life. The Disputation was really a no-win situation. Most Jews would agree that becoming a refugee is preferable to being forcibly converted to Catholicism.

Needless to say, the Catholic Church was anything but understanding. They had it all figured out according to their "dogma" teachings and understandings. Some of their teachings/doctrines are pure man-made. Scripture does not validate those teachings, yet they still hold fast to their "dogma."

Nehemia found that in the 1980's George Howard of Mercer University in Georgia had carried out a detailed linguistic study in which he showed that there were parts of the Shem-Tov's Hebrew Matthew which could not have been easily explained as being translated from Greek. One of the things Howard found in the Hebrew Matthew is "word puns." A *word pun* is a play on words that build on similar sounding Hebrew roots used multiple times with different meanings. These *word puns* are common throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. In Nehemia's book he gives several examples you can understand from the Scriptures.

There is other evidence besides *word puns* which seem to support a Hebrew original. In some instances it seems as if the Greek Matthew does not make sense or presents a difficult reading while Shem-Tov's Hebrew Matthew makes perfect sense. For example: In the Greek it says "For all the prophets **until** John." (Matthew 11:13, KJV, Emphasis mine.) If we were Shem-Tov writing an argument against Catholic Christianity, we would have brought this among other verses as our first argument. Here in black and white the Greek Matthew says that the Old Testament (Hebrew Tanach) was not talking about Yeshua; the Tanach only prophesied up until John the Baptist while Yeshua's ministry was not foretold by the Tanach. That's what it says in the Greek Matthew! The Hebrew Matthew has a slightly but highly significant change. The Hebrew says "For all the prophets and the Torah spoke **concerning** John." (Hebrew Matthew 11:13, Emphasis mine.) It is obvious that the Hebrew Matthew makes far more sense than the Greek version does. What the Hebrew Matthew is saying is that throughout the Tanach (Old Testament) there are references to a prophet such as John the Baptist. One could also point to Malachi's final prophecy as an example.

Moses' Seat

In the Greek, the words "until" and "concerning" are substantially different but in Hebrew the difference is only one single letter. So, if Shem-Tov's Hebrew Matthew were just a translation from Greek, then the Greek text on which it was based had a substantially different reading from the Greek Matthew known today. If the Shem-Tov Hebrew Matthew is just a translation from the Greek, why would the Hebrew translation make more sense than the Greek original? It would have been in Shem-Tov's interest to have preserved this Greek reading which lays the groundwork for a solid argument against Catholicism, which was his stated goal. There is far more to this story in Nehemia's book.

MOSES' SEAT

When we look at the Greek version translated into English of Matthew 23:2-3, it reads:

> "[2]Saying, **The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: [3]All therefore whatsoever <u>they</u> bid you observe,** *that* **observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not**." (KJV, Emphasis mine.)

However, when Nehemia read the Hebrew version translated into English of the same verses, it reads:

> "[2]Saying, **The Pharisees and sages sit upon the seat of Moses: [3]Therefore, all that <u>he</u> says to you, diligently do, but according to <u>their</u> reforms** (takanot) **and <u>their</u> precedents** (ma'asim) **do not do, because <u>they</u> talk but they do not do**." (Shem-Tov's Hebrew Matthew, Emphasis mine.)

There are four general classifications of Rabbinic "oral" law systems. They are as follows:

1. **Halacha** (Rabbinic): A law or laws derived directly from a manipulated interpretation of Scripture (*midrash*/discussion) or Rabbinic logic that oftentimes uses a proprietary series of filters from one or more of the many interpretation rules built on the seven rules of Hillel.

2. **Minhagim**: Customs are traditions enacted as law. This is built on the axiom, "minhag Yisrael torah hi" (a custom in Israel is Torah). The line is blurred between Rabbinic halacha (way of life) and minhag (custom).

3. **Takanot and Gezerot**: Enactments and decrees of the Rabbis, invented out of thin air, with no Scriptural justification. Simply, new religious laws framed with the authority of the oral law; an unabashed violation of Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:32

   Deuteronomy 4:2 "**<u>Do not add to the Word</u>** which I (Yahweh) command you, and **<u>do not take away from it</u>**, so as to guard the commands of יהוה (Yahweh) your Elohim (God) which I am commanding you." (The Scriptures Translation—Also see Proverbs 30:6 and Revelation 22:18-19.) [Emphasis mine.]

   Deuteronomy 12:32 "All the words I (Yahweh) am commanding you, guard to do it – **<u>do not add to it nor take away from it</u>**." (The Scriptures Translation—Also see Proverbs 30:6 and Revelation 22:18-19.) [Emphasis mine.]

