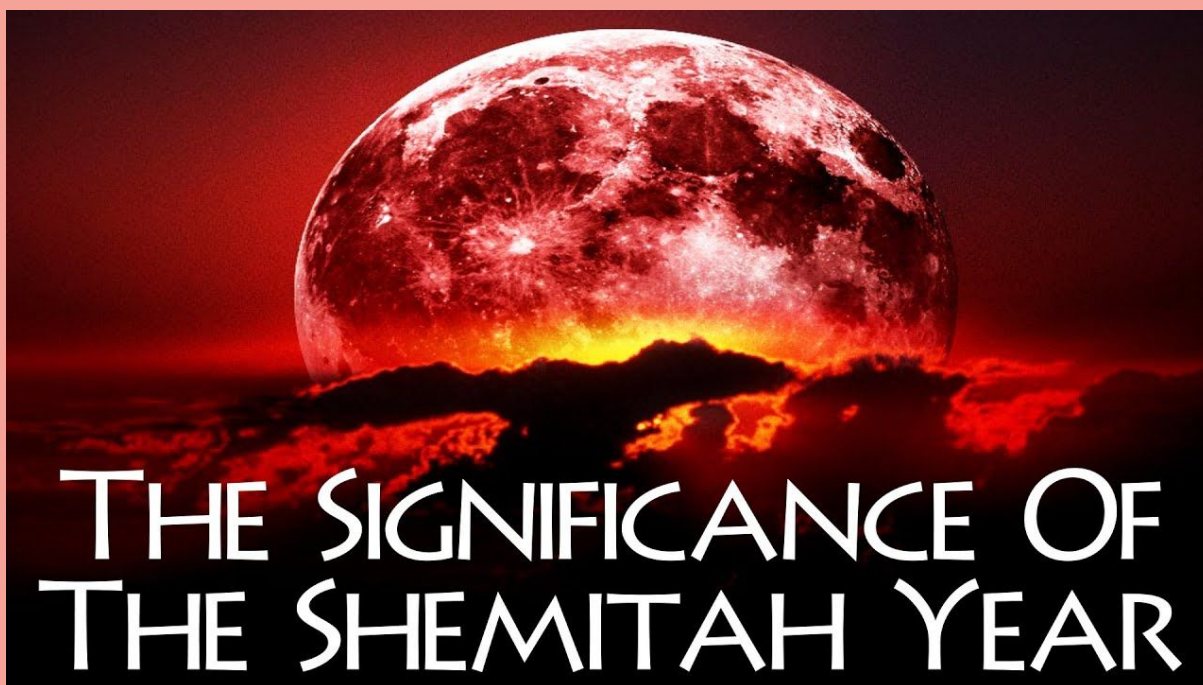




SPECIAL SHEMITA Edition 2022-23

The Remnant's Walk



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SHEMITAH YEAR

***Lev 25:4** And in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest to the land, a Sabbath to YAHWEH. You shall not sow your field, and you shall not prune your vineyard.*

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... is a Worldwide Ministry aimed at restoring the Faith once delivered by Yahshua of Nazareth to the Congregation at its inception close to 2,000 years ago. This restoration needs to take place in order to reach those with ears to hear and eyes to see the truth from the lies so that the good news of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. (*Matthew 24:14*)

We encourage all those who consider themselves to be true believers to ask: "which congregation do I belong to? The true faith our Savior Yahshua the Messiah set down in the year 30 CE, or the false doctrine, drenched in paganism and sun worship, as set down by Constantine in 325 CE?" The two are vastly different and we cannot serve two masters. (*Matthew 6:24*)

One was a Hebrew Congregation with a Hebrew Savior that was completely Torah observant. The other was and still is a counterfeit, lawless church, sealed by the decrees of Constantine and implemented for the sole purpose of deceiving and enslaving mankind. (*Revelation 12:9*)

The articles contained in this publication are motivated by the Word of Truth, the Holy Scriptures, inspired by our Almighty Father Yahweh and Yahshua Messiah, His Son. Words made manifest through the power of the Holy Spirit. (*2 Timothy 3:15-17*)

Some articles are reprint articles from the old Good News magazine and will say reprint. May you be blessed and grow in truth and Spirit in His wonderful name, Shalom...



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Personal

by Don Esposito

Greetings Brethren,

And shalom in the wonderful name of Yahshua Messiah. This issue of the Remnant's Walk is a special issue that will be focused on the Shemita year that is now upon us.

The Shemita year is a year of resting the land and allowing the soil to replenish itself from lost nutrients and overuse. It is also a year of releasing debt and being able to start fresh for those who may have gotten in financial difficulty in the past six years of this seven-year cycle.

However, the Shemita is so much more than just a 3,500-year-old command given to Moses for ancient Israel. The Shemita is a time of building faith in Yahweh as our provider just as the children of Israel had to when they were in the wilderness.

And here we are almost 3,500 hundred years later, and Yahweh has once again taken His people to the wilderness away from society to prepare for His soon coming Kingdom. The Israelites were being prepared for a physical piece of land to occupy with hostile nations all around them, and very little fortitude to serve Yahweh in spirit and truth.

But we are in the wilderness getting ready to also enter the physical land of Israel, but also to enter that land in the Kingdom of Yahweh with Yahshua, the King of Peace reigning from Jerusalem all over the earth.

The Shemita runs in 7 cycles of 7 years and then, the 50th year is set apart as the Jubilee of Yahweh where Yahshua, the coming kinsman redeemer, will redeem all true believers in Him back to the Promised Land of Israel.

And what makes this so exciting is that we don't know which one of the 7-year cycles that we are in. It could be the 5th 7-year cycle, or possibly even the 6th cycle, but one thing is for sure that very soon this current cycle of 7 years of 7 will be over, and Yahshua will come back to this earth right before the 50th year Jubilee will begin.

Yahshua started His ministry in 27 A.D., in a Shemita year, and the Shemita is a great time to overcome any bondage that may have crept into your life and to redeem the freedom that we have in Yahshua's sacrifice from the corrupted world of Satan.

Many in the first century came to faith in Yahshua because they were not working their fields that Shemita year and dedicated the year to Yahweh. Little did they know how blessed they would be for making that decision. May we also make a decision this year to put our full faith in Yahweh and dedicate this Shemita to serving Him and finishing His work.

*B'Shem Yahshua,
Elder Don*

The Shemita /Sabbatical Year



By Don Esposito

Some believe that the 7th year land rest from Scripture is only physical. This is not true as it is also most spiritual and a sign of faith. The land rest is physically set to replenish the land with nutrients, but also to replenish ourselves spiritually and is an extension of the Sabbath command of faith.

The Sabbath is called the faith commandment because anyone can say they don't lie or steal, but with the Sabbath you are either worshipping or working. It takes faith to enter the Sabbath covenant and maybe even lose your job and not have money to pay bills. It is the same with the land rest. It takes faith in believing in the Word of Yahweh to rest your land every 7th year if you are a farmer and will lose not only a whole year of your own personal food, but a whole year of income selling your grain/vegetables etc.

Lev 25:20 And when you say, What shall we eat in the seventh year; for, lo, we may not sow nor gather our increase?

Lev 25:21 Then **I have commanded My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it shall produce the increase for three years;**

Lev 25:22 and you shall sow the eighth year, and shall eat of the old crop until the ninth year, until the coming in of its crop; you shall eat of the old.

The land Sabbath is just as much a law as the 7th day Sabbath and takes just as much faith to follow it. Do you believe the promise of Yahweh in Lev 25:20-22 above? If you are faithful and obedient in this law then you will be blessed, but if you are not obedient and do not rest your land every 7th year according to Scripture, then you will deplete your land as they have done in the US/Babylon and many other parts of the world and it will become fruitless and unproductive.

The land of Israel is no different than any other land and any land not rested will be depleted of its nutrients.

Also, some claim that Scripture only states to keep the land Sabbaths when you enter into Israel, but they are not being honest with the situation, as it states that because they were entering Israel and that is where Yahweh's covenant was made. As a matter of fact, **NO law** in the Torah was meant to be kept outside of Israel, because Israel was never meant to be kicked

out of the land, but was kicked out because of disobedience, and one of the main laws that were being broken was the land Sabbath rest.

Lev 23:9 And YAHWEH spoke to Moses, saying,

Lev 23:10 Speak to the sons of Israel, and you shall say to them, **When you come in to the land which I am giving to you, and have reaped its harvest, and have brought in the Omer, of the beginning of your harvest, to the priest, (clearly this is the harvest and land of Israel)**

Lev 23:11 then he shall wave the Omer before YAHWEH for your acceptance; on the morrow of the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Lev 23:12 And you shall prepare a lamb in the day you wave the Omer, one without blemish, a son of a year, for a burnt offering to YAHWEH.

Lev 23:13 And its food offering shall be two tenths part of flour mixed with oil, a fire offering to YAHWEH, a sweet fragrance; and its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine.

Lev 23:14 And you shall not eat bread, nor roasted grain, nor fresh ears, until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your Elohim; it is a never ending statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Lev 23:21 And you shall make a proclamation on this same day; it is a holy gathering to you. You shall do no laborious work of service. It is a never ending statute in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

Lev 23:22 **And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not completely reap the corner of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor, and for the alien: I am YAHWEH your Elohim.**

(Would we only do this in Israel? I think NOT)

Lev 23:23 And YAHWEH spoke to Moses, saying,

Lev 23:24 Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first of the month, a Holy Day Sabbath shall be to you, a memorial acclamation of the resounding of trumpets, a holy gathering.

Lev 23:25 You shall do no laborious work and you shall bring a fire offering to YAHWEH.

Lev 23:26 And YAHWEH spoke to Moses saying,

Lev 23:27 Also, on the tenth of this seventh month shall be a day of atonement; there shall be a holy gathering, and you shall humble and weaken your bodies and shall bring a fire offering to YAHWEH.

Lev 23:28 And you shall do no work in this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to atone for you before YAHWEH your Elohim.

Lev 23:29 For any person who is not humbled in this same day shall be cut off from his people.

Lev 23:30 And any person who does any work in this same day, I shall even cut off that person from the midst of his people.

Lev 23:31 You shall do no work; it is a never ending statute throughout your generations, in all your dwellings.

Lev 23:32 It is a Sabbath of rest to you, and you shall humble your souls in the ninth of the month at evening; from evening until evening you shall keep your Sabbath.

Lev 23:33 And YAHWEH spoke to Moses, saying,

Lev 23:34 Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, In the fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be a Feast of Booths, seven days to YAHWEH.

Lev 23:35 On the first day shall be a holy gathering; you shall do no laborious work.

Lev 23:36 Seven days you shall bring a fire offering to YAHWEH; on the eighth day you shall have a holy gathering; and you shall bring the fire offering to YAHWEH; it is a solemn assembly; you shall do no laborious work of service.

Lev 23:37 These are the set feasts of YAHWEH which you shall proclaim, holy gatherings, to bring a fire offering to YAHWEH, a burnt offering, and a food offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, the thing of a day on its own day;

Lev 23:38 besides the Sabbaths of YAHWEH, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you shall give to YAHWEH.

Lev 23:39 Also, in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you gather the increase of the land, you shall keep the feast of YAHWEH seven days; on the first day a Holy Day Sabbath, and on the eighth day a Holy Day Sabbath.

Lev 23:40 And you shall take to yourselves on the first day the fruit of majestic trees, palm branches, and boughs of oak trees, and willows of the valley, and shall rejoice before YAHWEH your Elohim seven days. **(These were all trees indigenous to the land of Israel)**

Lev 23:41 And you shall celebrate it a feast to YAHWEH, seven days in a year, a never ending statute throughout your generations; in the seventh month you shall keep it.

Lev 23:42 You shall sit in Sookkuhs for seven days; all who are native in Israel shall sit down in Sookkuhs,

Lev 23:43 so that your generations shall know that I caused the sons of Israel to live in Sookkuhs, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am YAHWEH your Elohim.

Lev 23:44 And Moses declared the appointed feasts of YAHWEH to the sons of Israel.

If we believe the premise that the land Sabbath was only to be kept in Israel, then I would also have to believe that the Holy Days, including Passover, were only to be kept in Israel, as it states the same thing, ***“when you enter the land you are to keep these days”***. As a matter of fact, every Holy Day can only be kept properly with agriculture that can only be found in Israel and that region. If we are honest with Scripture, it never states about keeping the Holy days anywhere but Jerusalem.

1Ki 14:21b And **he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which YAHWEH chose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there.**

Deu 16:2 And **you shall sacrifice a Passover to YAHWEH your Elohim** of the flock, and of the herd, **in the place which He shall choose to cause His name to dwell there (Jerusalem).**

Deu 16:13 **You shall perform the Feast of Tabernacles seven days after you have gathered in from your grain-floor, and from your winepress.**

Deu 16:14 And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son, and your daughter, and your male slave, and your slave-girl, and the Levite, and the alien, and the fatherless, and the widow that are inside your gates.

Deu 16:15 **You shall keep a solemn feast seven days to YAHWEH your Elohim in the place which YAHWEH shall choose (Jerusalem);** for YAHWEH your Elohim shall bless you in all your produce, and in every work of your hands, and you shall be altogether joyful.

Deu 16:16 Three times in a year shall all your males appear before YAHWEH your Elohim in the place which He shall choose (Jerusalem): In the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks and in the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before YAHWEH empty,

Again, this is not saying this because we should not keep the Holy Days in our Diaspora, but because the original intent of the whole covenant, and primarily the land covenant was to be in the land of Israel. It was never thought of doing any Torah law outside the land because being outside the land was being outside of covenant relationship, and Israel never thought they would ever be outside of the land.

However, Yahweh tells us in Leviticus 26 that in the end time if we realize the sins of our forefathers and ourselves, and we cry out to Him and ask Him for forgiveness, then He will remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and **He WILL REMEMBER THE LAND!**

Lev 26:2 You shall keep My Sabbaths, **(including land Sabbaths)** and revere My sanctuary; I am YAHWEH.

Lev 26:3 If you walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them,

Lev 26:4 then I will give you rains in their season, and the land shall give her produce, and the tree of the field shall give its fruit;

Lev 26:5 and your threshing shall reach to the vintage, and the vintage shall reach to the sowing time; and you shall eat your bread to satisfaction, and live in your land securely.

Lev 26:14 And if you will not listen to Me, and do not do all these commands;

Lev 26:15 and if you reject My statutes, and if your soul hates My judgments, so as not to do all My commands, to the breaking of My covenant;

Lev 26:20 and your strength shall be consumed in vain, and your land shall not give her produce, and the tree of the land shall not give its fruit.

