IN THIS ISSUE:

THE SIGNS OF THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH

Full moon photo taken in Lapland by: Markus Nurmesniemi
“Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan.”

(Lev. 25:9-10)

In Hebrew the fiftieth year is called Yovel, a celebration year, jubilee. It is the year of the blowing of the ram’s horn. Thus Yovel got its name from the shofar announcing the beginning of the year.

The sound of the Yovel declares the beginning of a new era, the era of God’s favour towards Israel. In Hebrew the word yovel can be read in two ways. Either “yovel”, which means a ram or a ram’s horn like a shofar, or in passive voice “yuval”, is led or was led, like in Isaiah 53: “he was led like a lamb to the slaughter... for the transgression of my people he was punished.”

Like a lamb which has a desire to follow its shepherd humbly, to be led, “yuval”. The three names of the shofar are like a road signs on our salvation path: Keren, which is the name including the personal calling, rose up in smoke with the sacrificed ram instead of Isaac (Gen. 22:13). On Mount Sinai the Israelites heard the sound of that horn, Shofar, for the first time when it called the people to make the change, a turn a round, teshuva.

The nation learned the sound of the shofar when The Lord himself blew the horn (Ex. 19:16). From that point on the Israelites were commanded to blow themselves on the shofar (Lev. 25:9), until The Sovereign Lord himself blows it, this time the shofar called Yovel (Zech. 9:14).

Then He will announce freedom, liberation, a jubilee to all nations, to all of those who will hear His voice.

Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus Christ, started his ministry in the synagogue declaring with the words of Isaiah 61:1-2 proclaiming good news to the poor, freedom for the captives, release from darkness for the prisoners and proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favor. Proclaiming the jubilee, which is The Messiah himself.

In Him is the heritage restored, the one we lost in the garden of Eden. In Him is the essence of Yovel.

(http://torah-art.net)

Markus Nurmesniemi

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Dear reader!

This is the fifth Yovel magazine. The first was published in May 2017, coinciding thus with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Jerusalem’s liberation. The timing was perfect, as the name of the magazine, Yovel, means the year of jubilee (50th year).

During this past year we have seen much agitation and moving of tectonic plates in global politics. The day Finland celebrated recently its 100 years of Independence U.S. President Donald Trump announced the transfer of U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem acknowledging thus Jerusalem as Israel’s official capital. This stirred up (again) a flood of commotion among the nations and Israel is once again surrounded by foamy waves from every direction. There are, however, a few brave countries following U.S.A.’s example, and we can only pray that Finland will eventually be one of them.

On our one year anniversary we have the honour to back up (in spirit anyway) the transfer of the Embassy. At the same time Israel is also celebrating its 70 years of existence as a nation according to the western calendar. In the Hebrew calendar the big day was already in April.

Israel is the clock of time which shows the fulfilment of prophecies. We are living in unique times; our generation can see how the Word of God is coming true in the Middle East and then in all the world. This is also a season that calls us to carry our responsibility and stand with Israel more firmly. The best way to do it is to stand together. We are called to pray for Jerusalem but also to stretch out a helping and providing hand. The Messianic congregations and communities in Israel need badly funds and support, and first of all they need to know that the Gentile part of the Bride is with them.

I have long had a dream, a vision in my heart, a yearning to be one with the Council of the Saints. The example laid by the Early Church, where they gathered in Jerusalem to make decisions about the course of conduct in general, and where they came to discuss upcoming problems. These issues could relate to any area of life from the interpretation of the Word to daily life. We can read about this practice in Acts 15. The Bible also tells us that on his missionary tours among the nations Paul took offerings, a material and financial gift, to be taken to the poor and needy of Jerusalem. The council of Jerusalem got its support in this same manner.

Even today the Bride among the nations is invited to join in this charitable work. We ought to help the apple of God’s eye with spiritual and material gifts. It may never be more than just a dream that the Bride would one day be so well organized that she would turn to the Council of the Saints in Jerusalem for consultation and spiritual strengthening. But the pattern is clear: material help and brotherly support would flow from the nations to the Promised Land, and the rivers of blessings would come in return to the nations from the council of our fathers, the authority of Israel’s Bride and thus the entire Bride’s spiritual authority. The hearts of the fathers would turn to the children, and the hearts of the children would turn to the fathers.

In any case, as for the Torah (and the entire Bible) we shall begin to see its signification after all these years during which the church has neglected God’s instructions (= the Torah). The ancient gathering of Jerusalem can be considered as a meeting between main builders (the Apostles) where they pondered and prayed how to go on building according to the principles of God’s word, life and the Messiah’s almighty power.

We who live in this time are privileged people. We can have a part in rebuilding David’s fallen tabernacle, continuing the work they once started, but according to the lines relevant to our days.

We have the pleasure to introduce a new collaborator in this memorable number of Yovel. Michael Rood, American Bible scholar and historian, rolls before our eyes a spicy study on the discoveries he has made concerning Daniel’s prophecies and Yeshua’s earthly ministry. I wish you interesting moments when you read his article and the rest of the magazine.

I want to thank you, dear reader, for having been with us during our first year. May God bless you and keep you!

Markus Nurmesniemi
editor
Fatal Errors
The Life and Seventy Week Ministry of the Messiah
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Written by: Michael Rood
Most of the Christian world has grown up with the concept that Yeshua’s ministry was three-and-one-half years in duration. However, no scholar has ever been able to prove this hypothesis, and, in fact, the plain text of the Gospel narrative proves that a three-and-one-half-year ministry is a mathematical impossibility.

The three-and-one-half-year ministry construct is the theological invention of an age-old religious system that offers no proof for that which it demands its adherents blindly accept. Furthermore, this eschatological creation has tragically destroyed the Gospel chronology and heavily veiled the Gospel of the Kingdom that Yeshua taught.

It was Eusebius who first proposed a three-and-one-half-year ministry, three hundred years after the resurrection of Yeshua. Every church “father” and historian for the first three centuries either clearly stated, or never contradicted, that Yeshua’s ministry was “about one year”.

Eusebius proposed his undocumented assertion as a fulfillment of Daniel’s 70 week prophecy, and now, after 1600 years, his eschatological adherents continue to voice his unprovable invention with unwavering conviction. His assumptions destroyed any chance of understanding the prophecy of Daniel that he was purportedly solving. Furthermore, Eusebius’ followers have been left with unsolvable contradictions if his inventions are maintained.

The aforementioned position formed a significant problem in the Gospel record. The account of the feeding of the five thousand on a hillside near the Sea of Galilee is recorded in the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, the sixth chapter of the Gospel of Mark, the ninth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, and the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. This is the only miracle that is recorded in every one of the four Gospels. This event provides a synchronizing marker – a quadruple account of a single moment in time – that allows us to chronologically harmonize the Gospel records with absolute precision.

* In all four Gospels, the feeding of the five thousand takes place at the end of the summer when the twelve apostles return from their paired assignments throughout the villages of the Galilee (Matthew 10:1-14:2, Mark 6:7-6:31, Luke 9:1-9:10, John 6:1)

* The sixth chapter of John records the feeding of the five thousand took place two days before Yeshua taught in the synagogue at Capernaum on the Sabbath day. On that Sabbath, Yeshua’s exposition was on the subject of the Last Day and the Resurrection, the perpetual theme of Yom Teruah (Day of Trumpets).

* The seventh chapter of John

A view from the valley of Har Megiddo, also known in English as Armageddon, in Israel in spring of 2017. Photo by: Markus Nurmesniemi
opens with Yeshua making plans to go up to the Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles), which begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, exactly two weeks after the Day of Trumpets.

* According to Matthew, Mark and Luke, the feeding of the five thousand occurred thirteen days before the “Mount of Transfiguration” incident, which transpired on the tenth day of the seventh month, Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), the most holy day of the year (Matthew 14:22-17:9, Mark 6:45-9:10, Luke 9:17-36). John is the only author who does not record this event.

Hence, every Gospel record confirms that the feeding of the five thousand took place at the end of the summer, exactly eighteen days before the Feast of Sukkot. However, a fatal error has been introduced into an otherwise flawless mathematical system. In the fourth verse of John chapter six, eight words were inserted into later copies of the Greek text in order to artificially lengthen the ministry of Yeshua. It is the pinnacle of intrigue that these eight words were appended to the very section of Scripture that guaranteed that the forgery would eventually be exposed. And it was revealed by the one miraculous event recorded by all four Gospel authors: the feeding of the five thousand. In modern versions of the Gospel of John we read these eight infamous words (ten words in English):

“And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.” (John 6:4, KJV)

Notice that the King James translators did not deem Passover, a proper noun, worthy of capitalization. While the Greek version of John’s Gospel refers to Passover as “a feast of the Jews”, the Hebrew Scriptures declare that Passover is one of the Feasts of the LORD, which all Israelites were commanded to keep forever (Leviticus 23:14). Paul further proclaimed the Feasts of the LORD to be prophetic shadows of good things to come (Colossians 2:16-17, Hebrew 10:1). However, the inserted words have much bigger problems than grammar or name. Let us examine whether or not it is even possible to insert a Passover at this juncture.

Passover occurs in the spring, on the fourteenth day of the first month (the month of the aviv barley, Exodus 23:15). The eating of the Passover Lamb also begins the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, before which all leavened bread must be destroyed. Unleavened bread must not be found in any part of the land of Israel until after the Feast is concluded (Exodus 12:19). This is also one of the three yearly pilgrim Feasts for which all male Israelites are commanded to go up to Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:16). One must examine the Scriptures to find out whether or not leaven has been excluded, or travels to Jerusalem have been undertaken, during this time period.