4. **Ma'asim**: The deeds or actions of Rabbis or sages, justifying how a tradition should be observed—the practicality of observance. The *ma'asim* (works) were derived from stories, incidents, and actions of Rabbis, not Scripture, making the *ma'asim* a source for new laws.

I thought it important to add this piece of information because some of you who will be reading this know about this and others have never heard of this or even know anything about it. This is the benefit of trying to learn what the Rabbi's are thinking and how they have developed their own man-made rules of do's and don'ts.

Moving forward. In the Hebrew Matthew, Yeshua is telling His disciples *not* to obey the Pharisees. If their claim to authority is that they sit in *Moses' Seat*, **<u>then diligently do as Moses says</u>!**

To understand what has happened here, we must compare the Hebrew with the Greek. In the Greek, the disciples were commanded to obey "all that **<u>they</u>** (the Pharisees) say," but in the Hebrew, this is a difference of only one single letter! In Hebrew, "he says" is *yomar* rmay while "they say" is

yomru wrmay. The only difference between the two in an un-pointed Hebrew text is the addition of the extra *vav* w in *yomru* wrmay "they say." This one little letter changes Yeshua's message from an instruction to obey Moses ("all that **he** says") to a commandment to obey the Pharisees ("all that **they** say"). What this tells us is the Greek translator misread the Hebrew text and thus he added the extra *vav* w and thus it changed the meaning of the text from what it originally started out being.

So, we can see that Yeshua was warning His disciples not to follow the *takanot* (Enactments and Decrees of the Rabbis) or man-made laws of the Rabbis. This is consistent with what Yeshua taught in Matthew 15:3, 6:

> "[3]**Why do ye also transgress the commandments of God by your traditions? …**
> [6]**ye made the commandments of God of none effect by your tradition**." (KJV)

Interestingly, in the Hebrew of Matthew 15:3 the word translated as "tradition" is also *takanot*, "reforms that change biblical law!" So in the Hebrew Matthew there is a consistent thread throughout the book. Yeshua is preaching against the *takanot*, the Pharisaic reforms that change biblical law.

In the Greek Matthew 15:8-9 Yeshua then accuses the Pharisees of "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," supposedly a quote from Isaiah 29:13. However, this is not exactly what Isaiah says. Isaiah actually talks about "learning commandments of men." The Hebrew Matthew has the precise quote from Isaiah, word for word which says "learned commandments of men."

The other thing Yeshua is said to have warned His disciples about in the Hebrew Matthew is the *ma'asim* of the Pharisees. According to the Jastrow Dictionary, *ma'asim* are "precedents" or to be more precise, **acts or deeds that serve as precedents**. The concept of *ma'asim* is unique to Pharisaic Judaism. It is not surprising that the Greek translator of Matthew had no idea what it was referring to so he translated it literally as *erga* "actions or works." But Yeshua was talking about the *ma'asim* of the Pharisees which is something very specific. When a Pharisee does not know the law (we are talking about the Rabbinic oral law and not the Law of Moses here) in a particular situation he looks for a precedent from one of his teachers. The Pharisees reason that if one of their teachers did a certain act it must be what the Oral Law requires. This is called a *ma'aseh* or in plural *ma'ahim* "precedents." This concept is canonized in the Talmudic rule *ma'aseh rav* "precedent is a teacher" (*Babylonian Talmud*, Sabbath 21a). The Talmud cites numerous *ma'asim* from which practical laws are derived.

Learning precedents from the actions of the Rabbis is a "standard" method used by the Rabbis to derive religious law. There is no need for biblical proof in their mind because the Rabbinic precedent is even better according to them. They have given themselves power to make up laws as they so choose regardless if it is backed up by Scripture. Scripture is not a major factor when they make up these man-made laws. How sad!!!

According to the Hebrew Matthew, Yeshua is warning His disciples **not** to look to the *ma'asim*, the precedents to follow the *takanot*, the invented laws of the Rabbis. Instead, they are to **listen to what Moses says**, because after all the Rabbinic authority "claims" that they have this authority because they sit in Moses' Seat. This is reminiscent of the teaching concerning the coin with the picture of Caesar on it noted in Matthew 22:20-21. If it is Caesar's coin, give it to Caesar. If it is Moses' Seat, do what Moses says.