Lev 26:21 And if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to listen to Me, then I will bring seven times more plagues on you according to your sins **(7 times more for neglecting the 7th year land rest)**

Lev 26:32 **And I shall make the land desolate**, and your enemies who are living in it shall be astonished at it.

Lev 26:33 **And I will scatter you among nations**, and shall draw out the sword after you, and your land shall become a waste, **and your cities shall be a desolation.**

Lev 26:34 **Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths, all the days of the desolation. And you shall be in the land of your enemies; then the land shall enjoy rest, and shall enjoy its Sabbaths.**

Lev 26:35 It shall rest all the days of the desolation, that which it has not rested in your Sabbaths while you lived on it.

Lev 26:40 **And if they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass with which they have trespassed against Me; and, also, that they have walked contrary to Me,**

Lev 26:41 that I also have walked contrary to them, and I have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are then humbled, and they are pleased to pay for their iniquity;

Lev 26:42 **then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and I shall also remember My covenant with Abraham, and I shall remember the land.**

Lev 26:43 **For the land shall be forsaken by them, and shall satisfy for its Sabbaths, in the desolation without them. And they shall satisfy for their iniquity, because, even because, they have kicked against My judgments, and their soul has loathed My statutes.**

Lev 26:44 **And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I hate them, to consume them, to break My covenant with them; for I am YAHWEH their Elohim.**

Lev 26:45 Then I shall remember for them the covenant of the first fathers, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their Elohim; I am YAHWEH.

Lev 26:46 **These are the statutes and the judgments and the laws which YAHWEH has given between Him and the sons of Israel, in Mount Sinai, by the hand of Moses.**

How can we prove to Yahweh that we are really repentant and will be obedient to His Torah unless we show Him by keeping the whole Torah in our Diaspora? If not, we are just like the Christians, who state yes, the Sabbath was kept for 2,000 years until Messiah, and yes it will be kept in the Millennium, but we don't have to keep it now in our dispensation of grace. This is not convincing to Yahweh and will not bring the blessing of Him hearing our prayer and restoring Ephraim back to the land, it will only make Him think we are no different than ancient Israel who defiled His Sabbaths, both 7th day and land rests. Leviticus 26 clearly states that in our Diaspora if we repent and keep all the Torah and cry to Yahweh in our obedience,

then He will hear us and remember the land covenant and bring us back to our homeland of Israel.

And how do we know we have the Sabbatical year correct?

Please look at the following historical references that all point to the sabbatical cycle.

- We are told by Maccabees 6:49 that Judas Maccabee's defeat at Beth-Zur was a sabbatical year. This is dated from the autumn of **163 BC to 162 BC**.
- Josephus tells us that the murder of Simon the Hasmonian happened in a sabbatical year of **135 BC to autumn of 134 BC**.
- Josephus also states that Herod's conquest of Jerusalem happened in a sabbatical year from Autumn **37 BC to 36 BC**.
- King Agrippa's sabbatical year was **41 AD to autumn of 42 AD**.
- A papyrus document found in Aramaic found in Israel is dated to the second year of Nero, which is stated as a sabbatical year in the autumn of **55 to 56 AD**.
- Historical references for the temple being destroyed shows it was in a sabbatical year of **69 AD to 70 AD**.
- Dated documents found from the bar Kokhba revolt showed the year to be a sabbatical one dated **132 AD to 133 AD**.
- The ruins to a synagogue found a mosaic and it was dated to the second year of a sabbatical cycle, which was **237 AD to 238 AD**.

Then, in a most striking scripture in the book of John, chapter 4 we see;

Joh 4: 35 *Do you not say that **after four months comes the harvest**? Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and see the fields that are white and have ripened for the harvest already.*

This is where Yahshua was speaking with the Samaritan woman, and it is around summer time, yet the harvest is white (ready to be picked) and yet He states that it will be 4 months until they can legally harvest the grain. Only in a sabbatical year would this be possible. Since Yahshua started His ministry in the fall of 27 AD and this is the following summer, then, we can pinpoint this sabbatical year of **27 AD to 28 AD** according to Yahshua Himself.

The amazing part about all 9 references is that even though they are over hundreds of years apart, they all fit the same sabbatical cycle, and therefore it is clear proof from history that this cycle, which goes back to the days of Yahshua should be followed by us today.

Was it important to Israel? A whole nation went into captivity we are told in Ezekiel 20 for primarily the reason of not keeping the Yahweh's Sabbaths (including land Sabbaths as Lev 26 shows) and lacking faith in Yahweh.

Also, look at Ps 24:1.

Psa 24:1 [A Psalm of David.] The earth belongs to YAHWEH, and the fullness of it; the world, and those who live in it.

If the whole earth belongs to Yahweh, then that means just as the 7th day Sabbath should be kept all over the earth, then also the 7th year land rest should be also, as if the land is not rested in New York, it will get depleted just as well as in Israel.

The reason that Yahweh gave the land rest command to Israel for when they entered the land was that in the wilderness, they had no agriculture and their food was the manna from heaven, which was also a sign of faith and trust in Yahweh. So now in the land, they would not have manna, but would be growing their own food and would still have to exhibit faith in Yahweh for rain, and also for blessing in the 6th year for Yahweh to provide as He promised for the 7th, 8th and even 9th year.

As for more proof that the Sabbatical year should be kept worldwide, look at the significant events that have happened worldwide in many sabbatical years in the last 100 years. 1917-18- End of World War 1 and signing of Belfour declaration to allow for the modern state of Israel to be made. 1931-32- Beginning of Great Depression. 1938-39- The beginning of World War 2. 1945-46- The end of World War 2 and the beginning of last generation with start up of UN, IMF, World Bank, etc. 1966-67- Six-day war in Israel. 1973-74- Yom Kippur War. 1980-81- End of Hostage crisis with USA and Iran. 1987-88- Stock market crash in USA. 1994-95- ratifying the Oslo Accords in Israel.

2001-02- 911 event in USA and also stock market crash. 2008-9 Worst one day stock market crash in USA history, the stock market drops 777.7 points. 2015-16- Donald Trump becomes president and USA/Babylon gets one last chance and grows the greatest economy in their history.

The Next Shemita year is 2022-23, starting at Yom Teruah.

So, we see that besides just land rests the Shemita year also acts as prophecy markers to the covenant people of Yahweh who are faithful in keeping it. The Torah is binding as Yahshua said in Mathew 5.

Mat 5:17 Do not think that I came to annul the Torah or the Prophets; I did not come to annul, but to fulfill.

Mat 5:18 Truly I say to you, Until the heaven and the earth pass away, in no way shall one yod or one stroke pass away from the Torah until all comes to pass.

Mat 5:19 Therefore, whoever loosens one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the worst in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever does and teaches them, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 5:20 For I say to you, If your righteousness shall not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of YAHWEH, never!

Most of the modern-day Pharisees (The Rabbis) do not keep the Shemita year even in Israel, and they also don't tithe and they do away with many laws of Torah. But we know that the Torah is still binding except for the animal sacrifices with the Levitical Priesthood that was added to the Torah at Mount Sinai and that priesthood was changed to Melchizedek. I agree that not all laws apply to everyone as driving laws would not apply to me if I did not have a car or driving license. However, clearly land Sabbath laws would apply to those farming because it is part of Yahweh's judicial order to rest the land every 7th year according to the Biblical calendar.

Also, since it is commanded not to **plant or harvest** in the Shemita year, it stands to reason that one should Not buy food in a supermarket that has been planted or harvested in the Shemita year as it would not be kosher food during the Shemita year.

So, in summary, the Congregation of Yahweh Jerusalem believes in the keeping of the whole Sabbath command, both the 7th day Sabbath and also the land rest Sabbaths as they are a command to Yahweh's covenant people worldwide and a sign of His provision over them. And it is also a sign of prophecy and faith for His people. And in keeping them in our Diaspora we are proving to Yahweh that if He will bring us back to the Promised Land of Israel that we will be faithful to every Torah command.

Are You Cursing Your Land?



Today we are having severe drought in some areas and floods in others. It has not always been this way. Why the change? Who is responsible?

Reprint by J.W. Robinson

Large Portions of the United States, which were once productive, are now drought stricken. Streams and springs are drying up in many areas! Much of the topsoil in several states is blowing away. Tornadoes are sweeping inland farther, and with greater frequency than ever before!

Why all this distress? Is it a *naturally caused* situation, which can be explained away? OR IS IT PUNISHMENT FOR SIN! If it is punishment, for whose sin are YOU being punished?

Why Climatic Rampage?

Here is the answer—

When YAHWEH gave Israel the law in Mount Sinai, He told them to cultivate the land and harvest its fruit for six years (Ex. 23:10-11). But He also included this little-known, though vitally important statute: *“the seventh year you shall let it rest and let it lie fallow...so you shall do to your vineyard, to your olive-yard.”*

YAHWEH made this law a part of His overall law of love. He knows that the land needs a rest every seventh year.

YAHWEH did not say, “Do it if you *want* to.” He made it a definite command *for our own good!* Like the Sabbath day it involves spiritual as well as physical principles and still should be observed!

But why the increase in drought, in floods, in blowing topsoil and tornadoes? And why the coming war and captivity of this whole nation? What have the people done to merit such devastation?

Let Leviticus 26:34-35 tell us. “Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths, ALL THE DAYS OF THE DESOLATION. *And you shall be in the land of your enemies;* then the land shall enjoy rest, AND SHALL ENJOY ITS SABBATHS. It shall rest all the days of the desolation, THAT WHICH IT HAS NOT RESTED IN YOUR SABBATHS WHILE YOU LIVED ON IT.”

It is all very clear. The land becomes desolate *because it has not been allowed to rest and keep its Sabbaths!*

I have met at the Feast of Tabernacles farmers who *claimed* to have been in YAHWEH's Congregation and obeyed Him for seven and eight years. They should have known that YAHWEH requires them to keep the Sabbath year—but *they had neglected to do so!* When I explained to them their obligation and made it very plain that they had disobeyed YAHWEH, they turned and walked unconcernedly away. Did *that* show an attitude of OBEDIENCE?

No, it typifies the indifference of this modern age! Don't think for a minute that you are on a bandwagon with an easy ticket into the Kingdom of YAHWEH. *You must obey YAHWEH!* Otherwise, you will suffer when the nation pays for its sins.

In the Scriptures, YAHWEH isn't speaking just to your neighbor. *HE is speaking to YOU!*

YAHWEH's Conditional Promises

Are you occasionally plagued by disease among your livestock, by insect pest, or by drought? If so, you may have been neglecting to DESERVE YAHWEH's promised blessings. YAHWEH promises the obedient that He will...*"satisfy your soul in dry places...and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail"* (Isa. 58:11).

YAHWEH commands us, in Leviticus 23:35-36, *"You shall serve YAHWEH your Elohim and I will bless your bread and your water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of you. None shall cast her young or be barren in your land."*

Again, in 2 Chronicles 6:13-14 YAHWEH promised us, *"When I shut up the heavens that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people [Believers today] who are called by My name HUMBLE THEMSELVES and PRAY and SEEK My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and HEAL their land."*

There it is! YAHWEH's people must obey YAHWEH—and that includes the keeping of the Sabbath year. Now is the time we need to learn to PRAY *for one another*, *"Casting all your anxiety onto Him, because it matters to Him concerning you"* (1 Peter 5:7).

Punishment for Disobedience

Notice what happened once before when the people refused to obey this law. We have a record of this in 2 Chronicles 36:20-21: *"And he exiled to Babylon those who had escaped the sword, he carried them [Nebuchadnezzar] away to Babylon; and they were slaves to him and to his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia; in order to fulfill the Word of YAHWEH in the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths; all the days of the desolation it kept the Sabbath, to the full measure of seventy years."* Every sabbatical year un-kept meant a year in captivity for Judah! YAHWEH's corrective measures are sure—Israel, too, *will* be desolate and the land will soon *enjoy* her Sabbaths because the people refuse to turn to YAHWEH and keep His sabbatical years.

YAHWEH warned Israel in Leviticus 26:14-25 what would happen *if they disobeyed* His Torah. Israel was to receive severe punishment in four progressively worsening stages unless the nation repented.

Some have thought this prophecy applies only to Israel's first punishment, and isn't for us today. They quote verse 22: *"and send against you the beast of the field, and it shall bereave you. And I shall cut off your livestock and shall make you FEW, so that your ways [roads] shall be desolate."*

Those who are scoffers will say, *"That is no concern of ours: there are not enough wild beasts in this nation to do any serious damage."* Don't you believe it! We are already getting a foretaste of this condition.

Another incident, of greater danger and longer duration, is happening on Vancouver Island, in British Columbia, at the southwestern corner of Canada. The island's large cougar population is suffering from a shortage of deer and other natural prey. As a result of their hunger, many cougars, especially the half-

starved females, have gone into the towns, *even entering houses*, to attack people, watchdogs, and housecats.

Many unprovoked attacks have been made on humans by these hunger-maddened beasts. Wild animals are destined to become even more destructive *throughout* the nation *because we have ruined the land*.

Wild animals are not the only source of danger. There are more than 20,000,000 dogs in the United States. When our national food supply diminishes to famine proportions on a nationwide scale, we may expect many of them—possibly a majority—to be turned out to shift for themselves. Hungry dogs run in packs like wolves. Past association with man will enable them to be *more stealthy and cunning than any other beast*. Under such conditions they will multiply unrestrained—three or four years' time could produce enough wild dogs to outnumber the people. Marauding packs of dogs will do great damage to flocks of sheep and poultry and herds of cattle. And, rabies—which is rapidly increasing today—will run rampant.

How to Keep the Sabbath Year

We know that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in RIGHTEOUSNESS” (2 Tim. 3:16). We know also that we are *commanded* to keep the Sabbath year and that “*all (YAHWEH's) commandments are RIGHTEOUSNESS* (Ps.119: 172).” Therefore, let us look into the Scriptures for instructions in the keeping of the Sabbath year.

YAHWEH's instructions, in Leviticus 25:3-7, for the Sabbath year are very thorough and complete and are easily understood.

“You shall sow your field six years, and you shall prune your vineyard for six years, and shall gather its produce. And in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest to the land, a Sabbath to YAHWEH. You shall not sow your field, and you shall not prune your vineyard. You shall not reap that which grows of itself of your harvest; and you shall not gather the grapes of your unkempt vine; it shall be a year of rest to the land. And the Sabbath of the land shall be to you for food, to you, and to your male slave, and to your female slave, and to your hired one, and to your tenant, those living among you; and to your livestock, and to the animal in your land, all its produce shall be for food.”