The Gospel narratives clearly show us that Yeshua did not go up to Jerusalem for the “passover” referred to in the modern versions of John 6:4. Instead of keeping a Feast in Jerusalem, Yeshua assembled thousands of Israelites on a hillside in the Galilee and fed them with leavened barley loaves (John 6:9), which would have been a blatant violation of Torah if this were truly the time of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Two days later, Yeshua taught another large assembly in the Capernaum synagogue who also did not go up to “passover” in Jerusalem. Instead of delivering a message relevant to Passover on that Sabbath, he taught them about the prophetic significance of the Day of Trumpets (John 6:28-59). Yeshua was expounding on the prophetic significance of the Feast of Trumpets. Three days after his Sabbath teaching another Divinely multiplied store of leavened barley loaves (Matthew 15:32-39, Mark 8:1-9). On this occasion, a group of Pharisees from Jerusalem had arrived in the Galilee to confront Yeshua and his followers on the issue of breaking the rabbinic takenot (man-made laws) that concerned their ceremony of hand washing before eating bread. In this incident, even the ultra-orthodox Pharisees showed no concern about keeping a Feast in Jerusalem, but were themselves in the Galilee during this phantom “passover” to investigate the reports that Yeshua was teaching his disciples to disobey the invented rules and religious regulations of the rabbis.

During the following two weeks, Yeshua began his journey to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, which occurs exactly six months before Passover (John 7:2-10). Every Gospel author clearly shows that he never did go up to Jerusalem for the phantom passover indicated in John 6:4. Furthermore, if Passover really did occur in the sixth chapter of John, and if Yeshua went up to the Feast of Tabernacles at the beginning of the seventh chapter of John, what did Yeshua do for the six months leading up to the “passover” of John 6:4 and for the other six months leading back to the Feast of Tabernacles in John 7:1?

Does it make sense that all four Gospel records are suddenly dead silent for an entire year? NO! The sixth chapter phantom “passover” is a nonsensical theological forgery.

Those conversant in the Divine requirements concerning the Feasts know that either something is seriously wrong with the eight words of John 6:4 - “And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.” - or there is something gravely wrong with Yeshua.

* If the eight words of John 6:4 were not added by forgers, then Yeshua was in direct violation of Torah – the very commandments he swore he did not come to destroy or change (Matthew 5:17-20)

* If the eight words of John 6:4 were not added by forgers, then John has recorded prima facie evidence that Yeshua cannot be the Messiah since he deliberately disobeyed the Torah and did not fulfill its mandatory commandments (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, 13:1-5, 18:15-22).

* If the eight words of John 6:4 were not added by forgers, then every Gospel account of the week-by-week ministry of Yeshua stops abruptly and is dead silent for an entire year – except for the phantom “passover” and the iniquitous “feast of leavened bread” supposedly celebrated in the Galilee.

The addition of those eight words to the later texts of John’s Gospel artificially extended the ministry of Yeshua to build a foundation for replacement theology and preterist eschatology. In brief, replacement theology is the concept that Jesus started a new religion that mysteriously replaced the eternal covenants with Israel. Preterist eschatology goes on from there to teach that all Scripture and prophecy (including The Revelation) were fulfilled by 70 CE, opening the door for “the vicar of Christ” to rule from his millennial throne in Rome. To support this position, it was necessary to artificially fulfill all seventy sevens of Daniel’s messianic prophecy, and it would take exactly seven more years after Yeshua’s ministry began to make this invented replacement Christology work.

So a three-and-one-half-year ministry of Messiah was invented by Eusebius, and an additional three-and-one-half-year period was inserted-by-interpretation from the book of The Acts to give Eusebian dogmas theological credence. The support for this doctrine, however brilliant, was manufactured out of the thin air of fourth century Constantinian theology.

Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, and Lactantius, early “church fathers” of the second and third centuries, as well as...
Filastrius, Gaudentius, Evagrius, Orosius, Ephraem, and a half dozen other theologians cited by the Catholic Encyclopedia under “Chronology of the Life of Jesus Christ”, all concurred that the Messiah’s ministry lasted about one year. It was Eusebius, in the fourth century, who first expressed the notion in Demonstratio Evangelistica VIII, 106.8, that Messiah’s ministry was “three years and a half, which is half of a week” – in obvious reference to the ninth chapter of Daniel.

Eusebius claimed to have deduced this from John’s Gospel without ever providing proof for such a claim. In fact, he contradicted over three hundred years of undisputed testimony from the eyewitnesses, their disciples, and the two hundred years of historians that followed them. Eusebius’ assertion was based on nothing more than his own interpretation of Daniel’s seventy week prophecy, a prophecy that even Isaac Newton was unable to accurately decipher. Rome’s indisputable authority was the sole basis for demanded obedience to this heretical Eusebian eschatological dogma – and yet the Catholic Encyclopedia clearly acknowledges that Eusebius was the sole progenitor of this pedantic pontification.

One can determine anything one wants when all percipient witnesses died hundreds of years earlier, and when all Scripture is sequestered from the general population. Unfortunately, time hardens groundless dogma into tradition which trumps truth in all too many instances.

The first Passover of Yeshua’s ministry is recorded in the second chapter of the Gospel of John, while his last Passover begins in John chapter twelve. From the testimony of these second and third century scholars, it is obvious that the early texts of John’s Gospel, the only texts to which these men had access, could not have included the additional third “passover” of John 6:4. It is inconceivable that these scholars could have missed the simple mathematical fact that it would have taken well over two years to span three Passovers. These early historians were reading the original texts – long before the post-Eusebian forgery was added. They all concurred that the ministry of Yeshua was about one year.

There was not one dissenting opinion voiced in the ranks of Christians during the first three centuries. This simply means that no one even considered then what modern Eusebian theologians insist today – that Yeshua’s ministry was longer than about one year. Furthermore, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record just one year in the ministry of Yeshua; it is absolutely impossible to squeeze out more if one understands the Feasts!

The resolution of this problem is obvious, and the internal evidence conclusive: the first century texts to which the early church scholars had access could not possibly have contained the eight words of John 6:4.

A second fatal error was interpreted into John’s Gospel with the same maleficient motive – to artificially lengthen Messiah’s ministry by adding another year of dead silence into the Gospel testimony. Yet another fictitious Passover was interpreted into the text where it clearly does not exist. This was done in John chapter five.

John is the only Gospel author who records the first Passover of Yeshua’s adult ministry during which Yeshua met Nicodemus (John 2:13-3:21). Yeshua stayed in the Jerusalem area until the Pharisees got wind of his increasing popularity and then traveled north to spend two days with the Samaritans (John 3:22-4:42). Yeshua then continued on to Cana, where he performed his “second miracle after leaving Judea” by healing the nobleman’s son from afar (John 4:43-54). Then he immediately returned to Jerusalem for another “feast of the Jews” (John 5:1-47) and then directly returned to the Galilee (John 6:1), at which time the day-to-day records of Matthew, Mark and Luke commence. The feast of Shavuot (Pentecost) occurs seven week after Passover and perfectly fits the unnamed Feast recorded in John 5:1-47. Yet Eusebian replacement theologians resolutely insist that the Feast of John chapter five must be another Passover – an entire year after the Passover of John chapters two and three! If the Feast referred to in John chapter five is truly Passover, then only a few quick baptisms, a two-day ministry among the Samaritans, and the healing of one young man take place during that entire year. That is ludicrous!

The Feast spoken of in John chapter five is, without a doubt, not Passover. It is unmistakably the Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost). The healing of the man who was lame for thirty-eight years occurred on the seventh Sabbath of the counting of the omer in the presence of a multitude gathered to celebrate the Feast of Weeks (or Sevens) the following day on the Temple Mount. At this time Yeshua was informed that Yochanan had been put in prison by Herod, whereupon he immediately left Jerusalem to spend the entire summer in the Galilee. He was apprised of Yochanan’s execution at the end of the summer just before he fed the five thousand – three days before the Feasts of Trumpets.

By illegitimately interpreting the John 5:1-47 “feast of the Jews” as another Passover, it will be another wasted year before the four fisherman finally leave their family business and join Yeshua. Matthew will also keep his job at the Roman toll booth for another year before he begins chronicling the ministry of Messiah. There is apparently nothing Yeshua is doing that is worth recording – and no one is following him!

This was the tortuous method employed by replacement theologians to invent a three-and-on-half-year ministry – by interpreting the Feast of Shavuot in John 5:1-47 as a Feast of Passover an entire year later. However, since all the original witnesses had been dead for at least 250 years, and it was illegal for the laity to have the Scriptures in their own hands, no one could challenge the manuscript that would expose the forgery forced upon us by the edge of the Roman sword.

The forged “passover” statement of John 6:4 introduces “another Jesus”, as Paul coined the phrase: a religious renegade who starts a new cult in the Galilee by deliberately violating the Almighty’s Divine instructions to Moses and teaching others to do the same (Matthew 5:20).

The “Jesus” who was introduced with the eight words of John 6:4 is not the Messiah who came to fulfill the Torah, but rather invented false messiah – a Hellenized christ who built the house of replacement theology and treated the commandments with disdain. This “another Jesus” is definitely not the Messiah we were instructed to expect, but rather one of the false prophets we were warned to reject! Moses told us clearly and repeatedly that no one is ever allowed to add to, or to subtract one single commandment from the Torah (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32). Moses also cautioned us that if a prophet were to perform signs and wonders – yet teach us to disregard that the Creator had already instructed us at Mount Sinai – we were not to heed him. We were forewarned that the Almighty would supernaturally empower false prophets in order to determine whether Israel would keep his commandments – as we promised we would – or follow the deceiving performers of miracles who preach a perverted redefinition of law and grace (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 1815-22). This “another Jesus” is not Yeshua of Nazareth, but an invented entity that only exists in the fertile
imaginations of modern day religionists and the adherents to Eusebian eschatology.

Fatal Systematic Theology

Every week of Yeshua’s seventy week ministry can be accounted for in the records of the four Gospel authors. Yet Eusebius invented a three-and-one-half year ministry because it was essential to his theology, and it all fit into the hand of Rome’s dominion theology as well. In order for Rome to control the world stage, it was advantageous to have the last seven years of Daniel’s seventy-sevens prophecy be completely fulfilled so that they could discard the entirety of the prophetic Scriptures as mere history. Once all Scripture was fulfilled, the Torah and Prophets could be ignored, and the “vicar of Christ” could reign from his millennial throne in Rome.