THEY TALK BUT THEY DO NOT DO

Now we will take a look at the last few words in Matthew 23:3 where it is written:

> …but according to their reforms (*takanot*) do not do, **because they talk but they do not do** (Hebrew Matthew version, Emphasis mine.)

What did Yeshua mean when He said "they do not do?" What is it that they do not do? Nehemia kept asking himself these questions thinking there is something missing here. Then the light bulb came on. He remembered the story about the Samaritans that is told in 2 Kings 17. When the Babylonian Gentiles first settled in Samaria they were stricken by a series of lion attacks. They asked the king of Assyria to send them a priest from the exiled Israelites to pay homage to the local god. This priest was of course one of those evil priests who had served at the high-places which was one of the great sins of the northern tribes ever since the time of Jeroboam (2 Kings 17:21-23). But at least this priest brought a copy of the Torah with him and began to teach the Samaritans about Yahweh. In the end, the Samaritans worshipped Yahweh while at the same time worshipping their foreign ancestral gods (2 Kings 17:28-21).

The way 2 Kings 17:34 is structured in Hebrew is it lays emphasis on the Samaritans doing "according to **their** statutes and **their** judgments" but "they do not do" according to the Torah. When Nehemia saw this, he knew he had found the solution to Matthew 23:3. Both verses had this seemingly inexplicable phrase "they do not do" which did not seem to fit. But it did fit when 2 Kings 17:34 was finally understood with correct Hebrew syntax. Yeshua was echoing the special style of 2 Kings 17:34 when He said about the Pharisees, "but according to their reforms (*takanot*) and their precedents (*ma'asim*) do not do, because they talk but they do not do" (Hebrew Matthew 23:3). 2 Kings 17:34 records a very similar thing about the Samaritans who follow "their statutes and their judgments" but "do not do" Torah. **Yeshua was saying that like the Samaritans of old, the Pharisees have their own statutes and judgments which they follow, while at the same time they talk Torah but they do not do Torah**. To emphasize this, Yeshua borrowed this unique phrase from 2 Kings 17:34 talking about the sins of the Samaritans and applied this to the Pharisees.

THE TORAH—WAS IT "NAILED" TO THE CROSS?

We must stop and ask ourselves this question "If Yeshua came to do away with the Torah, Yahweh's Teachings and Instructions, then how did this fit in with the "For I assure you: **Until heaven and earth pass away**, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass from the law (Torah) until all things are accomplished" (Holeman Christian Standard Bible Translation, Emphasis mine.) passage in Matthew 5:18, which clearly upholds the minutest points of Torah?" Why do ministers in Christianity teach this when the written text "clearly" teaches us that "not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass from the law (Torah) until all things are accomplished?" This is something we all need to stop and strongly consider. We know that the earth and heavens have not passed away at this point. So, why in the world would we believe those who teach us that the "Law" has been done away with? We, not your pastor, Christian Theologian or TV Evangelist, are responsible for what we "receive," i.e….listen to and apply to our daily walk with Him. When we stand before the Great I AM on Judgment Day there will only be you before Him. You will not have your pastor whom you "believed" to back you up. He will say to you "*My child, you had my Written Word with you and yet you chose not to listen to Me by reading My Word but chose to listen to man and blindly receive what he taught you without reading My Word.*" We do not take the time to stop and realize when we hear those teaching that the "Law" has been

done away with or that it (the Law) was nailed to the cross is that those who teach this are saying that Yeshua is a liar.

The "only" thing that was nailed to the cross is the law of sin and death. Nothing more and nothing less.

Today, nearly two thousand years after the death and resurrection of Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus), most ministers and theologians would have you believe that the "Law" (Torah) was nailed to the cross. They teach that we are at liberty from the Law since we are now under grace. Scriptures such as Romans 3:28 are used to show you "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law," and others such as Romans 6:14 which states that "…ye are not under the law, but under grace." Can it be true that the Law was indeed nailed to the cross?

PROPHECY CONCERNING MESSIAH

If indeed this is true, then why did Yahweh prophesy by the mouth of Isaiah approximately seven hundred years before Messiah the following:

Isaiah 42:1-4 "[1]See, My Servant whom I (Yahweh) uphold, My Chosen One (Messiah Yeshua) My being has delighted in! I have put My Spirit upon Him (Yeshua); He brings forth right-ruling (judgment) to the nations. [2]He (Yeshua) does not cry out, nor lifts up His voice, nor causes His voice to be heard in the street. [3]A crushed reed He (Yeshua) does not break, and smoking flax He does not quench. He brings forth right-ruling (judgment) in accordance with truth (established in My Written Word—Torah). [4]He (Yeshua) does not become weak or crushed, until He has established right-ruling (judgment) in the earth. And the coastlands wait for His Torah (Teachings and Instructions)." (The Scriptures Translation, Emphasis mine.)