Read these verses again very carefully. They are important. Notice verse 5. It tells you that you must not gather your crops or fruit for commercial use in that year. They must, in general, be allowed to return to the soil. Yet verse six tells you that the natural produce of the land in the sabbatical year shall serve as food for you, your servants, and strangers or guests that are with you.

Some people are temporarily confused when reading these two verses, thinking they contradict. But actually, they don't. You must not harvest the produce of the land in order to sell it. Neither are you to store up on the Sabbath year for future use. You may use the produce for day-to-day needs. YAHWEH wants you to enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables when they are in season, even in the Sabbath year.

The natural produce of the land in that year will also furnish food for your cattle and other livestock, which may graze on the land (verse 7). This clearly shows that it is permissible to allow cattle to graze the fields in addition to the pasture in the Sabbath year. To take advantage of this liberty it is permissible to allow your cattle herd to increase while they are grazing the whole farm.

One man, *who did not study the Scriptures* on the matter, sold all of his cattle on the Sabbath year, and had no food except what he bought. To him and his family the Sabbath year became a yoke of bondage—a form of penance—*because of his ignorance* of YAHWEH's Torah. The sabbatical year should have been a time of great joy and rejoicing.

What about your shrubbery and flowers? How should you care for them on the Sabbath year? The answer is that you should keep the house and its surroundings neat with whatever lawn and hedge trimming may be necessary. YAHWEH would not want you to let your home become run-down and dilapidated looking. The law of the sabbatical year involves only that land from which crops are reaped and sold. It does not include your pasture or your flower garden around the home.

How to Figure Your Sabbath Year

The Sabbath year is counted from one Feast of Trumpets to the next, beginning and ending in the fall of the year. In ancient Israel the sabbatical years were reckoned from creation, but included the Jubilee every 50th year.

Is This Your Problem?

Someone is sure to ask, “Should renters, as well as landowners, keep the Sabbath year?” The answer is an emphatic “yes.”

There may be landowners who will not allow their renters to let the whole land rest for a year. Renters do not have the authority to force the issue in this case, but must submit to the demands of the owner.

Renters should keep the Sabbath year of the land for the same spiritual reason that wage earners, for example, should keep the Sabbath day. Since renters do not own the land, they must not insist that the owners obey YAHWEH. Instead, they may have to find work and a farm elsewhere.

Actually, all land renters who are obeying YAHWEH should aim to become landowners so that they will have full authority to farm according to YAHWEH’s principles. (But don’t buy a farm in a drought-stricken area!)

If you are obeying YAHWEH, you should be as willing, as was Abraham, to leave the locality in which your ancestors lived. But before you move into a new area, *make sure you can make a living there*. YAHWEH is not obligated to supply your needs if you move into a desolate, drought-stricken area, or if you grow up in such an area and stay there. You should start your farming venture in an area that is not yet suffering.

Then, *after you have fulfilled your normal obligations and are obeying and trusting YAHWEH to the best of your ability, YAHWEH will supply all your needs!*

Land Left Fallow Every 2nd or 3rd Year

There may arise the question “What should be done with land that is already being left idle every second, third, or fourth year? How should it be handled in order to conform YAHWEH’s Sabbath year?”

Two types of land are being managed in this manner. The first type to be considered is good, productive land that is periodically being left idle, usually being seeded to a winter legume or other soil builder. Such a practice builds the soil up to a richer, more productive capacity and should in no way be discouraged. However, this should be *in addition* to the sabbatical rest.

Another grade of soil is occasionally left idle because it is too poor to produce crops any more often. Such soil is gradually wasting away and is so thin that it should not be cultivated in the first place. Rather, it should be seeded to a good pasture grass AND TURNED INTO PERMANENT PASTURE.

It is *vitaly important*, however, that you *do not overgraze your land!* One cause of the present distress in our Western states is that much of the land has been overgrazed in the interest of *temporary* higher profits.

If too many cattle are on the land, they will nibble the grass *so short* that it will afford *no protective covering* for the soil. The land will then dry up—the grass will starve—the topsoil will be blown away.

Some land is also overgrazed even under the best grazing arrangement. Such land has already been worn out and should be left to nature so that shrubs and trees may take over and produce something for future generations. Do *not* think of *present profits only*! Think of future generations who will reclaim this land after the captivity—after the land shall have kept its Sabbaths.

YAHWEH's Blessings Promised

Some are sure to say, "How can we make a living in the Sabbath year? A little fresh fruit and vegetables will not support my family. I need a cash crop. I *think* YAHWEH wants us to use our minds and learn to draw our own conclusions; and I *think* we should let one-seventh of the farm lie idle each year." This looks good to the natural reasoning of some people, but what does YAHWEH say about it?

YAHWEH *does* want you to use your minds. And if use them properly, you will come to the conclusion that everyone must learn YAHWEH's point of view and live by it. The only other recourse is to follow human reasoning, independent of the Scriptures, which leads only to heartaches, sorrows, and wretchedness. Therefore, let us turn to YAHWEH's Word so that He will tell us *how* to keep the Sabbath year.

YAHWEH tells us in Leviticus 25:20-22, "And when you say, 'What shall we eat in the seventh year; for, lo, we may not sow nor gather our increase? Then I have commanded My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it shall produce the increase for three years; and you shall sow the eighth year, and shall eat of the old crop until the ninth year, until the coming in of its crop; you shall eat of the old.'"

There you see a definite command that one particular year should be set aside in which the *whole farm* should rest by being uncultivated. Also, you see a *very distinct promise* that YAHWEH will so abundantly bless you in the sixth year that your produce will last until the fall crops are harvested in the end of the ninth year.

You should be diligent in your work, but not overly concerned with such matters as your physical needs, because there is very little that you can do about it. *Making your crops grow is one of YAHWEH's jobs*. Strive for greater spiritual growth and YAHWEH will supply your needs. "Then do not be like them, for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matt. 6:8).

"Take no thought, saying, 'What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed?'—for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek first the kingdom of YAHWEH, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:25-33).

What Work Should One Do in the Sabbath Year?

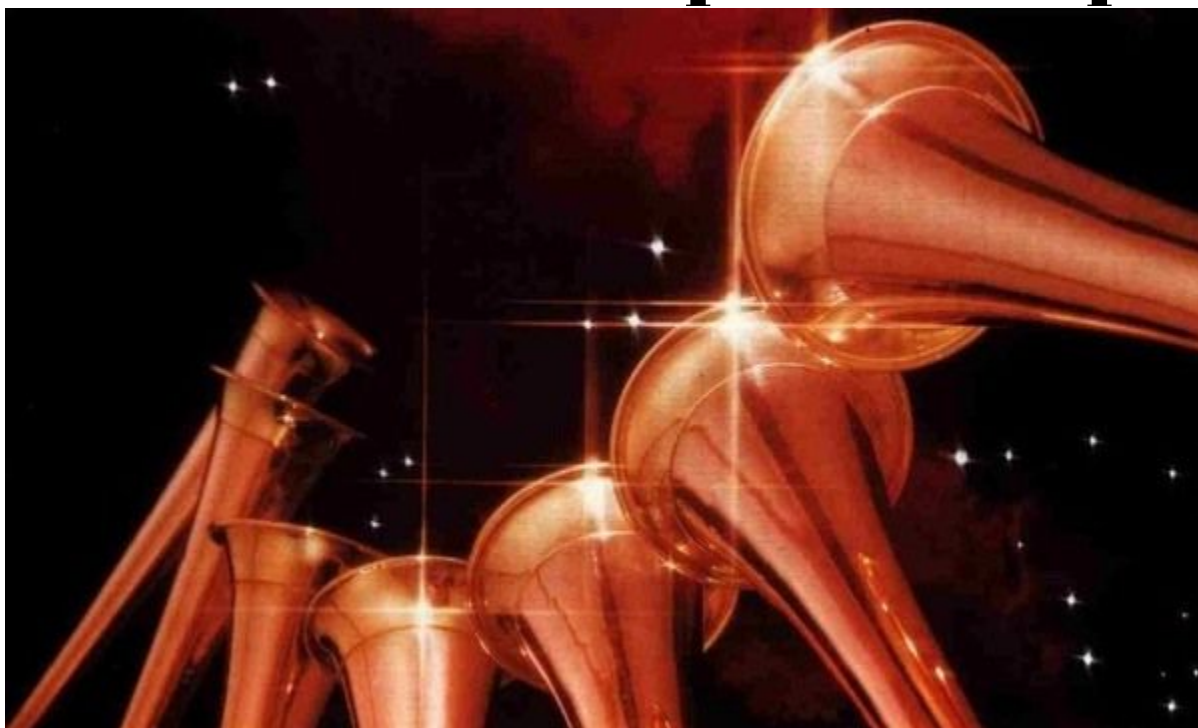
Some will want to know, "What should I do on the Sabbath year? I know I shouldn't become idle. Should I get a job in town?"

Considering the purpose of the Sabbath year, you should not get a job *until you have put your farm in good repair*. The Sabbath year does for your land what the Sabbath day does for your physical body. One rejuvenates the physical body; the other rejuvenates and improves the land. Surely you have buildings and fences that need repairing. Do you need new fences? Then build them. Digging post holes will not be a violation of the principle of letting the land rest. The sabbatical year is a *Sabbath for the land*.

Possibly your home needs remodeling and painting. Take time to renovate thoroughly in your seventh year. That will be the best opportunity you will have to make of it the kind of home you want. Overhaul or repair all of your machinery—make sure that everything is in good condition before the beginning of the eighth year.

After all this is accomplished, why not take an *educational vacation*? YAHWEH said that the laborers should be released from work in the sabbatical year. Go to the cities' libraries and museums to study and to broaden your understanding of the Bible and grow in the Word of Yahweh. **(continued on page 27)**

Are YOU a Philadelphian Disciple?



There is no need to be in doubt. There is a way you can tell whether you are in the Philadelphian or Laodicean condition. Check yourself by the FRUITS!

Reprint By L. Leroy Neff

Did you realize that there are members of YAHWEH's true Congregation, today, who are Philadelphia era Disciples *in name only*? Where do YOU stand?

You need to KNOW what kind of Disciple you are—in YAHWEH's sight! YAHWEH promises His Philadelphia Congregation protection in the time of great trial which is coming (Rev. 3:10). Will YOU qualify to receive that protection?

Or will you wake up—too late—to discover you have been in a *lukewarm* spiritual condition? Will you have to endure the Great Tribulation in order to build the character needed to serve in YAHWEH's Kingdom, and inherit eternal life?

No Question More Important

Yahshua Messiah said, "Then surely from their fruits you shall *know* them" (Matt. 7:20). It's as simple as that! You can tell by your fruits whether or not YOU are in YAHWEH's Philadelphia Congregation!

The way to tell that this Work, is a part of the Philadelphia era of YAHWEH's Congregation is to look at the *fruits*. It is by *description* that Yahshua Messiah gave in Revelation 3 that we can be sure that this great Work of YAHWEH, which is proclaiming the Good News of Yahshua's Kingdom to this end-time society is a part of the Philadelphia era of YAHWEH's Congregation.

Any Congregation is the *sum-total* of its membership. If the individuals are lethargic and lazy, the whole congregation will be that way. If the individuals making up the congregation are lacking in love, then the whole congregation will be cold.

The point is this:

Since the Philadelphia Congregation is made up of many members which are described in Revelation 3 then the *individual* member of that congregation will have the *same description*! You probably never thought of it that way. You can see that this is YAHWEH's Philadelphia Congregation because of the description. *Most* of the people in the Congregation also fit this description. But some do not. What about

you? Does Revelation 3:7-13 describe you also? In order to find out if this description fits you let's examine *very carefully* and minutely the description of the Congregation. Only in this way can we come to know whether or not we are really part of this congregation.

What Does Philadelphia Mean?

YAHWEH names things what they are. And, He has named this the *Philadelphia* Congregation. Philadelphia is a Greek derived name which comes from two Greek words: *philos*, and *adelphos*. *Philos* means *loving* or dear and *adelphos* means *brother*.

When put together these two words literally mean *brother-loving*.

Have you ever noticed how much love there is in YAHWEH's Congregation? Have you noticed how friendly YAHWEH's people are, and how much they enjoy being together on the Sabbath, or any other time?

As has been said many times, YAHWEH's people are about the "hand-shakingest" people there are. This is just one indication of how YAHWEH's people love to be together. There is a bond of true love and fellowship in this congregation that exists nowhere else on earth.

But there are some people among us who *do not* share this love and companionship. They enjoy other people's company more than YAHWEH's people! When they come to the congregation they like to come at the last minute and leave just as soon as it's over. They don't like to fellowship with YAHWEH's people; they have their own interests; THEY ARE NOT BROTHER-LOVING.

How about you?

Yahshua gave 12 descriptive points and promises about the Philadelphia Congregation in Revelation. Let's examine them one by one. Apply the description to *yourself*. See if the description fits *you*.

Are You Going Through Your "Open Door?"

The first thing that Yahshua said about this congregation is that it has works (verse 8). These could also be called "fruits."

Yahshua knows what our *fruits* and *works* are. He knows how to describe us *individually* and *collectively*. And, the first work that He mentions relates to an "open door" which He has set before us.

YAHWEH has given this end-time Congregation the powerful instrument of radio and the printing press to proclaim the soon coming Kingdom of YAHWEH to the whole world. The Congregation is going through that open door! The Congregation is fulfilling the command of Yahshua Messiah:

"Then having gone, disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the completion of the age. Amen." (Matt. 28:19-20)

Put this on a personal, individual level. If the Philadelphia Congregation is fulfilling this commission, then all those who are *truly* a part of this Congregation are also doing their *own* important part in carrying out this same Work. Each person has an important function in this Work just as 1 Cor. 12 plainly shows. We cannot all do the broadcasting. We cannot all write magazine articles or booklets. *But each has his own essential part!*

What are some of the "works" that the individual can do in order to do his part? How can the *individual* go through this *open door* of evangelism?

Each person has equal opportunity to pray fervently each day for this Work. After all, we all have 24 hours a day.

We all have equal opportunity of paying a tenth of our income to support this Work. In tithes, no one gives more than any other person! But YAHWEH has instructed us to also give offerings. The tithe is *required*. Offerings are required, but the *amount* of offering is left up to the individual. The *amount* of offerings is an indication of how vitally *interested* we are in YAHWEH's Work.

Another way that we can help in YAHWEH's Work is fasting, so that we might grow closer to YAHWEH and overcome our human nature.