But to do this, Eusebius and his successors had to find another seven years to fulfill the precise prophetic equation.

“Seventy sevens are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city: to restrain the transgression, and to complete the sin offering, and to atone for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to authenticate the vision and the Prophet, and to anoint the Most Holy.” (Daniel 9:24, Corrected King James Version)

It was exactly sixty-nine sevens of years (483 years) from the time that Artaxerxes gave the command to “go forth and build Jerusalem” (Ezra 7, Aviv 1, 457 BCE) until the day that Yochanan ben Zecharyah announced, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (KJV John 1:29, Aviv 1, 27 CE). That left seven years, or the final week, yet outstanding. To find another seven years after this point, agents of Rome invented a three-and-one-half-week ministry by forging another phantom “Passover” into John chapter six, interpreting another fictitious Passover into John chapter five, and then wresting the remaining three-and-one-half-years from the book of the Acts. This contrived fulfillment of Daniel’s seventy-sevens prophecy was extrapolated as being the final fulfillment of all the Torah and the Prophets.

Thus, they decreed that the everlasting covenant with Israel was now nullified, and the Creator’s eternal Torah – that Yeshua swore that he had not come to destroy – was demolished and replaced by the ever changing edicts of a new religious system that was headed by he who proclaims himself “Almighty God upon earth”.

The theological “proofs” for this new doctrine were deduced from the incident of Peter being sent to the house of a Roman centurion, Cornelius, which they incorrectly assert to have occurred three-and-one-half-years after the giving of the gift of the Holy Spirit on Shavuot (Pentecost). This incident (Acts chapter ten), in which Peter was instructed to “call no man unclean”, was twisted to teach that the Spirit nullified the Torah by commanding Peter to eat vermin off a filthy sheet.

Alleging that the Creator had suddenly revoked His eternal Torah three-and-one-half years into the book of Acts, it could also now be taught that the Almighty also rejected Israel at the same time and turned the “church” over to Roman gentiles at Caesarea (Acts 10:1-11:18).

With the last seven years of Daniel’s seventy-sevens prophecy now allegedly fulfilled, the light of the eternal Torah extinguished, and the everlasting covenant with Israel nullified, the foundations of replacement theology were securely anchored in sinking sand.

Thirty-three years after the church was supposedly turned over to the Roman soldiers at Caesarea, the Roman General Titus, himself soon to be Cæsar, conquered and destroyed Jerusalem. That destruction was eventually interpreted as the fulfillment of the book of The Revelation and was heralded as proof that the Almighty had forsaken his covenant with Israel. So now, with the Torah nullified and all New Testament prophecies fulfilled, Rome had its theological foundation for “another jesus” – “the vicar of Christ” – to rule with an iron rod from his millennial throne in Rome (Revelation 19:15, 20:4).

Thus the kingdom of dispensational replacement theology was born – and the eight infamous words, insidiously inserted into the Gospel of John, provided the mathematical authority for their arrogant systematic theology.

Those eight infamous words not only destroyed the chronology of the Gospels, but also buried any possibility of understanding the full significance of Daniel’s cryptic prophecy. Older, authentic texts were expunged in order to hide this act of sedition, but they could not eradicate them all. The Almighty watches over his Word.

Greek Manuscript #472, an 11th century manuscript that was originally housed in Constantinople, may be the last of a line of manuscripts that maintained the accurate rendering of John 6:3-5. In order to protect what remains of this ancient, mutilated, miniscule text, the manuscript is under lock and key in the Lambeth Palace Library in London.

The text reads (NOTICE: the original Greek text is found in Michael Rood’s book The Chronological Gospels – The Life and Seventy Week Ministry of the Messiah):

“And went up into the mountain, and there sat with the disciples his having lifted up then lesous eyes and having seen a great crowd is coming to him he says to Philip whence shall we buy loaves that may eat these” (word by word English translation).

“And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat” (KJV)

The eight words: (“and the Passover, a feast of the Jews was nigh”) are completely missing from this ancient manuscript (Novum Testamentum Graece; Nestle-Aland 26th edition, (1979). Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, p.263).

Verse and chapter markings are nonexistent in the ancient Greek texts, as is punctuation, but the following statement can only be made by using these modern conveniences: the entirety of verse four (“and the Passover, a feast of the Jews was nigh”) is nonexistent in the Lambeth Palace manuscript.

The last words of verse three (“the disciples his”) is followed by the first words in verse five (“having lifted up”). The wording found in the modern Greek texts, (“and the Passover, a feast of the Jews was nigh”) simply does not exist in the ancient Lambeth Palace manuscript. Those eight words were not expunged from the texts, but rather, just as with all the first and second century texts, those eight words were never added.

“You shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that you may keep the commandments of YHVH (the LORD) our Elohim (God) which I command you.” (Deuteronomy 4:2)

“For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book; if any man shall add unto these things, YHVH (the LORD) shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, YHVH (the LORD) shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and the things which are written in this book.” (Revelation 22:18-19)
Now we may understand why Dr. Frederick H. A. Scrivener, one of the most respected New Testament Greek scholars in history, heralded manuscript #472 as the most important miniscule text guarded within the fortress walls of Lambeth Palace (Scrivener, Frederick Henry Ambrose; Edward Miller (1894). A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, vol. 1 (4th ed.). London: George Bell & Sons, p.249).

We at last can see the same text that the early Christian historians were reading when they stated, without dissent, that Yeshua’s ministry was “about one year” in duration. Now, after 1600 years of enforced acquiescence to deception, the Christian world continues to drone the indefensible “three-and-one-half-year” fabrication of Eusebius, while insisting that no one is capable of making even the simplest of calendrical calculations to find the years of Messiah’s birth or the day of his resurrection.

The monumental testimony of this ancient manuscript #472 secured by Heaven for its revealing in the last days, is now presented in The Chronological Gospels: The Life and Seventy Week Ministry of the Messiah. (If you want to know all the details and the timing behind The Chronological Gospels, you can purchase Michael Rood’s book from: https://bookstore.aroodawakening.tv)

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The Coming of the Messiah  
And the Resurrection of the Church

Written by:  
Keijo Lindeman

One of the most focal and important biblical promises is the promise of the coming of Yeshua the Messiah and the resurrection, or taking up, of the church. This promise is given in various places in the Old Testament and in dozens of places in the New Testament (New Covenant). Some Bible scholars have found hundreds of verses in the Bible that speak about the Lord’s coming and the resurrection. In this paper we will address a few central prophecies.

The promise about the Messiah’s coming

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going... Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:1-4,6)

When Yeshua was talking to his disciples during the Passover meal, before his suffering, he said to them that he would go to his heavenly Father to prepare a place to his own. This happened about two millennia ago when, from the Mount of Olives, Yeshua was taken up into heaven in a cloud and was seated on the right hand of God the Father (Mark 16:9; Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:9-11). Right now our Saviour is in the heavenly Father’s house preparing a place to his own and praying for them (Hebr.7:22-28). Yeshua also promised to come back to take his own with him to the Father’s house, so that his disciples would always be with the Lord.

Glorified resurrection

“But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like a dew in the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead” (Isa.26:19).

“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (Phil.3:20-21).

“While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.’ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, ‘Do you have anything here to eat?’ They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence” (Luke 24:36-43).

When Yeshua the Messiah comes to take up his church, resurrection takes place and the Lord’s own are clothed in a glorified resurrection body, like the one Yeshua has. We won’t be mere spiritual beings then but the believers have rather a real body, a glorified resurrection body with flesh and bones. Yeshua appeared in his resurrection body in a locked room where his disciples were; he was not subject to the physical laws of the material world (John 20:19-29). In the resurrectin body you can walk through walls and other obstacles. Furthermore, Yeshua ate a piece of fried fish in the presence of his disciples; you can eat and drink and enjoy food while in the resurrection body.

What does Paul say about the resurrection body?

“But someone may ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?’ How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just the seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendour of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendour of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendour, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendour. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead.

“The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: ‘The first man Adam became a living being’, the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory’” (1 Cor.15:35-54).

Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles, describes the resurrection body of the believers in his letter to the church of Corinth. He uses the comparison of a seed of wheat sown in the earth. That seed sown in the earth dies but gives growth to a stalk and an ear with its grain. This is what happens in the resurrection. Our bodies are like a dying seed of wheat that is laid into grave. At the Messiah’s coming a new resurrectin body will rise from that dead and decomposed body. That new resurrection body is not the same as the one decomposed in the grave, but it does have the appearance and features of the per-
son it once was, only much more beautiful and eternally young. In our resurrection body we have our former appearance, features, and personality (refined); we will be recognized and known (1 Cor.13:12).

The new resurrection body will be a glorified body, a body of power, a body that is imperishable, immortal, and spiritual. That body does not know any pain, distress or anguish, nor does any illness or disease ravage it (Rev. 21:4). There are different levels of glory in the resurrection body, which we attain on grounds of our faithfulness and ministry (Matt.5:17-19; 13:43; Dan. 12:3).

Others will shine like the sun, others like the moon, and others like stars and one star is brighter than the other. In our resurrection condition, seeing with unveiled faces the glory of the Lord, we shall be transformed with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor.3:17-18).

When the last trumpet sounds

"The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.' And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying: 'We give thanks to you Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great – and for destroying those who destroy the earth.' Then God's temple in heaven was opened and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and earthquake and a great hailstorm" (Rev.11:15-19).

"...and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath" (1 Tess. 1:10).

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tess.5:9).

In his letter to the Corinthians Paul writes that the resurrection of believers occurs in a twinkling of an eye when the last trumpet sounds. This is a reference to the seven trumpets of the Book of Revelation. When the seventh, and the last, trumpet sounds, believers will be resurrected, and we will be transformed in a flash into resurrection condition, an immortal resurrection body.