How could the Law have been magnified and made honorable IF it was nailed to the cross and abolished?

To further complicate this question, we must contend with another prophecy also. This one was given by the prophet Daniel over five hundred years before Messiah came to earth. Archangel Gabriel stated that "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (Israel) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem) to FINISH the transgression, and to make an END of sins,…" (Daniel 9:24, KJV).

It is known from 1 John 3:4 that sin is defined as the breaking of Yahweh's Teachings and Instructions known to most as "The Law" because "whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law (Torah): for **SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW**." (KJV, Emphasis mine.) This means that the Torah/Law would have to continue for at least seventy prophetic weeks, since without the Torah/Law there would be no sin. (Romans 4:15)

Going back now to Daniel's prophecy, he states that it will take seventy prophetic weeks to make an end of sins. He further mentions that we are to "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem UNTO THE MESSIAH the Prince shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks…" (a total of 69 weeks). (Daniel 9:25, KJV) [Emphasis mine.]

THE FULFILLMENT OF DANIEL'S PROPHECY

Messiah Yeshua did this when He died upon the stake/cross. He was our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7; John 1:29). There is no need any more to sacrifice animals. "[12]Neither by the

blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He (Yeshua) entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained Eternal Redemption for us. [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: [14]How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? [15]And for this cause He is The Mediator of the new testament (Covenant), that by means of death for the redemption of the TRANSGRESSIONS that were under the first testament (Covenant), they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." (Hebrews 9:12-15, KJV) [Emphasis mine.]

TO FULFILL THE TORAH/LAW (Yahweh's Teachings and Instructions)

Does this make an end of sins? Some would have you believe that the "Law" was fulfilled here (meaning that the Law had ended here). They quote the last part of verse 17 of Matthew Chapter 5 where it is written:

> "I am not come to destroy (the law) BUT TO FULFILL." (KJV, Emphasis mine.)

What is meant by Yeshua's statement "but to fulfill?" The answer is given in Romans 8:3-4:

> "[3]For what the Torah (Law) could not do by itself, because it lacked the power to make the old nature (of mankind) cooperate, God did by sending His own Son as a human being with a nature like our own sinful one [but without sin]. God did this in order to deal with sin, and in so doing He (Yahweh) executed the punishment against sin in human nature, [4]so that the **Just Requirement** (Righteousness) of the Torah (Yahweh's Teachings and Instructions) might be FULFILLED IN US…" (Complete Jewish Bible Translation, Emphasis mine.)

Because of the weakness of our flesh, we could not obtain eternal life; but only eternal death "For **ALL** have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23, KJV) [Emphasis mine.]

But because Yeshua/Jesus was able to live a perfect life without sin, He was able to claim Eternal Life, something that no one else was able to do. This He did so that we could have eternal life also, saving us from the penalty of sin which is death. "Therefore, there is no longer any condemnation (criticism, disapproval, denunciation, blame) awaiting those WHO ARE IN UNION (obedient to keeping the Torah/Law) WITH the Messiah Yeshua." (Romans.8:1, Complete Jewish Bible Translation) [Emphasis mine.]

Notice that our redemption from the Torah/Law of sin **IS NOT** unconditional. It clearly states here that there is no condemnation to them who "**walk not after the flesh**." Paul continues again on this point in verse 4 of the same chapter saying that "the righteousness of the law (Torah) might be fulfilled in us. WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, but after the spirit." (KJV, Emphasis mine.)

THE PURPOSE OF THE TORAH/LAW

Many people who believe that the Torah/Law was nailed to the cross "think" that the Law was very harsh and cruel bringing death to all those who lived in them. They fail to recognize the purpose, which the Torah/Law serves. In Paul's writings to the Galatians he mentions that "the law was OUR schoolmaster to bring US to Christ…" (Galatians 3:24, KJV) [Emphasis mine.]