Our continual *concern* and *interest* in this Work—the measure of *zeal* that we have towards YAHWEH's Work—our dedication to YAHWEH's Work—shows how much a part we have in spreading the gospel to the world. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mat. 6:21).

How much are you preparing for greater service in *this Work*, as well as for the rulership that YAHWEH has promised in the World Tomorrow? How humble and meek are you? These fruits set us apart from the congregation of Laodicea—or lack of them could show that we are a part of it.

One of the outstanding fruits of this end-time work is that it has been increasing approximately 30 percent a year in almost every phase of operation. The congregation of Philadelphia is growing in grace and knowledge of Yahshua Messiah, it is also growing in size and in influence. Are *you* growing in faith and character at 30 percent a year?

YAHWEH has given each one of us *our* “open door” to do His end-time Work. If we are *not* doing that work, we are not a part of the Philadelphia Congregation.

Do You Have Little Strength?

The second point mentioned in Revelation 3 is that this congregation has “little strength.” Compare this with the Laodicean Congregation, who say, “I am rich, and I am made rich, and I have need of nothing.” (Rev. 3:17)

We live in a very *weak* and *degenerate* age, and yet few people are aware of this weakness. When we compare our accomplishments with the exploits of men in ancient times, we see how *puny* we really are.

We do not have national leaders with wisdom like Solomon today. Where are the men with the faith of Abraham, the organizational leadership and meekness of Moses, the steadfastness of Noah? Certainly, we have “little strength,” compared to such people.

The Apostle Paul wrote that there are not many wise, mighty, or strong that are called in this age (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

Have you ever heard ministers mention how much they lack, and how much they continually must call out to YAHWEH for strength? They recognize how little strength the people carrying on this Work actually have.

Consider how few we are in *number*, how *poor* we are, how lacking we are in knowledge, wisdom, faith, love, and every other way.

This congregation *realizes* that of itself it can do nothing! Yahshua said that He could do nothing, it was the Father that worked through Him. If Yahshua could do nothing, certainly we can do *less than nothing* by ourselves.

Do you realize how weak, helpless, lacking, and in need of help *you* are? Or, do you feel you already have wisdom, you are strong spiritually, that you are not weak like some of the *other* people you see? If so, you are not in YAHWEH's Philadelphia Congregation! Yes, YAHWEH's people in the Philadelphia Congregation are weak, they know it, and they are *constantly forced to cry out to YAHWEH for help*, to do the great Work that He has called them individually and collectively to do.

The third point that Yahshua gave concerning this Congregation is that it has *kept His Word* (verse 8). What does it mean to keep Yahshua's Words?

It means to *do* what He has commanded, in preaching and publishing the Good News to the whole world. It means to FAITHFULLY preach and obey His Word—His TRUTH. It means to *live* by every one of His *words*. He said that if we love Him, (that is if we are brother-loving) we will *keep His words* (John 14:23). He is the Spokesman or Word who inspired the *whole* Bible, so it also means to *obey* the whole Bible. Our standard of conduct is to live by all of His words—to *obey* Him.

On the personal or individual level, it means that we are searching and *seeking* to know YAHWEH's will by reading His Word *daily* and making it a very part of our being. How can we obey His words if we do not know what they are?

Next, Yahshua said that this Congregation has not denied His *name*! (Verse 8.)

The name of a person *represents*, or *is* the person. If we deny the name of Yahshua Messiah then we deny him. How do we deny Him? By verbally saying “I deny Yahshua”? No! It means much more than that. Yahshua inspired the Apostle Paul to say “They profess to know YAHWEH, but by their works they deny Him, and they are abominable and disobedient, condemning every kind of good work” (Titus 1:16).

We deny Yahshua Messiah if we have the *wrong kind* of works or deeds.

We can also deny Him by not being *obedient* to Him. He has authority in every aspect of our lives. He rules us through His Word and through His Congregation (Ephesians 4:11). If we are not obedient to those He sets over us in authority in His Congregation, if we do not obey His Word, He is not our *Adonai and Master*. One of Yahshua's names is Adonai which means *boss*, one having complete authority over us.

What Is Patience?

The fifth point is that true Philadelphians have “kept the Word of My patience” (verse 10).

All of the promises of YAHWEH are to the overcomer who *endures* to the end. What we are today does not prove what we shall be tomorrow. We may be winning the race today and lose it tomorrow. It is the one who *continues* in patience and who is steadfast even in tribulation who will receive the reward.

Yahshua said “by your *patience* you will gain your souls” (Luke 21:19).

Yahshua Messiah says that this Congregation is patient, and that it endures all these trials and tribulations until the very end.

Are you personally being *patient* in the time of adversity, sickness, and trials? Or do you give up when times get difficult? If you are a “quitter” you may not be a part of the Philadelphia Congregation.

The sixth point that Yahshua mentioned concerning this Congregation is the promise of protection. Before Yahshua Messiah returns to this earth, He will reward the Philadelphia Congregation by keeping it from the great time of trouble that is going to come upon the whole earth.

“Because you kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial which is going to come upon all the world in order to try those dwelling on the earth” (Rev. 3:10).

Other prophecies show that perhaps 90 percent of the people of Israel are going to be destroyed in the terrible war and holocaust that is shortly ahead. The people of the Laodicean Congregation will be tortured and martyred by fiendish men during the tribulation.

What a great and precious and comforting promise this is, that Yahshua will keep the Philadelphia Congregation from this *great* time of trouble!

Yahshua Is Coming Quickly!

In view of such a great and precious promise Yahshua exhorts us to *hold fast*, so that no one will take *our* reward. The crown of righteousness that is kept for us will go to someone else if we do not continue to be faithful. When we are in severe trial or sickness the time may seem *long*. But the day finally comes when the trial is completely and totally removed, just as though it had never existed. When you look back it doesn't seem as if it were so long after all.

That's just the way it's going to be when we receive that great reward of *eternal life*. The trials and tribulations of this age will then seem very small, and to have taken but a very short space of time. Almost like a dream that has gone in the night. So Yahshua says, “Behold I come quickly.” We think that He is slow in coming, but He promises that He will come *quickly*! It will not *really* be *long*. We must look forward with *great hope* and anticipation to that promise, realizing that it will come quickly.

After all, YAHWEH has called us to endure and overcome for only a few years. Many of the worthy prophets of old had to endure many times over the number of years that YAHWEH has called most of us to remain faithful. Consider the hundreds of years that such men as Enoch, Noah, and Abraham remained faithful to YAHWEH. Our few years are short by comparison.

If you are a part of YAHWEH's Congregation now, endure to the end, hold fast! Do not become offended at anything or let a root of bitterness come in. Do not become lukewarm and fail to fulfill any of the obligations that Yahshua has placed upon you personally. If you do, you will find that *someone else* will take YOUR CROWN.

More Rewards!

Yahshua next mentions an *additional* reward. But this reward will come *after* the resurrection. He has promised us (verse 12) that we shall become a *pillar* in the temple that is to be built in Jerusalem. A recent article in *The GOOD NEWS* explained that this is speaking spiritually and symbolically about the positions of authority in the government of YAHWEH, at the Headquarters of this whole world.

YAHWEH has called the people in the other congregation eras to be kings and priests over various cities, states, and nations. But He has chosen us in this Congregation era to have a very *special* part in the *headquarters* government. We will be with Yahshua Messiah at Jerusalem.

This is the Congregation era that has experienced firsthand the modern technological advances of science and industry. We have been able to see the good and the bad results from these tremendous

advances in science. The World Tomorrow is going to be a very peaceful utopia, but a *truly modern world*. There will be great advances in agriculture, science and industry.

YAHWEH is calling those who have had firsthand experience with some of the modern developments and advances of science to *properly control* them. We may have responsibility to control the world's *international affairs* and activities such as transportation, communications, education, and news.

YAHWEH is giving us experience in these things *now* so we might use this experience and knowledge in His Kingdom!

What a wonderful calling this is! Are you *qualifying* to have a part in that government? The Philadelphia Congregation is! Be sure that *you* are!

Yahshua next mentioned the position of rulership again. He said that no longer will we have any possibility of being discharged from that rulership and responsibility. We shall "*go no more out*." We will always be in YAHWEH's favor. We will be with Yahshua Messiah *forever and ever*.

We will have the *name* of YAHWEH written upon us. YAHWEH names things what they are. When He writes His name on us, that means we are then born into His very family. We will *be* Elohim, just as Yahshua is now Elohim. We will not have the same rank, position or authority that He has, but we will still be a part of that very divine family!

The name of the city of YAHWEH will also be written on us. In other words, we will have the blessing of ultimately living in the very city called New Jerusalem where YAHWEH the Father will dwell forever.

The twelfth point is that He will also put on us His new name. This Congregation is to be a part of the Bride of Messiah. A bride always takes the name of her husband. When we become married to Yahshua Messiah we will then share His *NEW name*!

Will YOU Qualify?

Now you have read the twelve points showing what a true Philadelphia member of YAHWEH's Congregation is like, will be doing, and how YAHWEH Himself will reward the Philadelphia Congregation in the World Tomorrow.

Look at your fruits! Have you been bringing forth the fruits of a zealous, inspired, dedicated Philadelphian? Is your whole life, your whole heart really behind and in this great Work of YAHWEH being carried on today? Are you sacrificing so this Good News can go out with greater power and force?

Are you obeying YAHWEH's Word—living by His every command?

Are you yielded to His Government, His authority over your life? Are you AWARE of your own personal weakness, inability, and wretchedness? Are you constantly crying out to YAHWEH for His help in overcoming, growing, and inspiration in serving?

Are you really looking forward to the glorious blessings and rewards and responsibilities which YAHWEH will prepare for those who endure to the end, faithfully serving Him?

You have heard how YAHWEH wants you to be. *Act on these things!* Don't let someone else steal your crown! Consider these things. Mediate on them. THINK about them, seriously, earnestly, and *take a spiritual inventory of yourself*.

Examine yourself before YAHWEH in prayer.

You can know where you stand *by the fruits* being produced!

If it is evident by your fruits that you are not a part of the Philadelphia Congregation of YAHWEH, then *repent, change* your ways before it is too late. Ask YAHWEH to give you that *love* which the Philadelphia Congregation has, to help you do the *work* that He has given you to do. Keep Yahshua's Words. Don't deny His name, ask for His help that you might *endure* to the end.

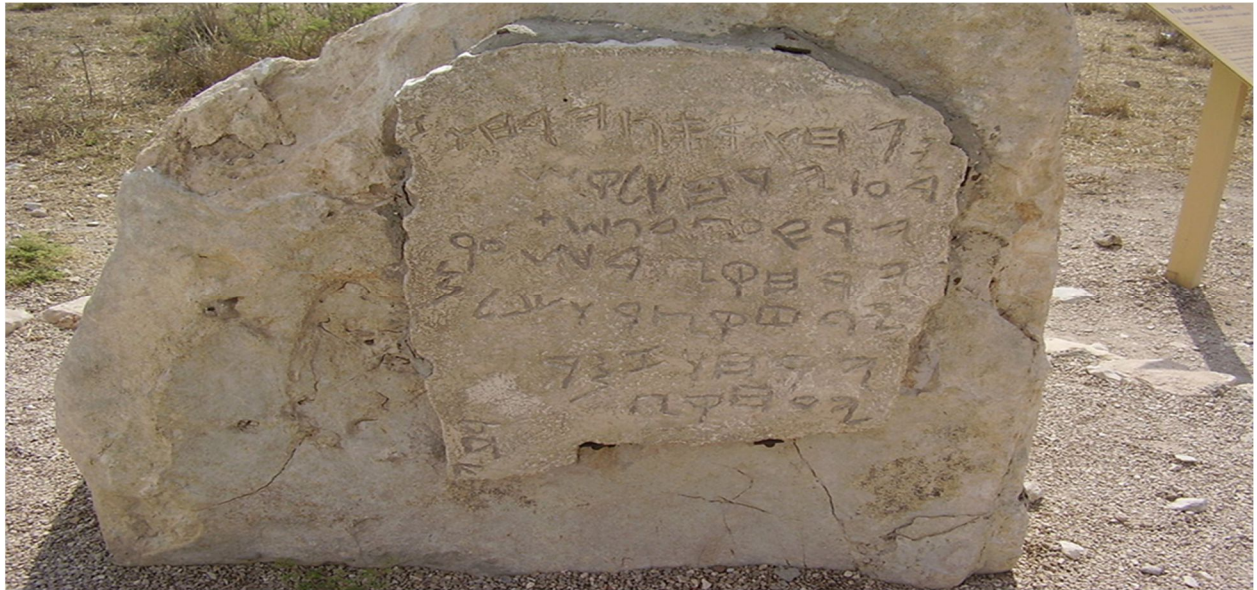
Remember, it is not the one who *starts* in the race—not just the one who is enduring at the *present* time that will be given the reward. It is the one who ENDURES to the *very end* who wins the race!

Be sure that you are a Philadelphia Disciple—and don't let your spiritual zeal grow lukewarm, don't let spiritual pride overthrow you, don't let vanity deceive you.

Remember the warning of the Apostle Paul—"So that he that thinks he can stand, let him be careful that he not fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

How To Calculate The Shemita Year

By Don Esposito



There has been some confusion on how to calculate the Shemita year and I believe where the confusion stems from is the fact that some don't understand that there are actually 2 coinciding calendars working throughout the biblical year. You have the cyclical calendar that runs from Aviv to Aviv, and then you have the agricultural calendar that runs from Tishrei to Tishrei. Both calendars revolve though around the equinoxes, but one starts near the vernal equinox and one starts near the autumn equinox.

The agricultural calendar begins Tishrie 1, and this is confirmed by the Gezer calendar that was used by King David and Solomon and is the very foundation that the biblical calendar is based on. The Gezer calendar was found in Tel Gezer and has a detailed account of the whole agricultural growing season in Israel. It has several words for grass depending on whether it is grass from the early rain or whether it is grass from the barley harvest, etc.

It also has different words for harvesting as in Hebrew there is a different Hebrew word for each fruit harvested. The Gezer calendar shows the whole agricultural cycle of Israel and clearly starts on Tishrei one, and that is why the Jews call Tishrei 1 **"Rosh Ha Shenah" or "the beginning of the year"**, because it is the beginning of the agricultural cycle.

Lev 25:8-10 confirms the Shemita and Jubilee begin in Tishrie, **NOT** Aviv.

Lev 25:8 And you shall number to yourself seven Sabbaths of years, seven years times seven, and all the days of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years.