The dead will be judged then, and God’s servants, prophets, and saints will be rewarded. Paul writes that all of us are destined to appear before the Messiah’s judgment seat, where each of us will receive according to what he or she has done while in the body, whether good or bad. All people, the godless included, will one day come before the judgment seat of Yeshua the Messiah to be judged for what he or she has done (John 5:27; Rev. 20:11-15). According to the Book of Revelation, the godless will be judged after the Millennial Kingdom of the Messiah.

The context reveals that in his letter to the Corinthians Paul’s words concern first of all believers who will come before the Messiah’s judgment seat to be judged for their deeds when the Lord comes, after the resurrection. This seat of judgment will be set up in connection with the Messiah’s coming, and he will call his servants before him to settle accounts with them (Matt.25:14-30; Luke 19:11.28). Those who have served the Lord faithfully, those who have been faithful with a few things, will be put in charge of many things. Some of them are given the authority to rule over ten cities, some over five cities, in the Messiah’s millennial kingdom of Peace. It is first of all “a seat of rewards” to those who have served the Lord.
faithfully.

This will take place in the resurrection as the last, or seventh, trumpet sounds. Believers will then be taken up to heaven from under the time of wrath that will cover the whole world. Gentile nations will be filled with anger, but that is when the judgments of God’s wrath will be released over the earth. Believers are still here on earth in the distressing circumstances of the End time, and even in persecutions, but they will not be left to face the judgments of God’s wrath, for the Messiah will come and save his own from the coming wrath (Matt.24:9, 20-22, 29-31).

With a loud command, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet call of God

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. Accounting to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage each other with these words” (1 Tess.4:13-18).

Paul’s letter to the Tессalonians contains crucial information about the Lord’s coming and the rapture, i.e. resurrection, of believers. At the Lord’s coming those passed away in Christ will rise first, and then also believers who are still alive will be transformed in a flash to their resurrection condition and taken up, with the passed away in Christ, to meet the Lord in the clouds, to be forever thereafter with the Lord. A good number of believers know well this passage of the Bible. However, what it means to be taken up with the loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, is often unclear.

The original Greek New Testament reads: “... for the Lord Himself with the loud command with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God will come down from the heavens.” The archangel is Michael (Jude 9).

‘The loud command’ is the Greek ‘keleusmati’, used by a superior officer or government official while giving orders to a soldier or a subordinate. In military circles the commands are usually given by shouting. A few biblical examples: Governor Pilate gave the soldiers the order to guard the tomb of Yeshua (Matt.27:64-65).

In Philippi the magistrates ordered Paul and Silas to be flogged and guarded carefully in prison (Acts.16:22-23). When the Lord comes down from heaven to take up the believers, the archangel, that is Michael, who is the military commander of the angels, will give orders to God’s angels who are under him. When the Bible is explained and interpreted by the Bible, we need to search the Bible and look for the explanation as to what kind of situations the archangel Michael appears in and gives orders to the angels. That is how we learn more about the global situation before the Lord’s coming and the taking up of the believers.

a) Michael and Gabriel’s war against the prince of Persian kingdom

“But the prince of Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the King of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come... So he said: ‘Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No-one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.)” (Dan. 10:13-14; 20-21).

At the end of times Michael will fight with Gabriel against the evil prince of Persia, and this fight will have an impact on things on earth. Afganistan, Pakistan and particularly Iran are the key areas of the ancient Persia, all nests of Islamic terrorism. The leaders of Iran keep on threatening Israel with destruction and seek to develop atom guns and missiles for this purpose.

Iran also supplies missiles and other guns to Hizbollah terrorist organization based in Lebanon, (and also to Hamas in Gaza), which is all the time preparing for war against Israel. Because of the war of Syria and Iraq there are forces of Iran and of its supporter Hizbollah on Syrian ground as well as in the Golan area. This is of great concern to Israel, which is preparing for the outbreak of war. All this heralds the approach of the Messiah’s coming.

b) Michael will protect Israel and the believers in the great distress

“At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission. But reports from the east and the north will alarm him. And he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no-one will help him. At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Dan.11:40- 12:3)

Michael appears a second time in the book of Daniel. In the end time a war will break out in the Middle East, and also the Beautiful Land, that is Israel, will be invaded. The war will gain global proportions. Daniel’s prophecy refers to the king of the North (Gog; Ezekiel 38-39) and also to the kings of the East (Japan, China etc.), that is, the kings of the rising sun mentioned in Revelation 16:12-16. That time will be a time of unequalled distress, of which Yeshua told his disciples (Matt.24:3,20-22, 29-31). If those days of tribulation were not shortened, no one would survive. But as Yeshua has told us (Amos 3:1-2; Rev.17:14), those days will be shortened because of Israel and the believers. That will also be the time of the Messiah’s coming and of the resurrection, as the righteous are resurrected to everlasting life.

According to Daniel, believers are taken up during the days of war and tribulation, in which time Michael, the great prince, with his hosts of angels protects Israel and the believers. That will be the time when the loud command of Michael will be heard while he leads God’s angels in those days, protecting Israel and the believers. That will be the time of
not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury because he knows that his time is short.” (Rev.12:1-12).

Michael, the great prince, appears in the book of Revelation, as well. John was shown a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and crowned with twelve stars. From the dream Joseph had we know who this woman is. In Joseph’s dream the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowed before Joseph (Gen. 37:9-10).

When his father Jacob heard this, he said: “Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?”

This is about the wife Israel and her household. The wife Israel will be the target of the dragon’s, i.e. the devil’s, rage and persecution, and he will try to demolish God’s chosen people through antisemitic enemies of Israel. Michael and his angels will fight against the dragon and his angels, and Satan will be thrown down on earth with his angels. Now an antichristian regime of terror and hatred will be established on earth. The prophet Isaiah also speaks about the time when the wife Israel is in birth pains.

“You have enlarged the nation; O Lord; you have enlarged the nation. You have gained glory for yourself; you have extended all the borders of the land. Lord, they came to you in their distress; when you disciplined them, they could barely whisper a prayer. As a woman with child and about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pain, so were we in your presence, O Lord. We were with child, we writhed in pain. But we gave birth to wind. We have not brought salvation to the earth; we have not given birth to people of the world. But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead. Go my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the Lord is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her, she will conceal her slain no longer” (Isa. 26:15-21).

Isaiah’s prophecy about the birth pains of the woman Israel is similar to the prophecy in Revelation. That will be the time when Israel is in great distress and twists about in great pains of childbirth (Jer.30:1-7). In addition, Isaiah also mentions how the Lord has increased the people and enlarged the boundaries of the land of Israel. This is a reference to the great Exodus of the end time when millions of Jews will flee antisemitism and hatred from among the nations to their own country Israel (Jer.16:14-16; Zech.2:6-8). There is also a reference to the end time war in the Middle East, as a result of which the territory of Israel will be enlarged so as to have ample space for the multitudes of Exodus Jews (Zech. 10:7-10; Obad.12-21). When Israel (and the whole world) is in great distress and birth pains, she will look upon her pierced Messiah Yeshua and receive him as her Messiah, Saviour and King (Zech.12:1-13:2; Rom. 11:25-31). Through that tribulation Israel will become the messianic nation of priest believing in Yeshua, ready for the coming millennial Kingdom of the Messiah ( Isa.2:1-4, 61:4-6). That time of great distress and of Israel’s birth pains coincides with the Lord’s coming, and the resurrection of believers.

d) Rapture at the sound of God’s trumpet

“I will bend Judah as I bend my bow and fill it with Ephraim. I will rouse your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and make you like a warrior’s sword. Then the Lord will appear over them; the arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign Lord will sound the trumpet; he will march in the storms of the south and the Lord Almighty will shield them. They will destroy and overcome with slingstones. They will drink and roar as with wine; they will be full like a bow used for sprinkling the corners of the altar... My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the Lord Almighty will care for his flock, the house of Judah, and make them like a proud horse in battle. From Judah will come a cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle-bow, from him every ruler. Together they will be like mighty men trampling the muddy streets in battle, because the Lord is with them, they will fight and overthrow the horsemen” (Zech.9:13-15, 10:3-5).

According to Paul the taking up of the church also occurs when God’s trumpet sounds, from which Zechariah speaks as well. God’s trumpet will sound when Israel is in the middle of tribulations, storms and battles, and days of exodus. The Lord God Almighty will sound his trumpet and help his chosen people Israel to overcome her enemies. The Lord will make of Judah his proud horse in battle, and they will be like heroes who trample their enemies like mud in the streets. This prophecy also seems to refer to the fact that the taking up, the resurrection, of the church will occur when Israel is in the middle of war and distress.

Where there is a “carcass”, there the vultures will gather

“It will be just like that in the day the Son of Man is revealed... I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together, one will be taken and the other left.” Where, Lord”, they asked. He replied, ‘Where there is a dead body (Greek soma=body), there the vultures will gather.” (Luke 17:30,34-37).
"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength (Hebrew ja’chalifu koach = they change into power). They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isa.40:29-31).

There has been much misunderstanding about Isaiah’s words “where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather”. (It has been interpreted to mean the gathering of “eagle nations” in the Middle East” to fight over oil brought about by decomposed carcasses.)

The Greek New Testament word “soma” means a body, living or dead. If it is translated as “carcass”, it opens the way to misunderstandings. But when it is translated as “a dead body” and connected contextually to the taking up of believers and leaving of unbelievers, the words of Yeshua are interpreted and understood right. This resurrection will occur when there is night on one side of the globe and day and daily chores on the other (thus the Bible confirms that the earth is round).

The text of Isaiah sheds more light on the issue. This text has been used in dozens of sermons to describe, with good reason, the power and help God gives a believer; however, the text relates first of all to the resurrection and the resurrection power.