Before a person knows any of Yahweh's truths, he lives a life "contrary" to the Torah/Laws of Almighty Yahweh, since the carnal (unconverted) mind is enmity (hostile, hate, antagonism, bad

feeling) against Yahweh (Romans 8:7). In fact, the things concerning the Spirit of Yahweh "are foolishness unto him" (1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV). A person does not even realize that he/she is committing sins against Yahweh until they become aware of the fact that there is an existing Teaching and Instruction/Law that defines sin, "for by the law (Torah) is the **knowledge of sin**" (Romans 3:20, KJV). [Emphasis mine.] Once a person does realize that the Torah/Law of Yahweh exists, he/she then knows that they have committed various sins against Yahweh, and that he/she (the person) carries the death penalty. It is a shocking realization. This is the reason why Paul writes that "we know that what things soever the law (Torah) saith, it saith to them who are under the law (to them who are under the penalty of death): THAT EVERY MOUTH MAY BE STOPPED and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:19, KJV) [Emphasis mine.]

A WAY OF ESCAPE

After a person receives this knowledge, he/she then has to realize that the only way that they can have the penalty of death removed from them is to repent of their sins, be baptized (Hebrew-Mikvah-immerse), and receive the Spirit of Yahweh. He/she should then continue to observe the commandments of Yahweh the best he/she knows how to based on their reading and studying His Written Word and most importantly by the guidance by the Set-Apart (Holy) Spirit dwelling in you. (Matthew 28:19-20 and Luke 24:47).

Since a person can have the death penalty removed ONLY by accepting the sacrifice of Messiah Yeshua, and since everyone has committed sins and carries the death sentence, it can easily be seen why Paul writes "[23]For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [24]Being justified freely by His (Yahweh's) grace through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus: [25]Whom God hath set forth *to be* a Propitiation through faith in His (Yeshua's) blood to declare His Righteousness for the remission of sins that ARE PAST through the forbearance of God; [26]to declare *I say*, at this time His Righteousness: that He might be just, and The Justifier of him (mankind) which believeth in Jesus. [27]Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. [28]Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:23-28, KJV). [Emphasis mine.] Paul continues in verse 31 of the same chapter "Do we then make VOID (make powerless, no good) the law (Torah) through faith? GOD FORBID: YES, **WE ESTABLISH THE LAW**." [Emphasis mine.] Yes indeed, we do in fact establish the Torah/Law of Almighty Yahweh because before we knew the truth we did not keep the Torah/Law. We did not realize the Torah/Law existed.

DOES THE LAW CONTINUE?

Unfortunately, many good people are misled into "thinking" that once they receive Yahweh's sacrifice of His Only Begotten Son Messiah Yeshua/Jesus for the redemption of their sins that they then have the right to live any way they want to since their past and future sins will be forgiven unconditionally. The error is made because of their "assumptions" that the Torah/Law was nailed to the stake/cross and done away with. Actually, "The Messiah redeemed us from the CURSE pronounced in the Torah by becoming cursed on our behalf; for the Tanakh (see Deuteronomy 21:23) says, 'Everyone who hangs from a stake comes under a curse.' " (Galatians 3:13, Complete Jewish Bible Translation) [Emphasis mine.]

Even though we are redeemed from the "curse" of the Torah/Law which results in death and we have the Spirit of Yahweh, this in no way nullifies Yahweh's Teachings and Instructions He has given us in His Torah/Law. The Torah is and always will be with us. It is not going away regardless

of who teaches this. "Know ye not, brethren (FOR I SPEAK TO THEM THAT KNOW THE LAW) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" (Romans 7:1, KJV). [Emphasis mine.] So, you can see here, this is not my opinion but it is His Absolute Word here where He is clearly telling us that His Torah will be with us as long as we live. Beware of those who teach you differently that what is "plainly" written in His Word.

But thanks be to our loving Father in Heaven, His grace/favor also reigns as long as man lives, for "where sin abounded, grace (favor) did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:20-21, KJV). [Emphasis mine.]

MUST WE KEEP THE LAW?

It is very important to notice that the apostle Paul states here that "grace reign THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS unto eternal life…." (Romans 5:21, KJV, Emphasis mine.) Eternal life is a gift that we receive from Yahweh. **It is conditional**. Contrary to common teaching, we do NOT have eternal life inherent within ourselves. One of the last warnings given to us in the Scriptures is found in Revelation 22:14 where it is written: "Blessed are they that **DO HIS COMMANDMENTS**, that they may have the **RIGHT** to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (KJV, Emphasis mine.)

It is interesting to note that the original Greek word which was translated in the above verse as RIGHT was translated as such only two times in the New Covenant/Testament. However, it was translated 29 times as "authority" and 69 times as "power". This means that this particular verse could just as easily have been translated, "Blessed are they that do His Commandments, that they may have the AUTHORITY OR POWER to the tree of life."