Lev 25:9 **And you shall let a ram's horn resound, a signal in the seventh month, in the tenth of the month; in the day of atonement, let a ram's horn pass throughout all your land;**

Lev 25:10 and you shall make the fiftieth year holy, one year. And you shall proclaim liberty in the land to those living in it; He shall be a jubilee to you. And you shall return every man to his possession; yea, you shall turn back each to his family.

The Jubilee starts on the 10th day of the seventh month called Tishrei, as where the Sabbatical Shemita year starts on Tishrei 1. The reason the Jubilee starts on the 10th day is that in a Jubilee year you would have back-to-back Sabbath land rests, so in the second-year land rest of the Jubilee you would have a 10-day period between the two Shemitas to harvest anything that had grown of itself the year before and prepare a harvest to bring up to Jerusalem for Sukkot, according to Scripture.

The Israelites are told to take of the harvest fruits and appear before Yahweh at Sukkot with those fruits which are part of the preparation for the Sukkah.

Lev 23:39 Also, in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you gather the increase of the land, you shall keep the feast of YAHWEH seven days; on the first day a Holy Day Sabbath, and on the eighth day a Holy Day Sabbath.

Lev 23:40 **And you shall take to yourselves on the first day the fruit of majestic trees**, palm branches, and boughs of oak trees, and willows of the valley, and shall rejoice before YAHWEH your Elohim seven days.

Deu 14:22 Tithing you shall tithe all the increase of your seed that the field yields year by year.

Deu 14:23 And you shall eat before YAHWEH your Elohim in the place which He shall choose to cause His name to dwell there (Jerusalem), **the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil**, and the first-lings of your herd and of your flock; that you may learn to fear YAHWEH your Elohim all your days.

The Israelites are commanded to take the fruit of the 7 species and hang them in the Sukkahs and also bring the firstfruit offerings of the agricultural harvest as the firstfruit tithe to Yahweh. They actually tie strings around the first pomegranates etc to even know which fruit came up first. Some believe that the Shemita begins from Aviv to Aviv, but if this was so how could the Israelites harvest and take up the yearly fruits for Sukkot as they would not be able to harvest any fruits in Tishrei (September/October) if they started the Sabbatical year in Aviv (March/April)? They would have to violate and break the above scriptures on bringing the harvest fruits to Jerusalem at feast time if the Shemita started in Aviv, which Yahweh would never command.

Starting the Shemita in Tishrei (the 7th month) according to the agricultural calendar makes total sense, as Yahweh affirms that He is in charge of the harvest and will bring it in the appropriate time (early or late) if Israel is obedient. Doesn't His Word say He can make it rain on one place and not on another (Amos 4:7)? And since it runs from Tishrie 1 to Tishrie 1 of the next year there would always be a harvest to bring the commanded fruits to Jerusalem for Sukkot.

In Israel, this year, up to Tishrei one, about 70% of the harvest is ready in this year and the rest will be used for the poor and all other people for gleaning during the Shemita.

Lev 23:22 **And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not completely reap the corner of your field, nor shall you gather the gleaning of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor, and for the alien: I am YAHWEH your Elohim.**

Lev 23:23 And YAHWEH spoke to Moses, saying,

Lev 23:24 Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, **In the seventh month, on the first of the month, a Holy Day Sabbath shall be to you, a memorial acclamation of the resounding of trumpets, a holy gathering.**

Lev 23:25 You shall do no laborious work and you shall bring a fire offering to YAHWEH.

It is interesting that right after Yahweh states about not reaping your harvest from the trees more than one time for leaving enough to glean for the poor, the next verse speaks of Tishrei one and the Feast of Trumpets. In normal years about 5% are left for gleaning after a farmer reaped his tree and in a Shemita year it is 30 to 40%.

And Shemita or not, there is never a full harvest lost as would be if one was incorrectly keeping the Shemita from Aviv to Aviv. As if you start your Shemita year in Aviv you will not be able to harvest your grain (which most is harvested after Aviv 1) and in the fall you will not be able to harvest anything as it would be in the middle of your Shemita cycle if you started the Shemita in Aviv (April).

Then, you would not be able to plant your grain after Sukkot for the next Aviv and in doing so you would lose your full second harvest. The Shemita is not meant as a burden, but as another avenue to put trust in Yahweh.

Just as the Israelites relied daily on Yahweh for the manna in the wilderness, in the Shemita year they would have to daily rely on him for their food, but it is reliance on Him,

and not wasting of good food that Yahweh is trying to show in a Sabbatical or Shemita year .

Every year, Shemita or not, people only harvest until the Feast of Trumpets (give or take a few days) and then, they prepare to go to Jerusalem for bringing their harvest to Sukkot. They harvest the remaining when they return and in a Shemita year, they don't harvest, but pick the fruits for food for several months, daily, as needed. In order to understand the Shemita year, you must understand there are 2 calendar cycles, the cyclical and the agricultural.

You can compare this with Yahweh's day running sunset to sunset. So, when we fast on Yom Kippur you really don't miss your big dinner meal, you simply eat your dinner early the first day before the fast, and then, the next day you eat your dinner later after sunset when the fast is over. And of course, you don't eat any of the smaller meals in between sunset to sunset.

The Shemita year is similar. You have an early harvest before the Shemita begins, and then you have a later fall harvest the following year after the Shemita is over, and you don't do any of the smaller harvesting in between the Shemita year, but you never miss any full harvest as Yahweh will provide the early and later harvest and rains for your obedience to obeying Him.

Lev 25:8 And you shall number to yourself seven Sabbaths of years, seven years times seven, and all the days of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years.

Lev 25:9 And you shall let a ram's horn resound, **a signal in the seventh month, in the tenth of the month**; in the day of atonement, let a ram's horn pass throughout all your land;

Lev 25:10 **and you shall make the fiftieth year holy, one year.** And you shall proclaim liberty in the land to those living in it; He shall be a jubilee to you. And you shall return every man to his possession; yea, you shall turn back each to his family.

Lev 25:14 And if you sell anything to your neighbor, or buy from the hand of your neighbor, you shall not each man oppress his brother.

Lev 25:15 By the number of years after the jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor; by the number of the years of increase he shall sell to you;

Lev 25:16 **according to the many years you shall increase its price; and by the fewness of the years you shall diminish its price, for he is selling to you the number of crops.**

The above scripture proves the 2-calendar system as in the Jubilee 50 year cycle you are not selling land **but 'agricultural cycles from Tishrei to Tishrei.'**

This is further proved in the following scriptures:

Exo 34:21 You may work six days, and on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.

Exo 34:22 And you shall observe a Feast of Weeks for yourself, the first-fruits of the harvest of wheat; also the Feast of Ingathering **after the turn of the year.**

Exo 23:16 Also the Feast of Harvest, the first fruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field. **Also the Feast of Ingathering, at the going out of the year,** at your gathering your work from the field.

Many translations put at "**the end of the year**" for Ex 23:16, so how could Tishrie being the 7th month be the end of the year? Because it is speaking of the end of the agricultural year, not the calendar year that runs from Aviv to Aviv.

As we learned from the Gezer calendar that the agricultural year started in Tishrei 1 and ran from equinox to equinox as that was the growing season cycle revolved around the equinoxes and that is why even the cyclical year starting in Aviv could not start before the vernal equinox.

Some have suggested that if the harvesting in a Shemita or Sabbatical year ends on Tishrei one, that much of the fruit on the trees will be wasted, but this is just not the case. Also realize that depending on where you are in Israel due to temperature changes, the harvest can vary up to several months, even in normal years, so in no year is everything harvested all at once. They have olive presses here from the days of Yahshua (I have seen them), and they have regular presses for normal years of commercial pressing of olive oil and they also have next to them hand presses to be used in a shemita year for daily grinding of oil. Yahweh's ways are perfect and nothing is lost.

Also, remember in biblical days olives were not pickled but used for oil and the paste left over for maybe paste.

According to the Gezar calendar Tishrie one is the beginning of the agricultural year and has been in Israel since before the days of Yahshua. That is why it is called Rosh Ha' Shenah, or the beginning of the year, but the agricultural year, not the cyclical one.

The Shemita command is a land rest and all the earth belongs to Yahweh (Ps 24:1), not just Israel and should be kept by believers all over the earth (please read my article on the Shemita year online www.coyhwh.com). So it would be a violation of Scripture to purchase any food that was either planted or harvested in a Shemita year.

It would be like if you found out that your local supermarket's food was stolen, would you buy food that was stolen and violated Yahweh's Word? In the same way how can you buy food from someone who you know has violated the Word of Yahweh by planting or harvesting that food in the Sabbatical year? I know in Diaspora it is not always easy, but Yahweh didn't want our Diaspora to be easy but hard and for His people to cry out to Him in repentance for Him to lift the curse and bring His people home to Israel.

Lev 26:33 And I will scatter you among nations, and shall draw out the sword after you, and your land shall become a waste, and your cities shall be a desolation.

Lev 26:34 **Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths**, all the days of the desolation. And you shall be in the land of your enemies; then the land shall enjoy rest, and shall enjoy its Sabbaths.

Lev 26:35 **It shall rest all the days of the desolation, that which it has not rested in your Sabbaths while you lived on it.**

Lev 26:36 And those who are left of you, I shall also bring a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a driven leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as one flees from the sword; and they shall fall when no one pursues.

Lev 26:40 And if they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass with which they have trespassed against Me; and, also, that they have walked contrary to Me,

Lev 26:41 **that I also have walked contrary to them, and I have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are then humbled, and they are pleased to pay for their iniquity;**

Lev 26:42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and I shall also remember My covenant with Abraham, **and I shall remember the land.**

Lev 26:43 For the land shall be forsaken by them, and shall satisfy for its Sabbaths, in the desolation without them. And they shall satisfy for their iniquity, because, even because, they have kicked against My judgments, and their soul has loathed My statutes.

Actually, in today's society it is much easier than as in ancient times as we do have canned food that are canned months if not even a year before that can be purchased as well as frozen foods, and dry foods. People can purchase whole grain now that was harvested in last year's harvest and use it for the whole Shemita.

Remember, the point of the Shemita is reliance on Yahweh, something we all need to learn more and not simply having us abstain from certain foods. But just as during the Days of Unleaven when we have to think about every meal whether there is leaven in it or not, during the Shemita we need daily to think about reliance on Yahweh for all and what we are doing is not violating His Word and thanking Him for the great bounty He gives daily.

It would be wrong to buy fresh fruits and grains from a supermarket since they are violating Yahweh's Word by planting and harvesting the food during the Shemita and making it unsanctified by doing so.

You can also refer to the article wrote on the Shemita and also the recent Q and A that I did that is in the video section at www.coyhwh.com.

IF I WERE THE DEVIL



If you could see and hear Satan, how would he act and talk? Maybe you are listening to him and don't know it! Read this unusual article and learn to recognize the devil's line!

Reprint by David L. Antion

IF I WERE the devil, I'd be an expert at overthrowing people. Don't forget I caused ancient Israel to be overthrown many times. I conquered persons such as Ananias, Sapphira, Alexander the coppersmith, and Hymenaeus—all true Believers once. I got Demas, a minister under the Apostle Paul to turn away from YAHWEH—having incited him to love *this* world.

Look Into History

The Bible is a book of history. It was written for our profit upon whom the ends of the world are come (1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4). The devil also knows the history contained in YAHWEH's Word. He knows the lessons better than all of us. He was there.

Do you remember how ancient Israel was overthrown time and again during the days of the judges? In Judges 3 YAHWEH delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the king of Mesopotamia by the hand of the son of Caleb's younger brother. Israel was delivered and the land had rest *forty years*. See Judges 3:8-11.

But what happened during those *forty years*? Obviously it was a time of peace, of prosperity and rebuilding of Israel. Those were "good" years—like the roaring twenties and soaring sixties!

"And the sons of Israel *did evil* again in the sight of YAHWEH. And YAHWEH made Eglon the king of Moab strong against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of YAHWEH" (verse 12).

So the children of Israel were taken captive—this time under the king of Moab where they served in captivity and slavery for eighteen years. But when they cried to YAHWEH, He heard them and delivered them.

"So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. AND THE LAND HAD REST EIGHTY YEARS" (verse 30).

Again ancient Israel had peace. This time for eighty years. Again, it was a time of peace and prosperity. During this time the children of Israel became a hedonistic and pleasure-loving nation. And they did evil in the sight of the YAHWEH.

"And YAHWEH sold them into the hand of Jabin the king of Canaan, who ruled in Hazor. And his army commander was Sisera; and he lived in Harosheth of the nations" (Judges 4:1-2).

With iron chariots and a mighty army the king of Canaan and the captain of his host mightily oppressed the children of Israel for twenty years.

But YAHWEH loved His nation. And when they cried to Him from pain and suffering, YAHWEH's mercy was extended to them again. This time YAHWEH used Deborah and Barak, the son of Abinoam, to free Israel.

And when He had freed them YAHWEH's Word tells us, "And the land had rest *forty years*" (Judges 5:31).

Whenever Israel was freed from captivity and persecution, the land had rest either *forty* or *eighty* (2 x 40) years. Forty is the number for trial in the Bible. When Israel was freed from persecution, at ease in prosperity and good times—it was a trial!

What happened once Israel was set free from the Canaanites? “And the sons of Israel did evil again in the sight of YAHWEH, and YAHWEH gave them into the hand of Midian seven years” (Judges 6:1).

The Israelites had degenerated into pagan perversions. When they had peace they turned toward production. From production they went to pleasure. In their pleasure they forgot YAHWEH and drifted into paganism and every vile practice.

YAHWEH used Gideon to deliver the children of Israel from the hand of the Midianites. “And Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads any more. And the land had rest FORTY YEARS in the days of Gideon” (Judges 8:28).

What did Israel do during the forty years of quietness? “And it happened, when Gideon was dead, the sons of *Israel rebelled* and went whoring after the Baals, and appointed Baal-Berith for a Elohim for themselves. And the sons of Israel *did not remember* YAHWEH their Elohim who had delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies all around; nor did they act with kindness on the house of Jerubbaal, Gideon, according to all the good which he did with Israel” (Judges 8:33-35).

There you have it. Ancient Israel forgot YAHWEH. She turned to pagan customs and made covenants with idols. History is solid on this fact!

Problems Build Character

“My brothers count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing THAT THE PROVING OF YOUR FAITH WORKS PATIENCE” (Jacob 1:2-3).

True Disciples are to rejoice and be joyful when they fall into trials. These trials work patience—patient endurance in the way of YAHWEH.