When the Lord comes and the church is taken up, believers who are waiting for the Lord will change into resurrection power and rise up like eagles in their resurrection bodies to meet the Lord in the air where the Body of the Messiah, i.e. God’s church, will be gathered to the Lord. So the text does not refer to a gathering of eagles to a carcass, but rather to the gathering of believers in their infatiguable and immortal resurrection bodies, like eagles, to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess.4:13-18).

This is our great hope and comfort, and we will be part of it, when we have received Yeshua the Messiah in faith as our Saviour and King, and follow Him faithfully till the end (Matt.24:13).

“Therefore prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given to you when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Peter 1:13).

The Messiah Is Coming
The Concept of the Messiah-faith

Written by:
John D. Garr, Ph.D.

At the very heart of all biblical faith is the concept of Messianism, the belief the Messiah will come to earth to banish evil and establish universal peace. The first promise in the Bible is a Messianic promise: A[the woman’s son] will bruise [the serpent’s] head (Genesis 3:15).

The very last promise in the Bible is also a Messianic promise: Surely I come quickly (Revelation 22:20). The expectation of the Messiah’s coming is the scarlet thread that is woven through the warp and woof of the entire fabric of Holy Scripture, making Messianism the one unified theme of the Word of God.

The two great biblical religions, Judaism and Christianity, rest on the secure confidence that the God of heaven and earth will send the Messiah to this planet to establish his dominion over all the earth. For millennia the Jewish people around the world have affirmed their expectation of the coming of the Messiah. For centuries Christians have focused their faith on the return of the Messiah. Regarding the Messiah’s advent, Teddy Kolleck, the long-time mayor of the city of Jerusalem once said, AI have the most difficult job of anyone, that of preparing the capital city of the world for the coming of the Messiah. Then he offered this aside: AWhen the Messiah comes, I want to ask him the same question that I have asked thousands of pilgrims to this holy land, IS this your first visit to Jerusalem, or have you been here before!]

Throughout biblical history, holy men of God were Acarried along through the Holy Spirit with prophetic insight that continually unfolded and expanded the understanding of the person and the work of the Mashiach. From the simple promise to Eve that a Son would be born, to Gabriel’s annunciation to Mary that the fullness of the time had come for her to conceive the Aholy thing that would be called the Son of God, God continued to reveal his determination to bring the Messiah to the earth to make the fullest possible disclosure of his person, his Word, and his will.

The Hebraic understanding of the coming and return of the Messiah is unique among the religions of the world, all of which have a completely different world view and mind-set than that of biblical faith. The Greek philosophers believed that the ideal was for the sparks of the divine that had been entrapped in evil matter (their own bodies) to escape and to be absorbed into the spiritual, the realm of ideas. Eastern monism believes that the ideal is achieved when one escapes the endless wheel of reincarnation by passing into nothingness.

Biblical religion, however, is not an escapist faith. It insists that God is the Creator of heaven and earth and that good will ultimately triumph over evil when the same God sends the Messiah to establish his dominion over the earth. It also teaches that all the righteous of the earth, both Jew and Gentile, will stand with the Messiah in the resurrection of the dead. Further, these righteous ones will rule with the Messiah over this planet so that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the water covers the sea.

Much of Christianity has bought into the escapism of the neo-Platonist philosophers that was brought into the church as it was Hellenized and Latinized during the Middle Ages. Most Christians think of Agoing to heaven, escaping the confines of this evil, ever-degenerating planet earth. This escapist mentality has fostered in many Christians a lack of concern for the society of man.

The Jewish understanding of the Messianic expectation, however, is that of Tikkun Olam, the restoration of the world in which man in partnership with God works continually at the improvement of the earth and the society of man, all while expecting the Garden of Eden experience to be
restored fully when the Messiah comes.

Other Christians have subscribed to the Augustinian concept of amillennialism that suggests that the earth will gradually be pervaded with the gospel and that Christianity will assume control of the world through political manipulation, dispelling evil in the process. This concept virtually eliminates the idea of the coming of the Messiah from the understanding of much of the church.

The incontrovertible evidence of history is that man cannot bring universal peace and brotherhood through his own volition. Though he is responsible for working toward that lofty goal, it will be realized only when the Messiah comes.

The truth is that the earliest church was thoroughly Messianic, both in its faith in the completed work of Jesus on Calvary for the redemption of mankind from sin and in its expectation that this same Jesus would return to the earth, bringing the righteous dead with him and catching the living saints up to be with him in his Kingdom. Apocalypticism and eschatology were centerpiece pieces of apostolic teaching and faith.

The concept that Jesus was the Messiah and that he would return to bring the resurrection and the age of universal peace in the kingdom of God was not an apostolic innovation, however. It was merely the actualization of the long-established Jewish Messianic expectation.

The Apocalypse (the Revelation of Jesus Christ) serves the single purpose of teaching what has been, what was, and what would be concerning the person of Jesus Christ. It is fully realized in chapter 19 when the Person of the Word of God returns to the earth, followed by the armies of heaven.

The angels promised the believers who witnessed Jesus’ ascension into heaven, This same Jesus will return in like manner. And, indeed he shall: the same Jesus (not an apparition or an emissary) will return to the same place from which he ascended (the Mount of Olives) and in the same manner in which he ascended (in clouds).

Though as Peter predicted, scoffers have come, saying, Where is the promise of his coming, the day of Messiah will come, and the faith of millions of Jews and Christians will be realized. When he returns, Jesus will still be the same Jewish Lord and Savior, of the lineage of Abraham and David, not a faceless wraith of abstractions.

Jews through the centuries have publicly affirmed their belief in the Messiah’s coming according to Maimonides’ articles of faith. Millions have died with the same expectation of Messiah in their hearts that was a song on the lips of the martyrs in the Warsaw ghetto:

I believe, I believe, I believe
Sincerely, firmly, and devoutly

In the coming of the Messiah.
I believe in the Messiah,
And, though he tarry,
No less firmly I believe.
And though he tarry longer still,
Nevertheless, I believe in the Messiah,
I believe, I believe, I believe.

Likewise, multiplied millions of Christians have affirmed their faith in the returning Messiah in their affirmation of faith in the Apostles’ Creed. Untold numbers have died with their hearts anchored firmly on this expectation: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13). May every believer echo Paul’s exclamation, Maranatha! (“Come, Lord!”)

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www.hebraiccommunity.org
Written by: Joseph Shulam

The prayers that are prayed in Jewish Synagogues around the world are a collection. This collection has both modern and ancient texts, some of which are composed by historical people, and others so ancient that their origin is unknown. The majority of Jewish liturgy in the Synagogues is comprised of a few standard prayers: The Shema (a recitation of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 that begins with “Hear O Israel”), the Amida (that is also called Shemona Esre – Eighteen Benedictions), the Kaddish (A prayer recited several times during the prayer service and also during funerals and memorial services remembering the deceased relatives), and the Hallel (a recitation of Psalms 114-118).

At the High Holidays there are special prayers, such as Kol Nidre on Yom HaKippurim (The day of Atonement) and Selichot (petitions for forgiveness) during the month of Elul and during the ten days of awe between Rosh Hashanah and Yom HaKippurim, and even more special blessings for Sukkoth and Passover.

The Amida (Hebrew: הַשְּׁמַנְתֶּה הָאָשֶׁר נָא אָשֶׁר 드ִּבֵּרֲאֵנוּ, Shmoneh Esre “The Eighteen”) is called by this name because it traditionally had eighteen benedictions. It is called the Amida because people stand during the time that they recite this prayer. This prayer is found in every “Siddur” (the traditional Jewish prayer book.)

Religious Jews recite the Amida at each of three daily prayer services on normal weekdays and on every Shabbat and Holiday. This article is not concerned with all the eighteen benedictions of the Amida. This article is concerned only with the fifteenth benediction known as “The Blessing of David” in Hebrew “Birkat David.” This benediction is translated to English in many different forms.

The first translation “The offspring of Thy servant David, quickly cause to flourish, and lift up his power by Thy delivereance; for Thy delivereance do we constantly hope. Blessed art Thou, Lord, who makes the glory of delivereance to flourish.”

The Second Translation “May the Seed of David Thy servant flourish speedily and may You exalt in Your salvation. For in your salvation do we hope all the day. Blessed are You, Lord, Who brings forth the Horn of our salvation.”

The last phrase is the one that is problematic: “Who brings forth the Horn of our salvation.”

In order to understand the complexity of this prayer it must be understood that the word “SALVATION” in Hebrew is very similar to, and from the same root as the name of Yeshua. In Hebrew “Yeshua” is the original name of the Western transliteration, influenced by Greek, which became “Jesus” in English. The Hebrew noun for Salvation is actually “Yeshuah.” You can immediately see the closeness and relationship between the Hebrew word for Salvation (Yeshuah) and the name Yeshua. In Hebrew the difference is only one letter at the end of the word “Yeshua (b).”

The ending of this fifteenth benediction of the Amida is somewhat difficult to understand. Professor Solomon Pines of the Hebrew University was one of the pioneer researchers of early Christianity and studied the relationship between Jewish followers of Yeshua and Judaism. Prof. Pines was among the earliest academics to notice that the benediction of the Amida is somewhat complex to understand.

Professor Yehuda Liebes, of the Hebrew University succeeding Professor Pines noticed that the difficulties in understanding this prayer lie within the ending. The conclusion of this benediction does not really tie in with the main body of the benediction. The first part of the prayer is speaking about King David and has allusions to Biblical texts.

Here is a spread out of the prayer and the Biblical allusions:

The phrase “A branch (or plant) of David” is found in the following texts – all of which are clearly messianic texts:

Jer. 23:5 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.”

(Psalm 132:17) “There I will make the horn of David grow; I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed.” The second phrase in the benediction is translated, “Thy servant flourish speedily” - it is a liberal translation of Psalm 132:17, “make the horn of David grow” – “Horn” here is like “the horn of plenty” in the Greco-Roman culture.