We are also warned that "if we sin (break Yahweh's Torah/Law) willfully AFTER that we have received the knowledge of the Truth there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." (Hebrews 10:26, KJV) [Emphasis mine.]

HOW ARE WE SAVED?

We should also understand that no one can keep all of Yahweh's Teachings and Instructions/Law perfectly. This is why we are not saved by OUR righteousness, but Yahweh's righteousness. This is also why it can be said that we are saved by grace and not by keeping the Torah/Law. **HOWEVER**, this does not give us the right to continue to live in sin.

We are like a criminal that has been given a pardon. He is free to go into society again as long as he continues to obey the laws. But if he again breaks the laws, he will find himself back in prison.

Once we have come to see the knowledge of the truth and are led into repentance and baptism, we are then "pardoned" from the death penalty. We are then to 'go unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works…" (Hebrews 6:1, KJV). Paul further elaborates on this subject in Romans 6:18 when he says that "Being then made free from sin, ye become the SERVANTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS."

IN CONCLUSION TO "THE TORAH—WAS IT "*NAILED*" TO THE CROSS?"

The final outcome of sin is death (Romans 6:23); and this will be the last enemy to be done away with (1 Corinthians 15:26). If death is done away with, then sin will be no more. Since sin **IS** the

cause of death, this will mark the completeness of Daniel's prophecy where he stated the finishing of "transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity (Lawlessness/Torahlessness), and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy" (Daniel 9:24, KJV).

This will be the finalizing of the Kingdom of Yahweh when only the BORN sons of Almighty Yahweh will exist, and we can sin no more (1 John 3:9).

Then it can truly be said: "[55]O Death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your overcoming? [56]And the sting of death is the sin, and the power of the sin is the Torah. [57]But thanks to Elohim who gives us the overcoming through our Master יהושע (Yeshua) Messiah." (1 Corinthians 15:55-57, The Scriptures Translation).

> 1 Samuel 15:23 "**For rebellion is as the sin of divination** (witchcraft/ sorcery), **and stubbornness is as wickedness** (iniquity) **and idolatry. Because you have rejected the Word of יהוה** (Yahweh)**, He also does reject you as sovereign.**"
> (The Scriptures Translation)

YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID

We have all been taught and have heard taught that we are not to "swear" because the Bible teaches us this. What we want to do at this point is take a look at this more closely to see if in fact we are commanded not to swear. I believe you will be surprised as I was when I learned this recently.

We will first start off by looking at Matthew 5:33-37 "[33]**Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'** [34]**But I** (Yeshua) **say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;** [35]**nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.** [36]**Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.** [37]**But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.**" (NKJV) [Emphasis mine.]

As we can see here the "Greek Jesus" was very clearly saying not to make vows but only to say "yes" or "no."

Before we can dive in here, it will be necessary to lay a foundation so it will all come together at the end and make sense.

We will start my taking a look at Exodus 3:15 where it is written "And God said moreover unto Moses, **Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD** (**יהוה** [Yahweh]) **God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me** (Moses) **unto you** (Israel)**: this is My Name for ever, and this is My Memorial unto all generations.**" (KJV, Emphasis mine.)

As we see here in this verse the King James translation has LORD where it should have been translated as **יהוה** or Yahweh. I understand there are other variations of the spelling and pronunciation of our Heavenly Father's Name and we will not get into this here. I have learned that He has given us what He wants us to call Him by. Thus, He honors all these variations by which we are addressing Him. So, we need not get all hung-up in how we write His Name nor how we pronounce His Name. There is coming a day in which He will give us a pure tongue (language)

so that we will be able to speak His Name correctly. Until then, we are to do the best we know how until Messiah comes.

When we say "Lord, God, Master" or any of His other "titles," we are not speaking His Name, but rather one of His titles. Even in Orthodox Judaism and in some Messianic Jewish groups they will not speak His Name even though the Hebrew text clearly has **יהוה,** they will say Adonai which translated is Mighty One or Lord. How sad! This brings to mind Jeremiah 5:21 "Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:" (KJV) We cannot point our finger only toward the Jewish people because if we look closely, we will see there are three fingers pointing back at us. Those of us who do not use His Name are just as guilty as the Orthodox Jews and some Messianic Jewish groups are. We need to be speaking His Name more, not less. If your Bible translation has "LORD" or "GOD" replace it with Yahweh. A good study Bible will tell you up front that they have chosen to use LORD and GOD in place of using His Name. It baffles me why they have done this. There are many today who are using His Name to try to restore what has been lost for many years. It is time we get back to His basics of doing things His Way and not our own way.