“Wherein you will rejoice forever, notwithstanding, at the present time you are pressed a little, by the various trials that have come upon you; so that the proving of your faith, much more precious than perishing gold, but having been proved through fire, may be made manifest to praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Yahshua Messiah” (1 Peter 1:6-7).

Notice! The trial of faith drives us closer to YAHWEH. It is more precious than gold, because under duress we build character when we stay steadfast.

We experience many trials that are blessings. For after the trial is over, we are closer to YAHWEH than before. We learn vital and important lessons from trials.

In the face of trials people have to pray more, fast more, study more, and examine themselves! No wonder the Bible says the trial of your faith is more precious than gold!

If I were the devil, I too would know that trials could be good for Believers.

YAHWEH's Warning

YAHWEH gives this warning in Deuteronomy 6:10-12, and the devil knows why.

“And it shall be, when YAHWEH your Elohim shall bring you into the land which He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to you great and good cities, which you have not built, and houses full of every good thing which you have not filled, and wells dug which you did not dig, vineyards and olive yards which you did not plant; and you shall eat and be satisfied; THEN YOU SHALL BE ON GUARD THAT YOU DO NOT FORGET YAHWEH, *who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves.*”

“Be careful,” YAHWEH says, “lest you forget me in your prosperity.” This is the very thing ancient Israel did!

YAHWEH gives another warning in Deuteronomy 8. “And you shall eat and be satisfied; and you shall bless YAHWEH your Elohim in the good land which *He has given you*. Take heed to yourself, *lest you forget* YAHWEH your Elohim so as not to keep His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I am commanding you today; *that when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built goodly houses, and have lived in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold have multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied*, THEN IT RISES UP INTO YOUR HEART, AND YOU FORGET YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves” (verses 10-14).

Yes, *prosperity is a trial*—a test! But here YAHWEH shows us how to withstand this trial. YAHWEH says we must not forget to acknowledge Him—to keep our eyes on Him—to keep full throttle in His ways!

Here's what Israel did when she got fat and prosperous. “But Jeshurun [Israel] grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, thick and sated. And he abandoned Elohim who made him, and fell away from the Rock of his

salvation (Y'shua)" (Deut. 32:15). Here lies the trouble! Here's the problem! Here's what overthrows so many!

Once prosperous and fat they begin to forsake YAHWEH by lightly esteeming Him!

Enthralled with their own physical prosperity—gadgets, appliances, and just plain things—they seldom think seriously about YAHWEH or His ways. They lightly esteem YAHWEH.

In prophecy, YAHWEH rebukes Israel's descendants (some of whom are our modern English-speaking peoples of America and Britain) for idolatry! "And his land is full of idols; *they worship the work of their own hands*, that which their own fingers have made" (Isaiah 2:8). The Moffatt translation says they worship the things they manufacture.

Is Material Wealth Wrong?

YAHWEH wants to bless His people. He delights in heaping abundant material blessings and prosperity on those who fully obey Him. YAHWEH promised unparalleled blessings to Israel because of Abraham's obedience. Every good and precious gift comes from YAHWEH. He loves to bless.

Yahshua tells Believers that YAHWEH will supply their needs. Even more, YAHWEH says, "Beloved, in regard to all things, I pray for you to PROSPER and to be in health, as your soul prospers" (3 John 1:2).

YAHWEH promises to bless the tithe payer and to prosper Him (See Mal. 3:10). The Bible contains dozens of rules on handling money and using wisdom in finances. The Bible says that riches are the crown of wise men. YAHWEH wants His people to be blessed and prospered.

BUT YAHWEH FORBIDS US TO SET OUR HEARTS ON PROSPERITY!! (Psalm 62:10)
So if I were the devil I'd try to get Believers to set their hearts on material things!

Yahshua Warns of Materialism

Yahshua Messiah foresaw the end time. He knew what troubles we would face and gave this warning: "But beware in yourselves that your hearts *never become* heavy by extravagance and by DRUNKEDNESS, AND BY DISTRESS OF THE WORLD, AND THAT DAY SHOULD COME SUDDENLY UPON YOU."

"As a snare, for it will come in on all those sitting on the face of all the earth" (Luke 21:34-35).

Here is YAHWEH's warning to New Testament Believers. Don't get too materially minded! Don't let the cares of this life take your mind off YAHWEH and His purposes! Watch that you don't forget YAHWEH!

Examine yourself. Have you imbibed the spirit of this world? Have you taken on the spirit of the society around you? Have you adopted the spirit of lethargy?

"So then, we should not sleep, as the rest also do, but we should watch and be sober. For those sleeping sleep by night, and those having been drunk are drunk by night. But let us who are children of the day *be alert*, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet put on the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5:6-8).

Money is Power

Today the emphasis is on materialism. People are frantically concerned about the cares of this life. How to make ends meet. How to get more for their money.

YAHWEH warns us about the greedy, selfish spirit that pervades our societies today. "But those purposing to be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which plunge men into ruin and destruction. **FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY IS A ROOT OF ALL EVIL**, by means of which some having lusted *after it were seduced from the faith*, and they themselves pierced through by many pains" (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

Most people are not ready for riches. They can't handle them!

Now, what happens when people get a little extra money? How do they use this money—this power? Is it handled wisely?

All too often it is not. Many spend themselves sick!

Money is power. It must be controlled. Without self-control and restraint money becomes a curse. Satan's aim is to encourage us to destroy ourselves—turn blessings into curses.

Indeed prosperity is a *trial*!

Yahshua said, "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (Matt. 6:21).

He also said, "No one is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and he will love the other; or he will cleave to the one, and he will despise the other. **YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO SERVE YAHWEH AND WEALTH**" (Matt. 6:24).

The devil knows the choice is either YAHWEH or your material wealth. Now if he can drug you, hook you on materialism, pleasures and the soft life so you think you can't live without it—then your mind can be

turned away from holiness. For the Bible plainly reveals that the mind set on the flesh and the fleshly things is enmity to YAHWEH (See Romans 8:4-7).

The Devil's Plan

The devil really hates prosperity! Those he dominates will eventually live in squalor. Witness the underdeveloped nations.

Prosperity is a blessing from YAHWEH! But it must be used properly! Like fire, water and other elements—prosperity can be *destructive* rather than *constructive* if not handled properly.

Thus the devil's plan: Get people to misuse prosperity so that it becomes a *curse* rather than a blessing. Get people to *set their hearts on material things*—forget YAHWEH!

So, if I were the devil here's how I'd do it.

Within my power I'd give you a road of smooth sailing. I'd hold back some persecutions. I'd assure you—CONVINCE YOU—that there is no need to pray harder, study more, and sacrifice further. "Everything will be all right. Take it easy," I'd say. "Rest, relax, enjoy yourself—have another piece of candy."

I'd try my best to convince you there's no need for you to carry all that spiritual armor around (Eph. 6:12-18).

"Look, haven't things been going well? Then why keep that shield of faith up so high? And why lug that breastplate of righteousness around? You don't need it. Neither will you need that sword of the Spirit"—the Word of YAHWEH.

"That's it," I'd say, "take off those shoes of readiness in the gospel. Now sit back and relax. Make yourself comfortable. Take it off. That's it, go ahead—sure, do it. It must be hot under that helmet of salvation."

Now, with all your armor off—you would no longer hear the smooth voice of an apparent friend. *You'd hear the terrifying ROAR of a hungry lion!*

Don't let this happen to you. Don't obey the devil by yielding to *his* temptations. Instead, ask YAHWEH for help. Refuse to yield to materialistic temptations. Submit to YAHWEH's correction. Let Him guide you through HIS WORD.

Are you cursing your Land (continued from page 11)

Trust YAHWEH

Remember that the Sabbath year is a time for rejoicing, created for the benefit of man. If you *obey* YAHWEH and *trust* Him, in *faith*, He will fully supply all your needs. In Deuteronomy 11:13-15 YAHWEH promises you that if you *obey* Him, He will send you rain at the right season so that your fields will produce abundant crops and your pastures plenty of grass "...that you may eat and be satisfied."

Do you think it would be difficult for YAHWEH to punish the nation *without injuring you*? Turn to Psalm 91:7-10 and read YAHWEH's answer to this question: "A thousand shall fall by your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes you shall look, and see the reward of the wicked. Because You, O YAHWEH, are My refuge; You make the Most High Your habitation, no evil shall happen to You, nor shall any plague come near Your tent."

Turn to Amos 4:7, also, and read: "And I also withheld the rain from you when it was yet three months to the harvest. And I caused rain to fall on one city, and caused it not to rain on another city. One piece was rained on, and the piece where it did not rain was dried up." This definitely *proves* that YAHWEH can give *you* rain while your neighbor suffers from drought. If you doubt that this refers to our day, read carefully verses 6-12. The statement, "Prepare to meet your Elohim, O Israel" at the end of verse 12 shows that this scripture is for our day—just before the return of The Messiah.

Could you want stronger promises? What could be stronger than these assurances taken directly from YAHWEH's inspired Word? Do you believe YAHWEH?

If you do not, you have a very wretched life ahead of you! Anyone can see that conditions are worsening the world over. Human scheming certainly cannot save you. Are you going to continue disobeying YAHWEH and suffer for it? Or will you OBEY Him so that He can heap HIS BLESSINGS upon you?

ANGER

Escaping the Curse



Unbridled anger is a hallmark of our time. We need to learn about this potent force and how to control it.

Reprint Article by K. Neil Earle

“The Manifestations of the emotion of anger are so numerous that Dr. W.B. Cannon of Harvard required an entire printed page to merely list them,” wrote Dr. John Schindler in *How to Live 365 Days a Year*.

“The chief *external* manifestations are: a reddening of the skin, bloodshot whites of the eyes, etc. But the *internal manifestations* are much more profound. Your blood immediately clots a whole lot quicker...the muscles at the outlet of the stomach squeeze down so tightly that nothing leaves (one reason some doctors label 99 and 44/100 percent of ‘gas’ attacks as emotional reactions).

“The entire digestive tract becomes spastic, triggering severe abdominal pains. The heart rate goes up markedly...the coronary arteries squeeze down hard enough to produce angina or even a fatal coronary” (pages 25-26).

Now note this excellent prescription, almost 3,000 years old, from the world’s bestseller: “Abstain from anger and cease from fury; also, do not inflame yourself to do evil” (Psalm 37:8). Modern research helps us understand Solomon’s shrewd counsel: “One slow to anger is of great understanding” (Proverbs 14:29).

Overt Anger

Few want to suffer the penalties of rampant, misdirected anger, but alas, millions of us get entangled with it every day. Even today’s slang is emotionally charged, threatening, dangerous: “He makes me sick!” “He burns me up (gastric pain?!)”

“I really blew my stack (maybe some blood vessels as well!)” “I could kill him!”
Sound familiar?

Our own bodies are the big losers in uncontrolled anger, but sometimes innocent bystanders get hit with the emotional spillover as well. The Bible even cautions us about the hate-filled words that reduce our inhibitions to performing some tragic acts (Proverbs 16:27).

Of course, one of today's most common erroneous assumptions is that all anger is wrong. It's not. Just as there are beneficial kinds of fear (Proverbs 1:7), so there are positive uses of anger.

YAHWEH gets angry—(Psalm 7:11)! But YAHWEH's anger is constructive, solution-oriented, under the control of His overriding intelligence and perspective.

The Apostle Paul confirmed it: "Be angry but do not sin," he taught in Ephesians 4:26. Yahshua blazed at the slander, the bitterness, the spite and jealousy of the Pharisees, especially when it hurt others (Mark 3:5). He was angry when He cleared the moneychangers from the Temple (John 2:13-17).

This is controlled anger. YAHWEH encourages us to grow in this (Ezekiel 21:14-17, Jeremiah 20:9). But most anger in the world today is *not* beneficial. It is the uncontrolled explosion from the steady barrage of negative or threatening life experiences: teachers finally "blowing up" at pupils, parents exasperated with children, husbands upset with wives and vice versa.

We need to clearheadedly pinpoint the causes of friction and apply sound remedies. But the wrong type of anger blocks sound thinking. It is the easy way out, the cheap, characterless way, the way that intimidates and bullies, but doesn't courageously and intelligently tackle the real problems. Overt, explosive anger only tenses the atmosphere, polarizes the parties involved, stifles meaningful feedback and leaves wounds that sometimes last a lifetime. It is the enemy of sound thinking (Ecclesiastes 9:17).

And it doesn't make you feel better. Why? Because the overstimulation of the bloodstream produces toxins that course through the body, leaving the whole organism enervated and agitated. Worse—the problem still remains.

How wise the Scriptures are: "A merciful man does good to his own soul, but the cruel troubles his own flesh" (Proverbs 11:17).

Latent Anger

Millions of people suffer from depression in our society, unaware that depression, like anger, develops its own dynamic. This is because depression is often anger turned inward: We'd like to vent our frustrations on someone, but often we don't dare. We seethe inwardly instead, harboring the hostile, aggressive feelings deep down inside our human spirit.

Result? The resentments and envying that we don't want to admit we have, the hostility we don't want to let slip out (especially against authority figures who can retaliate), these negative, putrid emotions eat away at us inside.

In time they can distort our whole spirit. Emotional spite, un-repentant of, eats away at us deep inside (Matthew 15:19, Jacob 4:1).

Sound farfetched? Neurologist Mortimer Ostow, in his study *The Psychology of Melancholy*, reported, "Depression at *every phase* of its development includes a component of anger, whether visible or invisible, whether conscious or unconscious."

The latent anger and resentment often rise to our consciousness as baffling waves of negativism—depression. In time the depression becomes such a virulent force that *it* is diagnosed as the *cause* of the problem when, quite often, it is the *effect*.

And this is not the happy way to live. The depressive isn't usually aware of what is happening. Jeremiah put it eloquently: "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is incurable; who can know it?*" (Jeremiah 17:9). And, "O YAHWEH, I know that his way does not belong to man; it is not in man who walks to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Even the closest friends of the one suffering from latent anger usually can't spot it. Judas Iscariot, seething with bitterness at Yahshua's style of ministry, was not suspected by the other disciples (John 13:26-29).

Understand now why, in our day, a man who murdered four victims was a model citizen until he was bypassed for promotion at work. Eighteen months later he finally exploded.

Latent anger is scary. Try to spot it, admit it, face up to it and, with YAHWEH's help, wrench yourself from it (Romans 7:23-24).

The way to overcome anger is to train ourselves, with YAHWEH's help, to see the benefits in quickly forgiving offenses. We don't need to play amateur psychologist or engage in tedious confrontations that solve nothing. Instead, be more willing to forgive offenses than the other party. Try to soften the rhetoric and keep it unemotional. Try to have Yahshua's attitude of agreeing with the adversary quickly (Matthew 5:25).