In this text of Psalms 132:17, it is clear that the Psalmist is talking about the Messiah. The parallel phrase of the verse is: “I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed” - where “Anointed” is actually in Hebrew “Messiah.” All of this is spoken with reference to King David. The third phrase in the fifteenth benediction is: “For in your salvation do we hope all the day.”

But this is not what is written in this ancient prayer. The phrase to “bring forth the Horn...” connects with a person not with an abstract noun like “salvation.” In his article Professor Liebes also points out that in Biblical Langu-
we find in the blessing of Moses that "his horns like the horns of the wild ox" (Deut. 33:16: "With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let the blessing come 'on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.' 17 His glory is like a firstborn bull, And his horns like the horns of the wild ox; Together with them He shall push the peoples To the ends of the earth; They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, And they are the thousands of Manasseh.").

In the Hebrew this phrase is not like in the prayer, "Keren Yeshua" - Keren Yishei - קֵּרֶן יִשְׂחָא, but it is "Keren Yishei" - קֵּרֶן יִשְׂחָא. It has the same root, but the form is very different and speaks not of an abstract concept of Salvation but "My Salvation", which is very personal, and gives context to the phrase in Psalm 22:3 that refers to God Himself as the "Horn of my Salvation" - קֵּרֶן יִשְׂחָא. Also in the Kaddish prayer we find an Aramaic phrase that speaks of "God Himself who makes Salvation grow and brings near His Messiah" - עַכְרַת בְּנֵי חוֹדֵשׁ (Va Yetzma'ch Purka-ne Va Yekarev Meshiche), but we don’t find Salvation as a concept, be it acting, recieving, or as a source.

Professor Liebes argues that growing the Horn is always a questi on of giving strength to a person and for proof he brings the passages Psalm 132:17, Jeremiah 33:15, and Ezekiel 29:21 (Ezekiel: "In that day I will cause the horn of the house of Israel to spring forth, and I will open your mouth to speak in their midst. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.").

In Psalm 92:10-11, we find the phrase in its natural context and the meaning is "to give strength to the person so that he can vanquish his enemies." (92:10: "But my horn You have exalted like a wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil. 11 My eye also has seen my desire on my enemies; My ears hear my desire on the wicked Who rise up against me.").

In this text the exhalation of the Horn is in parallel with the anointing of fresh oil on the person who is speaking or singing this Psalm. In Deuteronomy 33:16-17, we find in the blessing of Moses to the tribes a blessing for Joseph that "his horns like the horns of the wild ox" (Deut. 33:16: "With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let the blessing come 'on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.' 17 His glory is like a firstborn bull, And his horns like the horns of the wild ox; Together with them He shall push the peoples To the ends of the earth; They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, And they are the thousands of Manasseh.").

(See also: 1 Chronicles 25:5: "All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to exalt his horn. For God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters)"

The Bible and Jewish literature’s stance with the phrase always refers to a person and not to an abstract concept, this strengthens the secondary nature of the phrase as it stands now in the Siddur (the Jewish Prayer books). By secondary nature Professor Liebes suggests that the original must have had a different meaning i.e. it was speaking of a person and not of a concept.

One of the Midrashic commentaries of the Tanach of the Byzantine period is Yalkut Shimeoni, which states that all the eighteen benedictions of the Amida are actually based on 1 Samuel chapter 2, Hannah's prayer of gratitude for the son that God has given her.

This is what Yalkut Shimeoni states: "And Hannah prayed. From this we learn that women must pray since it is clear that Hannah was praying the Eighteen Benedictions.

We know this by the hint that she gave us when she said, "My heart rejoices in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD. I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation." (1 Samuel 2:1, The Midrash commentary on Samuel, chapter 80, states that Hannah prayed the Amida. The Midrash connects the Amida with the phrase: "My horn is exalted in the LORD. I smile at my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation.")

There are several more linguistic considerations from Biblical texts and Second Temple Jewish literature that prove that the way the 15th Benediction of the Amida reads today is not the original text.

Professor Yehuda Liebes states that this prayer makes more sense if those who composed the prayer meant the third phrase to be about a person and not an abstract concept. The most logical person to whom this phrase could refer would be "Yeshua" - because the text would only change slightly with the addition of the letter "n". They would at least hide the originally intended glorification and identification of the Son of David, the Messiah, and Yeshua.

This not only happened in the ancient days of the Byzantine Empire, but it happened in the 20th Century in the prayer book of Rosh Hashanah.

In the early days of the State of Israel, during the 1950s, most of the Ashkenazi Machzorim (Orthodox Prayer Books for Rosh Hashanah) had the phrase "Yeshua Sar HaPanim" - "Yeshua the Minister (or angel) of God’s presence." Later on the "n" was added to make the text read "Yeshuah – Salvation – the Minister (or Angel) of God’s face."

So, it is not a large leap to see Yeshua in this very messianic blessing of the 15th benediction of the Amida. Whithin the Midrash and Talmud there is evidence that this prayer has been changed several times. In some periods the name of David was inserted a second time and the prayer read: "The God of David who makes "Yeshuah – Salvation" grow (Tsemach – חмысл) for His people Israel."

These changes are a clear indication that there was some discomfort and dissatisfaction with the original 15th benediction. (Midrash on Samuel 26:3, Martin Buber edition, Krakow, Poland, page 126. More on the same issue see Zeligman Bear’s book on the worship of Israel. There you find more Midrashic examples of the same in pages 97, 227.)

The question is who? When would such a benediction have been composed and who would want to make it more palatable for the Jewish Synagogues in the Land of Israel? We have seen that after the phrase "v'Azab Yishei" usu ally follows the name of a person. In the benediction case Professor Liebes proposes the possibility that it was "Yeshua", and that the prayer was composed by Jewish Disciples of Yeshua, and later changed because Jewish tradition in the Synagogues rejected Yeshua and his Disciples.

The quickest fix to the prayer, already a part of the liturgical tradition, was to add the "n" and make Yeshuah into Yeshuah – salvation.


It is clear that Luke and Ben-Sirach both see the idea of the horn of salvation as a reference to the messiah. It is likely that this addition of the name Yeshua that turned into Yeshuah happened in the first century before the period of the Bar-Kochba rebellion in the first quarter of the Second Century A.D.

In that period the Jewish Disciples of Yeshua were still very much Jewish and very much involved in the community and local Syna-
Professor Pines noted that the message of the Angel to Mary in Matthew chapter 1 was: “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Yeshua (JESUS), for He will Yoshiah (save – in construct) His people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:21)

This phrase has to be understood from the Hebrew for in Greek translation you lose the play on words of Yeshua / Yoshiah. This use of the word “save” - Yoshiah in this verse is an indication of the way that His disciples saw Yeshua in the end of the First Century A.D. He was seen to be Son of David and Savior.

The passages dealing with the “horn of David” (קרן דוד) and a “plant of David” (צמח דוד) are messianic by nature even in their original contexts in the Tanach.

Professor Liebes also suggests the possibility that even very early in the history of the 15th benediction of the Amida the disciples of Yeshua may have added the “ה” at the end of the word “Yeshua” and made it into “Yeshuah.” The friction between the Jews who were disciples of Yeshua and those who were not inside the Synagogues may have needed pacify. One way to soothe the friction and still retain their belief would have been to mask the name Yeshua and make it the noun “Yeshuah.”

David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first Prime Minister used a similar technique in the composition of Israel’s Declaration of Independence written on a Scroll. The Orthodox Jews wanted to include God in this important document, David Ben-Gurion objected to it, but in the end compromised and wrote in place of God “The Rock of Israel.” This satisfied the Orthodox Jews and also those who were secular.

Using a word that says what you want said and at the same time does not say it is like teaching with Parables. Those who need to understand the parables can understand them, and those who don’t need to use the parables will not. (Matt 13:10-11)

Professor David Flusser brought up a theory that this benediction was allowed in the Jewish Amida prayer because it was a political slap in the face of the Sadducees who denied the resurrection of the dead. So, by asking “The horn of salvation” to be raised it is a polemic against the Sadducees.

For the Jewish Disciples of Yeshua it would have been natural to pray together with all of Israel in the Synagogues. For the strengthening of David’s place as the prototype of the Messiah, for raising of the Horn of David as a “savior,” and for resolving the waiting for the Messiah, which is part of the controversial battles inside of Israel.

Professor Liebes points out that in the land of Israel this benediction was omitted because the Jewish Disciples of Yeshua were well known and their participation in the Synagogues was the cause for the insertion of what is called “Birkat HaMinim” - the benediction of the heretics. This benediction was especially composed to exclude the Disciples of Yeshua from participation in the Synagogue prayers.

Since the Diaspora in Babylon, the 15th benediction has been continuously included to this very day in most of the Jewish Prayer Books around the world. Yeshua found His way into the most central of Jewish prayers, the Amida (the Eighteen Benedictions), the very core of Jewish prayer and the center of Jewish worship.

Yes, the additional benediction against the heretics was added and that too continues to be recited in every Synagogue, but the memory of Yeshua and Salvation is not blotted out and it is our conviction that His name will be straightened and His Horn of King David will bring Yeshuah – Salvation to all of Israel.

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Deeper Significance

Eisler argued that at the time of Yeshua the afikoman was originally part of an established messianic ritual observed during the Passover.

He said the whole piece of matzah held up at the beginning of the meal represented all Israel, while the broken-off portion stood for the longed-for Messiah. When the hidden afikoman emerged from concealment at the end of the Seder, it symbolized the coming of the Messiah in the midst of his people.

Eisler’s Thesis
• Whole matzah = all Israel
• Broken, hidden piece = Messiah

According to Eisler, this symbolic ritual was already being observed by at least some (if not most) Jews in the first century at the time of Yeshua. The ritual thus predated him. His thesis lay dormant for some 40 years.