Have you even thought about the part in Exodus 3:15 where it says "**My Memorial unto all generations?**" On the surface it sounds like it is saying that Yahweh is dead that He has a "memorial!" This is what we "think" of when we hear the term "memorial." The Hebrew word for memorial is usually translated *zeker* (Strong's #H2143). This word comes from the root of *zakar* (Strong's #H2142) which actually has a broader meaning than simply "memorial." It means "to refer to something" either with the mind ("remember/memorial") or with the mouth ("mention"). The same exact root appears in Exodus 23:13, which says, "...make no **mention** (*zakar* – Strong's #H2142) of the name of other mighty ones (gods), let it not be heard from your mouth." (KJV, Emphasis mine.) In Exodus 3:15 it really says "this is My Name for ever, this is my **mention**, from generation to generation." This means we are "required" by Scripture to **mention** Him by His eternal Name Yahweh! This fits with the "explicit commandment" to swear by the Name Yahweh. For example: In Deuteronomy 6:13 it is written "You shall fear the LORD (Yahweh) your God and serve Him, **and shall take oaths** (swear--*shaba* Strong's #H7650) **in His Name**." (NKJV, Emphasis mine.) This is a clear and explicit commandment to make oaths in the Name of Yahweh. Similarly, in Deuteronomy 10:20 "Thou shalt fear the LORD (Yahweh) thy God; Him shalt thou serve; and to Him shalt thou cleave, and **by His name shalt thou swear**." (KJV, Emphasis mine.)

The practice of swearing in the Name of Yahweh is something seen throughout the Tanach/Old Covenant/Testament. For example, in 1 Kings 2:23 we read where King Solomon vows by invoking the Name of Yahweh "Then king Solomon **swore** (made a vow/oath) by the LORD (Yahweh), saying: God do so to me, and more also…" (KJV, Emphasis mine.) He is basically laying a curse upon himself that Yahweh shall punish him in such and such a way that IF he is lying or does not fulfill the terms of his vow to Yahweh, Yahweh has legal right to curse him. In 1 Samuel 20:3 we find David making a vow "…as יהוה (Yahweh) lives…" (The Scriptures Translation) There is actually a very important end-time prophecy in Jeremiah 12:16 related to the vow formula we are looking at here—"As Yahweh lives…"

> "And it shall be, if they learn well the ways of My people, to **swear by My Name**, '**As יהוה (Yahweh) lives**,' as they taught My people to swear by Baʿal (a Phoenician deity), then they shall be established in the midst of My people." (The Scriptures Translation, Emphasis mine.)

This prophecy is speaking to the Gentiles and not to Israelites which is very interesting. It is directed at those Gentiles who taught Israel to swear by Baʿal. If these Gentiles will learn to swear "As Yahweh lives" then they will become a part of the covenant nation of Israel. Obviously this has not happened yet. At this point in time most Israelites have forgotten how to swear "As Yahweh lives" and I am not aware of many people who do swear. I know I have heard sermons in Church where we were taught "not" to swear at all much less by His Name. This is a promise that in the end of days the Gentiles will learn to swear in the Name of Yahweh and through this they will be built into Israel.

In the Greek version of Matthew 5:33-37 the way it is written, Yeshua did away with swearing, even saying that he who swears was of "the evil one." If this is really what Yeshua/Jesus was saying, then He would not only be annulling Torah but He would be delaying the fulfillment of the end of days prophecy in Jeremiah.

Now, when we look at the Hebrew version of Matthew 5:33-37, we will find a small difference but it is the difference between night and day. In the Hebrew version of Matthew, it says:

> "[33]**Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'** [34]**But I** (Yeshua) **say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;** [35]**nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.** [36]**Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.** [37]**But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.**" (NKJV) [Emphasis mine.]

What Yeshua is saying in the Hebrew is not to swear falsely! The Torah/Law had said in Leviticus 19:12 not to swear falsely in the Name of Yahweh. It seems that some Pharisees took this as permission to swear falsely as long as the Name of Yahweh was not used. The strange doctrine/teaching was based on an over-literalization of Leviticus 19:12, "you shall not swear falsely by My Name." The Pharisees took this to mean that as long as you do not swear by the Name of Yahweh, you are free to swear falsely. Yeshua protests that it is forbidden to swear falsely by anything. It does not matter if the vow is "by Yahweh" or " by Jerusalem." Any vow "by anything" is binding, period. If you say, yes, I swear to do such and such, no matter what you vowed by, you must keep your word. I remember growing up and being taught that if I make a promise/vow, I must keep it. My word was my integrity. I was taught this at a young age. If I swore something, I must keep my word. I have witnessed some people making vows and never fulfilling their vow. Thus, their "word" is empty and without meaning. It also reflects upon "who" they are as a person. Can you rely on what they say? So, if you vow something like "I swear not to do such and such," you are obligated to stand by your word. Period!