This goes a long way in reducing conflict, that spirit of murder that seethes and festers inside. So many of our conflicts are unintentional or accidental. And if we believe that people are lying awake at night trying to make our life difficult, then we do have problems!

In most cases it just isn't so—life is usually much less complicated than that.

Modern False Doctrines

Unfortunately, a deceptive teaching today encourages people to ventilate their anger. "Don't hold it in, it'll harm you—let it out!" says this popular school of thought. "Don't suppress it, or you'll explode later on."

But why wait for tensions to get to this point?

Learn to enjoy therapeutic talks with a close friend from time to time. Here, irritations or frustrations can be talked out in a nonthreatening environment. The Bible upholds this kind of friendship (Proverbs 17:17).

What is a friend? "Someone who knows all about you but likes you anyway," a wise man answered.

One spin-off of a happy marriage is the emotional release from unburdening oneself of frustrations—a beautiful blessing in a good marriage, where each mate can act as trusted confidant, consoler, and stabilizer.

Dr. James Dobson perceptively condemns the "let-it-all-hangout" school of thought. There are alternatives:

"I have no desire to return our culture to the formalism of yesterday, when father was a marble statue and mother couldn't smile because her corset was too tight. But if our grandparents represented one extreme of emotional repression, today's (adults) have become temperamental yo-yos at the other.

Reason is now dominated by feelings, rather than the reverse. The pop psyche movement...encourages us to get in touch with our feelings...to open up...to tell it like it is...The past 10 years people in the 'helping sciences' have been obsessed by the need to express anger and resentment: 'Hatred is stored-up anger. Therefore, getting mad is a loving thing.'"

"We must harmonize the finding that anger should be ventilated with the biblical commandment that we be 'slow to become angry' (Jacob 1:19). I do not find these objectives to be in contradiction. Why else did the Apostle Paul tell us to settle our irritations before sundown (Ephesians 4:26), preventing an accumulation of seething hostility?" (*Emotions: CAN YOU TRUST THEM?* Pages 9-10, 94)

Don't be deceived. Rampant anger is a destructive force in its own right, regardless of the trigger. It can lead to tragedy. The Bible is very clear on that:

Cain lost control and in berserk, jealous rage at his brother became the first murderer (Genesis 4:1-8).

Moses lost the chance to enter the promised land for indulging in one temper outburst too many (Numbers 20:1-12).

David, a man after YAHWEH's heart, got carried away in unbridled anger at times (2 Samuel 8:1-2). It cost him the blessing of building the Temple (1 Chronicles 22:8).

Jacob and John were rebuked by Yahshua for a vindictive, hard-hearted attitude toward a despised group of people (Luke 9:51-56). They changed greatly later on (1 John 4:20). So can we.

Let's study two case histories illustrating the kinds of anger we have been discussing. Let's learn to spot the enemy inside us.

Overt Anger: The Exploder

Explosive anger is usually short-term, extremely passionate and often deadly in its effects. People who indulge it pay a price (Proverbs 5:22).

King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon was a classic exploder, steamroller and Sherman tank rolled into one. Notice Daniel 3:

"Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He spoke and directed to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usual to heat it. And he ordered mighty men of valor in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and to

throw them into the burning, fiery furnace. Then these men were tied up in their coats, their gowns, and their hats, and their clothes, and were thrown into the middle of the burning, fiery furnace. Then, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego" (verses 19-22).

What a temper tantrum!

Destructive, uncontrolled, unbridled anger is not indulged without a price. The mighty men were part of Nebuchadnezzar's general staff, soldiers of proven worth and loyal to the king.

But who is safe before rampant rage?

Not even the ones you love. Are some of our fights and frictions exacerbated by "harsh words" that "stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1)? Everyone gets upset and nothing is solved. Is this happening in your home, business, school or team?

YAHWEH promises, "A soft answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1).

Latent Anger: Dangerous Depressives

King Ahab of ancient Israel never did grow up emotionally. Look at his reaction when his neighbor wouldn't accept Ahab's real-estate offer:

"And Ahab came into his house sullen and angry...and he lay on his bed and turned away his face, and would not eat food. And his wife Jezebel came in to him, and said to him, Why is your spirit sullen that you are not eating food?" (1 Kings 21:4-5)

This is a classic disappointment, dejection and depression stemming from frustration. But frustration is often thwarted self-will. Ahab couldn't even eat. We've all known people like that. They turn their anger inward; misery and paralysis result. The more Ahab wallowed in self-pity, the more deeply embedded the anger and resentment became.

It distorted his reasoning process till he was putty in wily Jezebel's hands (verses 7-14).

See how anger and depression are linked? They are virulent raging forces in their own right. YAHWEH pleads with us: "One slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

Ahab, sniveling assassin that he was, cold-bloodedly murdered his neighbor. YAHWEH was so angry He pronounced a curse on the dynasty (1 Kings 21:20-24).

Rather than destructively lashing out, it would be far better for us all to learn the biblical prescriptions for handling anger.

A Biblical Strategy

First, if possible, drop to your knees the moment you see resentment, bitterness and anger welling up. Ask YAHWEH to rebuke your wrong thoughts (2 Corinthians 10:5). Remember: Most anger is sin (Jacob 1:20).

Second, keep the big picture of human existence in mind. Ask yourself: Will this really matter 1,000 years from now? Suppose your adversary died, and you still had a grudge on your conscience. How would you feel then?

Third, try sincerely to see the other person's point of view. Where is he coming from? Remember the Indian motto: "Help me not to speak evil of my brother till I have walked a day in his moccasins."

Fourth, sow peace (Jacob 3:18). Do you have an antagonist at odds with you? At the very least, if you are a true peacemaker (Matthew 5:9), you can be sorry that you and your adversary are having a problem. That attitude all by itself softens tensions. Why not send a gift, a card or some other small token of goodwill? Solomon said much about the wise use of gifts (Proverbs 17:8, 18:16).

Fifth, when in conflict review the points covered in this article and others like it. Seek wise counsel. Cement in your mind how nonproductive anger is. See it as a sheer waste of time. Tell yourself you need all the clearheaded thinking you can muster. Why waste time going on the warpath?

Sixth, consider this: Does YAHWEH need us to police His universe? Do we really believe that people who offend us can violate YAHWEH's laws with impunity? Read Psalm 73 and stay calm.

Seventh, pray for your adversary. At least then the problem will come up for review before the great YAHWEH, and this will help far more than you think. You will be investing spiritual energies that can revitalize the relationship. This will soften your approach (Matthew 5:43-44). Since, YAHWEH loves both of you, His Holy Spirit will give you more objectivity toward your persecutor. YAHWEH will enter the relationship if you ask Him (Jacob 4:1-2).

With YAHWEH's help we can master anger. And what a blessing if we do. Life is so short, and anger disrupts, dislocates and distracts us from the abundant life YAHWEH wants us to have!

Ask the Amish is a section in the Remnant's Walk with reprint articles and letters from the Amish community from a publication called "*Family Life*", which started back in 1967. Some original authors are listed in the publication, some are not. If there is an author listed, they would be listed at the end of the article with an original publishing date. Some Amish choose not to put their names on articles they write.



What Businesses build Community?

Sam Miller felt a twang of guilt as he put the "For sale" sign up on his front lawn, surrounded by lawn ornaments. He had felt this way last year when he had introduced his line of wind chimes and designer flower pots. But was it any worse than Joe across the road, with his trampoline business, or Pete's with their quilt factory; or Amos and his exotic animals? It seems that in these times, everyone needs a little extra income. "*If tourists are going to come here anyway, we might as well sell them something,*" Sam reassured himself.

Sam's problem is not unlike what is happening to many Amish families and indeed whole communities across America. Is it good or all bad? What effect does it have on our plain churches?

Just a few decades ago, these plain people who produced or sold things not used by the church would have been considered wayward or not very conscientious. Thirty years ago, 90% of the Amish in Lancaster County farmed. While never a quick way to wealth, farming provided ample income to live on and to buy more farms for the next generation.

By the early 1960's, prices of farmland and inputs had risen to the point, that small dairy herds no longer made enough income. The fifty-cow herd became the norm, and included such things as bulk milk tanks, milking machines, and specialized buildings and machinery. But in 1965, a farmer could still jump in and have his farm paid off in fifteen to twenty years.

By the 1980's, the situation had changed. Interest rates hit 18 percent, and farmland in Lancaster County sold for \$5,000 to \$10,000 per acre. Farms were split until they became too small to split again. This coupled the fact that the Amish population is doubling every twenty years, and half of our people now are under eighteen years of age. Obviously, the problem will not go away, there are too many people and too few acres.

Initially, many farmers began sideline industries to help pay for their farms. The 1977 *Old Order Shop and Service Directory* listed 135 in Lancaster County. And the updated 1987 version would likely contain 400-500, a quadrupling in ten years. Many of the shops have turned from sidelines to full-time employment, with 50-70% of the workforce employed off the farm. Many laborers are working in Amish shops or construction to earn money to someday buy a farm. Many have given up their dream of farming.

One farmer with a sideline shop and several teenage sons, said, *"Basically, we're trying to keep the family together. I don't know what will happen when these chaps get married. They'll probably keep right on working here. They'll have the business and I'll do the farming. We're working out of sheer fright. We've got a forty-acre farm with an eighty-acre mortgage."*

At the same time that the economic woes began to beset the Amish, another force was at work. Tourists discovered the Amish. While Lancaster County was discovered first, the last twenty years have also seen an upsurge in tourism in almost all plain communities. Millions of tourists jam the roads, attractions, and flea markets. Sleepy farm towns have become thriving "handicraft" and "country-look" centers.

While we would like to blame such activity on outsiders, it is becoming evident that some Amish have welcomed and even encouraged the tourist trade. A very conservative Amish group in a new settlement began allowing car and bus tours of their houses and shops. The tours are a real hit and today 10,000 visitors a year file through the Amish homes there buying the wares they have for sale. This system is apparently being repeated in other small mid-western settlements of plain people.

Most of the tourists are anxious to see these plain people. However, many are only interested in the nostalgic "country image", and the Amish just happen to be there, like a convenient back drop or prop. All the tourists have a lot of money to spend. Some want to indulge in food or recreation while there. Some would like a keepsake from the Amish. Others see us as quality country craftsmanship. Others will settle for junk. Literally anything you want to sell will find a willing buyer in the more heavily traveled areas.

While they may be somewhat tied together, we can perhaps divide our discussion into two separate questions. First. To what extent should we encourage tourists. The problem lies in the fact that tourist trickles tend to become streams, and streams become torrents.

While there is certainly nothing wrong with a few well-thought-out questions from a passer-by or selling some baked goods or pieces of furniture to someone outside of our own circles, there comes a point when the involvement goes deeper. As tourist numbers swell, we find it brings changes to our families and communities, and these changes are rarely for the good.

Along with the tourists come the developers, they buy up land for attractions and shopping malls. Many visitors decide they would like to live permanently in such a "quaint setting". So, lots are bought, and oftentimes Amish crews are hired to build rows of luxury homes.

Land prices spiral upwards so that farms are neither affordable or available. Demand for "services" increases. Where does it all stop?

The process is nearing completion in some of the older settlements, most notably Lancaster County. But other settlements such as [the counties of] Holmes [Ohio] and LaGrange [Ind.], are also well on

the way. Perhaps it can't be stopped, but it will have to result in the migration of concerned plain people to new settlements. For those communities where tourism has not become a problem, don't start it.

We don't need tourist dollars that bad. Let us work quietly with dignity on our farms and leave the public contact and high-visibility jobs to other people.

There is a second question. To what extent should we be making or selling things we would not use ourselves. Most of us would not be able to imagine an Amish-man operating a used-car-dealership or opening a jewelry store. But how much different is that really from selling rototillers or other items not used by our church. And what is the difference between jewelry to adorn someone else's body, and lawn ornaments or patio furniture to adorn someone else's house and yard?

A similar dilemma lies in the very production of nonessential or non-useful items. The plain people have long been known as practitioners of basic industry and craftsmanship. Not so long ago this was still true. Our farmers produced staple foods, our welders and blacksmiths produced wagons, tools and machinery. Our woodworkers produced lumber, furniture and barns. Today we often find ourselves producing decorations and playthings for an increasingly decadent society.

When we consider this subject, two scriptures immediately come to mind. In Jacob 4:4 we read, *"Don't you know that the friendship of the world is enmity with Elohim? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is and enemy of Yahweh."*

How close a relationship dare we have with the world before we become its friend? Friends are those who help us and encourage us. If we encourage the world by helping supply the items they desire for wanton, extravagant lifestyles, are we not then their friends?

In Romans 1:32 we read, *"who knowing the judgement of Elohim that they commit such things worthy of death not only do the same, but pleasure in them that do them."* Yes, have pleasure in them. Do we enjoy the company of well-dressed society high-rollers with their flattering talk and sophisticated hair?

Are we pleased that our knickknacks and quilts are going to New York or Chicago or perhaps becoming decorations or wall hangings at a fashionable restaurant?

If we truly see the dangers in the modern lifestyle and all that goes with it, how could we encourage someone else to indulge in it? What are we really telling our children? Is our light shining as bright as we think it is? Or have we possibly become as the Pharisees of old with one foot in the world and the other in the church?

What can we do about it? Well, for one thing we should look honestly at our income producing sidelines and ask ourselves why we are involved. Do we need the money to make ends meet on the farm? If so, off-farm income doesn't mean working away or selling questionable items.

There are many useful, community-minded businesses we can pursue right from the farm. If we really don't need the money then why dabble in something questionable? If engaged in a small business for a living, ask yourself again, "Is it a community-building occupation? How big is this business really becoming? Am I living a lifestyle that is higher, easier, or more luxurious than the farmers in our church?"

One builder of mini-barns who sells over a thousand a year said, "The off-farm jobs are a bad thing for the Amish. Prosperity was never good for Christians. Too much money is not good for anybody. Too much prosperity is no good either."

(Robert Alexander, 10-90)

Helpful Hints



Managing the Budget - Envelope System

The one thing that has made the biggest difference in our living on a budget is using an envelope system, it's like we got a huge raise! We divide our spending into specific categories and fill each envelope with a designated amount of cash each month. Some examples are: **Children's Clothes, Wife's Spending Money, Husband's Spending Money, Home Improvement/Garden, Vacation Fund, Car Maintenance, Groceries, Wife's Clothing, Husband's Clothing**, etc.