The Recovery

In his book He That Cometh (1966), Professor David Daube, a Jewish biblical and legal scholar at Oxford University, revived Eisler’s proposal and provided more significant documentation for the thesis.

Daube argued that the word afikoman had nothing to do with “dessert,” but came from the Greek verb afikomenos which means “the Coming One” or “He who has come.”

Daube said the Passover meal long had a messianic tone to it. And the afikoman matzah glowed with a special aura. He believed this was because it symbolized the expected Messiah. The afikoman energized the Seder with a deep sense of expectancy: the hope of an even greater, future Passover redemption.

 Appropriately, this matzah was the last thing eaten at the meal. Daube believed that the unleavened bread that Yeshua gave to his disciples at the last Passover meal was actually an afikoman.

Does the Thesis Fit the Gospels?

The implication of Eisler’s thesis—and Daube’s added validation—is striking. Can we assume that Yeshua took an existing Jewish messianic-prophetic tradition and used it as an opportunity for self-revelation? Was he uniting himself with his people into “one loaf” and fulfilling their messianic hopes?

If so, then when he raised the unleavened afikoman and said, “Take, eat; this is my body,” he was in effect saying: “This broken and hidden matzah, which has for our people symbolized the Messiah, is fulfilled in me. I myself am the Afikoman—the Coming One—whom you expect.”

Submerged Stream

This messianic symbolism and ritual were eventually lost to Jewish tradition.

Daube’s thesis (himself a Jew) suggests that the linguistic origin of afikoman may have been deliberately distorted by the rabbis. Hence, later definitions “dessert” and “after-dinner entertainment” were put forth to cover their duplicity. Or the messianic symbolism of the ritual was suppressed by later rabbinic commentators because the messiah didn’t arrive.

In other words, because Yeshua’s Jewish disciples perpetuated the old customs about the afikoman, official Judaism abandoned them. This was (and continues to be) a common rabbinic tactic for treating perceived heresy. Whatever gave credence to Yeshua’s claims must either be reinterpreted or rejected altogether.

Similarly, in the later gentilized Christian church, the original Passover roots of the “Festival/Feast” (1 Cor 5:7-8) and the “Lord’s Supper” (1 Cor 11:20) were obscurcured by growing anti-Jewish ideology and abstract arguments about Transubstantiation and the efficacy of the sacrament.

In time, the messianic (i.e., Jewish) symbolism in the Seder and Afikoman disappeared behind the Eucharist and the Host, Communion and the Breaking of Bread.

The Coming One in the New Testament

Yeshua and his Jewish disciples repeatedly refer to his “coming.” In fact, there were two. As he said, “I have come from God” (John 8:42), and John wrote, “We know the Son of God has come” (1 John 5:20). But by far, most passages refer to his future coming: his return. “He will appear a second time for salvation” (Heb 9:28).

Psalm 118:26 — “Blessed is the One Coming in the name of YHVH.”

This blessing formed part of the Hosanna acclamation that met
Yeshua as he entered Jerusalem for the last time (Matt 21:9 parallels).

Yeshua also cites this passage from Psalm 118 as a promise-warning to Israel. “From now on you shall not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (Matt 23:39; Luke 13:35). This implies his return is contingent upon the people of Israel sending up an urgent request to God to send their Messiah back, who will remain in God’s presence “until the period of Restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21).

In the meantime, he sits at the right hand of God “waiting.” Waiting for that prayer to rise from Israel’s lips (Heb 10:13). But sitting is not an image of inactivity. Paul says Yeshua’s posture of sitting and waiting means he actually “reigns” (1 Cor 15:25).

Based on Psalm 110:1, God makes war on behalf of his Son, while Paul tells us Messiah works to defeat “all rule and all authority and power” until the End, when he “delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father” (1 Cor 15:24).

The Hidden Afikoman-Messiah Reappears

Yeshua physically left earth. He was taken away and hidden from us. We are told he is waiting, even reigning and waging war “until...”

. . . until Israel wants him to return.
. . . until God and Messiah finish liberating their Kingdom (Rev 11:15) from the supernatural and human Resistance Movement that has plagued humanity from East of Eden.

In time, the Afikoman Messiah will return as the longed-for, life-giving dessert promised to those awaiting for him. And every time they memorialize the ancient and Messianic Seder by eating the matzah and drinking the wine, they “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26).

Yeshua’s last recorded words to his people were: “Yes, I am coming quickly.” In anticipation, perhaps an apt response from those who partake of his Memorial Afikoman Bread might be: “Amen, come Lord Yeshua” (Rev 22:20).
"For we know in part and we prophesy in part" (1 Cor. 13:9).

There are various interpretations concerning the coming of the Messiah and the rapture of the Church. Many talk about the seven year period of the End time, which is further divided in two three and a half year periods. Some say the rapture of the Church will happen in the beginning of the seven year period, some say it will happen in the middle of it, and the third interpretation places it at the end of the seven year period. The Bible, however, does not give us any exact information about the date of the Messiah’s coming, which makes it pointless to argue about these interpretations.

(Matt. 24:36) Yeshua on the other hand, while talking to his disciples, spoke about many signs that would herald His approaching coming. In this paper we will discuss briefly the signs of the Messiah’s coming.

Yeshua’s teaching about the signs of His coming

“Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ‘Do you see all these things?’, he asked, ‘I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.’ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately. ‘Tell us,’ they said, ‘when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming [Greek ses parusias = to your coming] and of the end of the age [Greek aion, Hebrew haOlam]?’” (Matt. 24:1-3, NIV).

Just before His suffering and crucifixion Yeshua told His disciples that the beautiful and sumptuous Jerusalem Temple would be demolished. The disciples must have been shattered when their Master told them that the beautiful Temple would be destroyed to such an extent that no stone would be left upon a stone. (This happened in 70 AD through the Roman Forces.) The disciples, all shaken, began to ask Yeshua when this would happen and what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age. Yeshua responded by giving a long and prophetical sermon in which He enumerated many signs that would signal His coming.

The great deception

“Jesus answered: ‘Watch out that no-one deceives you… and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people’” (Matthew 24:4,11).

“For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect – if that were possible’” (Matthew 24:24).

Yeshua’s first word was a serious word of warning; do not be deceived by the deception that has caught many and will catch many, even by the power of miracles. There has always been false prophets, false messiahs (anointed ones), deceivers and deception, but especially close to the coming of our Lord, the enemy of our souls will do his...
utmost to lead astray as many people as possible. As the coming of the Messiah draws nearer, the currents of the deception will be so devious that even many of the elect risk being caught up in the webs of the deception. (Matt. 24:24) Satan will masquerade as an angel of light, and his servants as servants of righteousness. (1 Cor. 11:1-4; 13:15)

How, then, can we tell what is deception? The most important thing to remember is that all that is not according to the Word of God is deception. Secondly, you recognize the tree by its fruit. (Matt. 7:15-23) We will take up here some distinguishing features of deception. One has to do with greed for money. (1 Tim. 6:9-12; 2 Peter 2:1-3) Money in itself is not a bad thing, but greed is. Where people talk much about money, where one is promised success and blessings in return for a sacrificial donation, beware of deception! The Bible also warns us not to be deceived by sin and immorality. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) If the worst happens, and God’s laws and instructions are forgotten in this adulterous End time (Jude 7), God’s grace can be dragged through the mire. There is the threat of leaving the straight way, as well. The Bible teaches us that the ways of the Lord are straight, but people are looking for rondboways so they wouldn’t have to obey the clear instruc-
tions God has given in His Word. (Hosea 14:10; Ecl.7:30) Not lo-
ving one’s brother is also a form of deception. (1 John 3:7-12) Yeshua said that the world would know His disciples by their mutual love. (John 13:35) The early church were one in heart and in mind, and their love to each other was demonstrated in the way they took care of each other. (Acts 4:32-35) One further sign of the approach of the Messiah’s coming is that the believers’ love gets cold as lawlessness increa-
ses. (Matt. 24:12-13)

The world will know a last and hideous deception. The Bible te-
aches us that the Lord will restore Israel, Jerusalem, and His church close to His coming. (Acts 3:19-21; Isa.49:6; 8: 62:1-7; Eph.5:25-
27) This means, e.g., that true believers will be gathered in one flock. (John 10:16) The enemy of our souls, who is well aware of this plan of the Lord, will come masqueraded as an angel of light and deceive the Christians in the End time. He will build a counter-
feit system, a unity of churches or an ecumenical world church led by Rome. The Book of Re-
velation calls this “Babylon the great, the mother of prostitutes” whose real nature will be revea-
led once she is in power. She will persecute believers through the earthly power of the beast. (Rev. 17; Eph.5:31-32; 1 Cor.6:15-16) Many Christians with no or little knowledge of the Word will be deceived, because they think that Yeshua’s prayer “that they would be one” has come true, although what they see is only counterfeit oneness displayed by the leaders of the prostitute church of Ba-
bylon, and not the real oneness in Spirit based on the light of the Word. (John 17:20-23; Ps. 119:105; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 17-18) Tragically, also the Finnish church leaders are leading their flocks towards the world church led by Rome.

Wars and rumours of wars

“You will hear of wars and rum-
ors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against king-
dom...” (Matthew 24:6-7).

“When you hear of wars and re-
volutions, don’t be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away. Then he said to them: Na-
tion will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...” (Luke 21:9-10).

Among the signs heralding the Messiah’s coming are also revolu-

tions, wars and rumours of wars, which we are now hearing from all over the world. The sea of na-
tions is surging, especially around the Great Sea, i.e. the Mediter-
ranean. (Dan.7:1-3). From this uproar the beast nations will rise in the End time. The Middle East and the regions of the river Euph-
rates have been for years another crucial area of great uproar, and it will continue to be one till the end. (Rev.9:12-21; 16:12-16) Every-
thing will culminate in a great at world war and an atom war. There are many references to the great End time war in the Bible, e.g. in Ezekiel 38-39 and Revelati-
on 9 and 16. Israel will also come under attack.