Yeshua ends His exhortation with a paraphrase of Deuteronomy 4:2 which says not to add to the Torah: "Anything added to this is evil." Yeshua/Jesus is reaffirming for us this basic Torah principle to silence anyone who might "think" he is adding to the Torah. The fact that He includes swearing falsely by anything in the prohibition "You shall not swear falsely by My Name" (Leviticus 19:12) is not intended as an addition to the Torah. Instead, He is simply bringing out

the underlying principle of the Torah commandment which is to prohibit false vows of any kind, not just those made in the Name of Yahweh. Yeshua reiterates the prohibition not to add to the Torah/Law nor would He ever do that because ***anything*** added to the Torah is evil! Unfortunately, this is happening in our Churches today and those doing this will have to answer to the Great I AM for what they have done. So, we can see there is a big difference in the way the Greek Matthew reads verses the Hebrew version of Matthew. For me, I have to wonder about all the other New Covenant/Testament text we have. I have not heard of nor come across other Hebrew text for any of the other New Covenant/Testament writings. We will have to do the best we can with what we currently have until Messiah Yeshua comes.

Nehemia was asked if there are any writings to back up where the Pharisees could make a vow and not keep it as long as they did not make the vow using the phrase "As Yahweh lives." He checked and did not find anything. However, when he looked at the Hebrew Matthew, he found his answer. Interesting!!!

Hebrew Matthew 23:16-20 reads "[16]Woe to you, you blind **chairs**, who say that he who swears by the sanctuary is not obligated but he who vows by anything that is sanctified to the sanctuary building is obligated to pay. [17]Mad men and blind men! Which is greater, the sanctuary or the thing which is sanctified to the sanctuary? [18]And [you say] he who vows by the altar is not obligated but he who vows to bring a sacrifice must give it. [19]Which is greater, the sacrifice or the altar? The sanctuary or the sacrifice? [20]He who swears by the altar swears by it and by all that is in it."

All throughout these verses Yeshua is speaking to the Pharisees. Earlier He had said that they sit in the seat of Moses and now He calls them **in the Hebrew** "you blind chairs;" they sit in the seat or "chair" of Moses but they are proverbially blind. Then Yeshua/Jesus criticizes them for saying that if a person swears "by the sanctuary" or "by the altar" he is not bound by this oath. This is exactly the view that Yeshua is speaking in Matthew 5:33-37 when He says not to swear falsely by anything not even "by Jerusalem." What is significant about Matthew 23:16-20 is that the Hebrew and Greek are not substantially different. In both texts Yeshua says that oaths and vows are binding no matter what they are made by. He gives no hint that He is against making vows nor does He indicate that a person who swears "by the sanctuary" or vows "by the altar" is of "the evil one." On the contrary, in both Hebrew and Greek, Yeshua upholds the principle behind the prohibition not to swear falsely in the Name of Yahweh, which is really a prohibition against any false oath. Here again the Hebrew Yeshua was trying to return the people to the Torah after the Pharisees led them astray.

If Yeshua were here today, He would do the very same thing to those in the Church. All too many good pastors are not reading and teaching His Word in context nor are they doing their homework to make sure they are teaching His Word correctly according to the best text we have. This is why it is so important for us to be diligent to study His Word for ourselves because we are ultimately responsible for what we think, believe and do. Our actions are directly linked to what we believe.

I hope this study of our Father's Word is helpful in learning a little bit more of what He really meant for us to learn. I hope everyone who reads this study will take to heart His Word more seriously and apply His Word to your daily life as He gives you breath.

Yahweh (יהוה – He who exists) **will kneel before you presenting gifts and will**

guard you with a hedge of protection;

Yahweh (יהוה – He who exists) **will illuminate the wholeness of His being toward**

you bringing order and He will provide you with love, sustenance, and friendship;

Yahweh (יהוה – He who exists) **will lift up wholeness of being and look upon you**

and He will set in place all you need to be, whole and complete. (Numbers 6:23-26)

I hope you have enjoyed this study. If so, please pass it on to others so that they also may be blessed. It is all about learning from one another.

Shalom!

I am One Crying In The Wilderness!

Eddie Rogers, Minister, D.D.

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