Natural disasters and exception-

tal weather phenomena

“There will be famine and earth-
quakes in various places” (Matth-
ew 24:7).

“There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in vario-
us places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven” (Luke 21:11).

“The sky receded like a scroll,
and the mountains could not be found” (Rev.6:14; 16:20).

Natural disasters and exceptional weather phenomena are among the signs of the Messiah’s coming. One of these disasters is famine, so common in many places, especially in Africa. Millions of people suffer from malnutrition or are starving. In the End time famine and expensive groce-
ries may well strike the Western world and the Northern countries which are now living in luxury. (Rev. 6-5-6: Zech. 6:6) Earth-
quakes, even huge earthquakes, are signs of the End time. Eventu-
ally the earth will be shaken by so enormous an earthquake — caus-
ed possibly by the falling into the sea of a big asteroid - that moun-
tains will crumble and islands will be removed from their places. Certain believers have had visions of a complete parting of Northern and Southern America.

The Mount Zion in Jerusalem will be the highest (temple)

mount in the world and the rest of the earth will be rather flat. (Isa.2:1-4) God will shape up the earth into a paradise for the com-

Alongside these phenomena mentioned above, the Bible spe-

aks about many other signs of the End time. We will take here briefly some examples:

* Plague, pestilence, and epidemics (Rev.6:7-8).
* Heat, draught, locusts (Joel 1).
* Torrents of rain and floods (Ezekiel 38:22).
* Frost, snow and hailstorms (Job 38:22-23).
* Tornadoes (Jeremiah 23:19-20).

Global persecution

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to dea-
th, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other” (Matthew24:9-10).

“However, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when men will no longer say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites out of Egypt,’ but they will say, ‘As sure-
ly as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.’ For I will restore them to the land I gave to their forefa-
thers. But now I will send for many fishermen’, declares the LORD, ’and they will catch them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and from the crevices of the rocks’” (Jer-

Believers in Yeshua have been persecuted ever since the days of the early church. (Acts 8:1-2) In this End time that we live in, believers are being persecuted in about fifty countries, and there are about 200 million believers who experience persecution.
The worst situation has been for many years in North Korea, and in many Islamic countries persecution is a daily threat. Eventually persecution will increase, and also Western countries that have professed freedom of religion will persecute Bible believing and pro-Israel Christians. (Mark 13:9-13)

God’s chosen people, Israel and the Jews, will also be persecuted. Something will happen in the world that will trigger off global anti-Semitism and Israel hatred, and the Jews will have to flee from the nations to Israel in the great End time Exodus. (Zech. 2:6-8) God allows this to happen so that every one included in His chosen people would return to the land of their forefathers. At the end there will be no Jew left among the nations. (Ezek. 39:28-29) During those days of great tribulation believers who love Israel must help them to flee from the nations to their own land. (Isa. 49:22; Matt. 24:20-22)

Increase of wickedness

“Because the increase of wickedness [Greek anomian= lawlessness, an attitude without the law/Torah], the love of most will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12).

“This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3).

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord’, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matt.7:21-23).

“For the secret power of lawlessness [Greek anomalia is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one [Greek anomos= a person without the law/Torah] will be revealed” (2Tess.2:7-8).

“This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men [Greek anomos= lawless, without the law; refers to Roman soldiers who nailed the Messiah on the cross], put him to death by nailing him to the cross” (Acts 2:23).

Yeshua mentioned in his prophetic sermon on the Mount of Olives that one of the signs of His coming would be the increase of lawlessness. This means a general moral collapse; crime, violence and overall amorality takes over the societies of the world, as we now see happening. This moral corruption and loss of love for God also concerns Christian churches who have ceased to honor the truths of the Word and of the commands of God. A good example of this moral backsliding is the rejection of the traditional concept of marriage between man and woman, and replacing it with gender neutral marriage.

Lawlessness, however, has a spiritual dimension as well. In the Greek language there is the word nomos, meaning law, God’s Torah (Hebrew Torah= teaching, instruction, law; the five books of Moses; mostly translated as “law”). The opposite of nomos is anomia, which means lawlessness or an attitude that wants to be without God’s law/Torah, or undo the Torah. The secret of this lawlessness was working already at the time of the Apostle Paul, but it could not take over, because after the ascension of Yeshua, Paul with the other apostles supervised the Torah-honouring teaching given in the church. (Matt.5:17-19; Acts 24:14; 26:22; Rom.3:31; 1 Tim. 1:8) But Paul warned that after him savage wolves, false prophets, would come into the church, who would not spare the flock but carry into the church pernicious doctrines, exposing God’s church to a great danger with their teaching that distorts and nullifies the Torah, and even changes God’s Word. (Acts 20:28-31; Matt. 7:15-17; 1 Peter 2:1-3) Towards the end of the first century, while John, the last of the apostles, was still living, these savage wolves that rose from the midst of the church, these lawless people, these antichrists, sought to split and disperse the Messiah’s one flock with their deceitful lies. (1 John 2:18-19) Their work will reach the peak in the End times.

We can learn from the Acts from which direction this religious lawlessness is impacting the church. The Messiah was nailed to the cross by men of lawlessness, i.e. Roman soldiers. Daniel chapter seven, towards the end, confirms this; it speaks about the four beasts that rise from the churning sea of nations, about the horn of the beast of Rome that changes the times and the law. This beastly kingdom of Rome first ruled through emperors, then it became a religious power governed by the Holy Seat, and it will continue as such until the Millennium reign of the Messiah. (Dan.7:23-27; Rev 20) This horn of the beast of Rome has changed times and calendar (also the times of biblical feasts), and the law/Torah with its commandments. Let us see some examples.

The horn of the beast of Rome removed from the Ten Commandments the command not to make nor to adore any images, and split the tenth commandment in two in order to maintain the same number of commandments. This opened the way to the worship of Virgins Mary and the saints. Biblical holidays, God’s set times, were turned into a mixture of Babylon’s mystery religion and biblical feasts (Lev.23), of which Christmas is a good example.

Otava Great Encyclopedia writes on Christmas: “Pagan background and Middle Age tradition of Christmas: Christian Christmas was transferred to December 25 in the middle of the fourth century. The former holiday was in January, at Epiphany. There have been many different interpretations and calculations about the date of Christ’s birth. It has been placed in the spring or in the autumn. No tradition binds it to December. The reasons lie elsewhere. In Rome, instituted by Emperor Aurelian, the birthday of the Sun god was celebrated on December 25, “Dies natalis solis invicti”. This festivity was connected with oriental religions, e.g. the Mithra cult. This date was chosen because about the time of the introduction of the Julian calendar winter solstice happened to fall on December 25. The Christian church took the same course of action as many times before. It did not fight against the success the holiday had gained but rather embraced it and gave it a Christian content. Two other festivities observed in the Roman empire, Saturnalia and Kalendai, also had influence on the establishment of Christmas.”

Pope Julius I established the 25th of December as Jesus’ birthday, i.e. Christmas Day, in 345. Thus the sun god’s birthday was turned into the celebration of Jesus’ birthday. (It is most probable that Yeshua was born in the autumn around the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Bible does not give any command nor example to celebrate Yeshua’s birthday.) Our second example deals with Passover.

Otava Great Encyclopedia writes on page 5503: “In the most ancient times, especially in Asian churches, Passover was observed according to the Jewish tradition on Nisan 14. In Western countries another tradition was observed according to which the fast couldn’t be ended nor the feast begun until the following Sunday. Also this practice was considered apostolic. The earliest recorded knowledge of the western style of Passover dates from the early second century in Rome. Through its pagan-christian tradition the Roman church clearly wanted to separate itself from Jewish influence. Passover favoured by Rome also differed from the eastern way as to the contents of the feast. The winner was the pegan-
Christian Passover, which was instituted by the Council of Nicea in 325. The date of Passover, object of debate still for the next two centuries, was placed on Sunday following the next full moon after vernal equinox.

Extract from the papers of the Council of Nicea in 325: “By rejecting their ways we can pass to coming generations the legally right form of celebrating Passover… So we should not have anything in common with the Jews, because the Saviour has shown us another way: our worship observes a legally more right and appropriate sequence (order of week days). And consistently, choosing unanimously this form, dear brethren, we want to separate ourselves from the disgusting company of Jews.”

We see how Christianity has been taken over morally and religiously by lawlessness. The instructions of God’s Word are ignored, and His commandments are not obeyed. Those who practise lawlessness, however, are heading towards a tragic end. Yeshua the Messiah won’t recognize them as His own even though they had done miracles in Jesus’ name, cast out demons and prophesied. All miracles are not from God. What matters is that we obey God’s Word and the Lord’s commandments. This doesn’t mean we obey Him under compulsion, but that we obey His commandments out of love for God and the Messiah, thanking Him for having saved us by grace. All things will reach their highest in the End time, and the ultimate man of lawlessness will appear, as the Apostle Paul warns us. (2 T ess. 2:1-12)

The Gospel of the Kingdom and the last Revival

“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralysed, and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him” (Matthew 4:23-25).

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

Almost two thousand years ago Yeshua the Messiah preached the gospel of the kingdom to one people, the Jewish people, healing the sick and the possessed. (Matt. 9:35-38) Big crowds followed Him during this great revival. At the end of this age of grace, just before the Messiah’s return, the gospel of the kingdom will be preached intensively. And not only to one people, the Israeli people, but to all nations around the world. Signs and wonders accompany this last great revival of the gospel of the kingdom as the Lord confirms the Word of His gospel by signs. (Mark 16:15-18) When this mission of the last great but short revival is accomplished, alongside with the great Exodus caused by it, the end of this age will come. (Dan. 12:1-3) We have to keep working as long as there is day, because night is coming when no one can work. (John 9:4)

We will continue to discuss the signs of the Messiah’s coming in the next issues of Yovel.
"...that all of them may be one (echad)..."] Joh. 17:21

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