In some envelopes, such as Vacation Fund, the cash builds up over several months. Expenditures such as Home/Garden need to be approved by both spouses so there is no accidental deficit. This helps to make good decisions. For example, is a coffee at Starbucks really worth \$4 of my spending money (and not feel guilty if I decide it is!), or do I want to save it up for something more needy?

The following are some other things that have helped us to be less wasteful.

- After making a pot of coffee leave the filter and coffee grounds until the next morning. Then add half the amount of coffee grounds you would use for a full pot. This saves half the number of filters and $\frac{1}{4}$ the amount of coffee that you would normally use making it every morning. We don't notice a difference in taste. Use the coffee grounds to make "compost tea" for your garden.
- We take all the return address labels and cut off the pretty pictures on the left-hand side to use as stickers for the children.
- Wash out and reuse plastic bags, plastic and aluminum foil (except for those who have touched raw meat), then recycle the foil for cash.
- I crochet Afghans as baby gifts to save money and they are also a more meaningful personal gift.
- Automatic bill pays saves on stamps, envelopes and time!
- Cloth diapers save money if you don't get addicted to buying and trying the newest ones all the time. It also helps the environment.
- When the croc-pot is not in use for dinner, I make a large batch of beans and freeze them in 2 cup portions to be used instead of canned beans.
- When buying depreciating assets, buy used. We saved thousands of dollars on our used van and pop-up camper. Now the camper saves loads of money when we camp instead of getting a hotel on vacation. This includes great used clothing for a fraction of the price at Good Wills and second hand stores.

*Mrs. Jackson
Texas, USA
3 children (as of 2011)*

Family Meal Manager

One of the greatest challenges we have faced as a newly married couple living on one income, is affording healthy foods for our family. This is one area where we try to make as few compromises as possible, which takes some creativity.

As the meal manager, I mainly shop in the outside aisles of the supermarket, purchasing fruits, dairy (raw, and farm fresh when we can get it) and meat (antibiotic/hormone free), with some canned beans, canned or frozen chicken and grains. We eat brown rice instead of pasta, since it is cheaper and healthier, and we bake our own spelt bread on a weekly basis. At times it is frustrating when I want to buy expensive super foods, but I know I need to be faithful in little things and manage our family's money as well. Here are a few things I keep in mind when shopping.

- **No snacks or sweets.** We hardly ever buy snack food. Many of the snacks, even in health food stores are nutritionally limited. They are full of fattening carbs without really meeting the body's needs. Why would I purchase chips or crackers when I can buy a whole food that will satisfy my hunger? My husband likes snacking on raisins and nuts to get the extra calories he needs when he's on the job. If I'm going out when I might get hungry, I'll usually make a sandwich or grab some fruit. We also rarely buy sweets, even "natural" ones, and I only make dessert when there's company. A nutritious sweet is fun to have every once in a while, but if I must make a choice as to which benefits the dinner table, I'll go with zucchini and sweet potatoes.
- **Pick your produce.** Pesticides are sprayed on many of the grocery stores' produce that can be harmful to our bodies. Still, it is much more expensive to buy organic. I'd rather buy the fruits and veggies we need than not have any at all. I recently read about the *EWG's Shoppers Guide to Pesticides* on foodnews.com. Their *Clean 15 and Dirty Dozen* lists are a great help in identifying what produce is more heavily treated and what produce is safer to buy. By eliminating the *Dirty Dozen* from your diet, you cut 4/5 of your body's pesticide intake!! This has helped me to choose which lower-pesticide fruits and veggies to buy and which ones are more important to buy organic. My husband is also clearing our backyard for this year's garden. With about 3,000 sq. ft. of garden space we are hoping to supply a good amount of our family's produce, preserve many veggies and store the root crops in our basement for the winter. We see this as an important step to managing our budget.
- **Identify cheaper foods and stock up.** I often find myself drooling over exotic dates and realize that my money could be better spent on ground beef. I make a point of identifying cheaper foods and stock up on them—onions, potatoes and carrots are a part of practically every meal. Cooking a big batch of soup (especially bone broth soup) and freezing it can provide some easy "fast-food" meals. Defrost it earlier in the day and heat it up.
- **Buy in season and preserve.** Our choice to breast-feed exclusively for the first year of our baby's life was based on what we decided was best for his body and immune system, but it also proved to be a blessing to the budget. It is hard to imagine buying cereals, pureed foods or formula for a baby who is perfectly sustained on nutritious mother milk. Our baby is now 16 months old and devouring everything we put out on his plate. I have found that stocking up on fruits when they are on sale and storing them in our chest freezer is a great way to get him a variety of nutrients. I also purchase a lot of frozen veggies to steam or stir fry for his dinners. I have done some canning in the past, but we decided to mainly freeze the produce from our garden this year.
- **Cook simple!** Stay away from complicated recipes. This was something I figured out really fast after I got married. I would buy a gazillion ingredients to make a casserole or soup and then complain later when the budget ran out prematurely, and I still had an assortment of random accessories. I don't use recipes very often now and when I do I choose the ones with minimal ingredients. Not only does simple cooking save money but it is also easier for your body to digest your meals when there's only a mix of 5 foods instead of 15! The most popular meal in our house is stir-fry-over rice. It's fast, easy and can look different every day of the week. I use different veggies, a variety of seasonings and we also occasionally have it on pasta. It's incredible how delicious and satisfying a simple stir-fry can be!

Mrs. Thomas

2 children (as of 2011)

Massachusetts, USA

Ask Questions

I ask myself certain questions before I buy something new at the store. Do we really need this? Could we get by without it? Do we already have something to use for this purpose? Can we buy it used?

You know the saying, "Reuse, Reduce and Recycle." I don't know if recycling can save you money, but the other two can (**recycling can too if you do it right**) if we think of using items that can be reused instead of spending money, we can save money. Cloth diapering definitely saves over disposables. Empty little trash cans from around the house into the kitchen trash to save on trash bags. Before you throw something away, think, "Can I still use this or some part of this in some useful way?"

Jarred baby food can be so expensive!! Waiting until your baby is closer to one year before introducing a lot of solids can help save money. We also enjoy feeding our baby simple things like oatmeal with extra water, canned pumpkin, and regular unsweetened applesauce found in the canned fruits section of the store. My parents have bought us a hand food mill. When the baby gets a little older we put some of whatever the family is eating in there, grind it and voila!—baby food!

We live in an apartment and use a coin-operated washing machine. To save on drying, we hang small garments on a laundry rack and have a collection of hangers for larger garments. We also have a way to hang somethings outside, which is especially helpful for sheets and cloth diapers! I have found that we can often use less of a product than we thought we needed and it will last longer, less shampoo, laundry detergent, dishwashing detergent, and toothpaste.

We also enjoy our local free-cycle program! If you search your local newspapers many things that are useful are being given away for free.

I've had fun in the recent months creating handmade gifts. We enjoy making things! Keeping scrap fabric from projects and old clothes allows for some fun projects. Some ideas for little girl gifts are doll blankets and pillows and doll clothes. We've sewn a stuffed snake with button eyes for a little boy.

Bean bags and capes are fun for boys and girls. I've made a number of baby blankets even without batting, for a simmer baby or a nursing cover-up. We've decorated magnets for adults. I'm the kind of person who has to be careful about legalism. I purposely don't do all of the above all the time. We want to be good resources but we must trust Yahweh. All the budget watching and saving I do will not save me! His providence does not depend on my performance.

Mrs. Gregory 3 children (as of 2011) Texas, USA

Don't Forget to Tithe

Tithing has helped us so much. Before we started tithing, we were barely scraping by at the end of the month. Now we have some extra, not a lot, but better than before! When my husband gets paid, I do the budget. If I don't put the tithe money in first, the budget never works, but when I do, everything works out wonderfully. We also find it is good to have an emergency fund as long as you don't touch the money unless it is a real emergency. This gives you peace of mind.

Mrs. Ramey 2 children (as of 2011) Kentucky USA



Answers to your Questions

Q) Do all debts have to be released in a Shemita year? What about paying your rent on your house, or what about if you were simply helping out a brother, but it wasn't really a debt?

A) As a believer we are commanded to relieve all debts, whether Shemita or not, if the person we lent to cannot pay.

1Co 6:1 Does anyone of you having a matter against his brother dare to be judged before the unjust, and not before the saints?

1Co 6:2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge small affairs?

1Co 6:3 Do you not know that we shall judge cherubs? How much more than should we judge those who belong to this world?

1Co 6:4 You have worldly affairs to be settled and yet you have put men of bad reputation in the congregation on the judgment seat.

1Co 6:5 I say this to you to make you feel ashamed. So, is there not a single wise one among you, who could settle a dispute between brother and brother?

1Co 6:6 But brother goes to court with brother and this before unbelievers!

1Co 6:7 Indeed, then, there is already a failure with you all, that you have lawsuits with yourselves.

Why not instead be wronged? Why not instead be defrauded?

So, it doesn't mean that you cannot expect to be paid back when you lend money to a brother or sister, but when you do lend money, you have to be ready to lose that money if the person you lent it to cannot or doesn't pay it back to you.

There is no recourse, or taking them to court as with the world. So, the lesson to learn is **DO NOT** lend money to anyone unless you are in a position that you can lose that money. You must lend fully realizing that you may not get the money back.

So, if you can't afford to lose the money, then **DO NOT** lend it to begin with. This goes for lending anything of material worth, only lend it if you can afford to lose it.

So, in this case, with the Shemita year it really does not change anything in lending. If you lent a brother money and he cannot pay it back, then you should release him from the debt as you would in any other year as mentioned.

But, if a brother is able to pay you back, then even though you release the debt, he should have the honor to still want to pay you back from what he took.

So, if you lent this money in good faith, hoping to be repaid, and the other party agreed to that, then unless the person is in a position that he cannot repay the debt (in which it should be released) the person should still pay back what he has committed to pay.

You can release the person from the debt, but if the person has agreed to pay you back, then they should still pay you what they have agreed to.

Our word is our bond!

And if they don't want to, and say they have been released, then you would have to let it go, but remember we reap what we sow, and the other party would be blessed for such an action.

The principle of the Shemita is giving freedom to those who for different circumstances who wound up in debt or slavery into which they could not repay, (and just as Yahshua paid our debt of sin which we could not pay), we should be willing to release debts that people are unable to pay back. However, if a person was in a strong financial position and could pay the debt back, then he should keep his word and not take advantage of the system of release for those who are unable to pay themselves. As for regular bills, such as paying rent or your electric bill, these are not debts but normal cost of living bills. Nowhere in Scripture do we see that no normal bills have to be paid in a Shemita year or how could society run, as who would be paying for everyone's cost of living if no one was paying any bill at all?

The key to Shemita is like someone who goes into bankruptcy, who is overburdened in debt or even slavery, that we are to have mercy and pity on such people and release them from this burden in the Shemita year, but also each person is still to pay for his normal bills as at any other time.

Q) Since Shemita starts on September 27th, would it be lawful to buy tomatoes, and onions, etc., on September 28th after the Shemita started, since they were planted before the Shemita began, or can we not buy any fresh fruit or grain after this September 27th date?

A) The Shemita starts September 27th on Yom Teruah, so if you go to the supermarket on September 28 and they have onions/tomatoes that were harvested the week before Shemita began, then you could buy them as they were not planted or harvested in the Shemita.

There is no hard date as to when to stop buying fresh food as all markets and food stores are different. Some local stores may start to harvest new crops within a week or two of Shemita as where bigger stores such as Walmarts who store food in big warehouses may take up to a month before newly harvested food is put on shelves.

So, the principle is very simple, you are not allowed to plant or harvest in the Shemita year, so if things were not harvested or planted in the Shemita then they can be bought and eaten.

Q) Can you buy herbal supplements during the Shemita year?

A) As with many of the Shemita questions there is no one simple answer to give. If you are speaking about things such as super green powder, which is made from all fresh vegetables, then of course you could not buy such a supplement that was made after the Shemita began.

The same would go for something like an essential oil like lavender or peppermint that needs to be planted and harvested to make.

However, some herbal supplements, such as used for things such as prostate or heart health, and simply have vitamins, such as vitamins D and E, and are usually processed at least 6 months to a year in advance would not be such a problem in the Shemita.

The key is, if possible, to try to prepare as much as you can in advance with herbal supplements and have to make decisions according to when each one was processed and put on the shelf.

Letters from our Readers

Dear Brethren,

I am a Bible student seeking the truth. I am an indigent state prisoner, in Texas. A cell mate of mine introduced me to one of your publications: Hebraic Roots Bible—A Literal Translation. I really enjoy the way it is worded, and would like to receive one if I may. And if you all have Bible studies I'd appreciate if you could enclose that as well. Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Prisoner, Texas, USA

Dear Congregation of Yahweh,

Thank you for your response. I am excited to finally have a Bible. I spend my free time throughout the day and night reading the download.

I refuse to go to church here and listen to false teachings. I don't want to hear the names of G-d and J---s and be told the Torah does not matter. I have a friend that is a minister and argues with me about it. He actually gets offended that I want to follow the Torah and fast too! These false teachings are dangerous. I am relying on Yahweh to teach me now, to follow Him in the way He intended. He is amazing and has been helping me.

When I found your website through prayer and being led, I felt a calm come over my entire body when I heard the first sound of a sermon. I know this congregation is where He wants me to learn. We spend our Sabbath and other days listening to sermons and reading the downloads. I am baking bread for 200 homeless people weekly, and listening to sermons while I bake. I cannot thank you enough.

I cannot find a church like yours here, so I will consider your church, my church. I thank you for being accessible online.

Please pray for me that I will always seek His will in my life and follow only His will. I am facing hardships and as a single mother it is very hard. As long as I can recognize His will I will be okay. I need to see His will at all times, and I need prayer for this please.

If you need any help with writing, I do blog articles professionally. He has blessed me with writing. I wish there were some other way I could be there to contribute. But I am not there yet. I hope to write a children's bible soon and share it. My son threw away his G-d and J---s ones, and misses having his own. He has to rely on me having time to read and explain. He watches your puppet shows constantly and listens to the music with his 1 ½ year old brother. I pray my adult children find Him.

Thank you again. Thank you for the Bible and thank you for your ministry.

In Yahweh,
CA, USA

Greetings from Australia!

We are a family of 3 including my wife and I and our 9-year-old daughter, Lynette.

We are South African citizens, temporarily living and working in Australia, for the last several years. We grew up and were baptized in reformed churches in South Africa and have since discovered with the help of my father, the lies and falsehoods brought to us believed to be true.

As a family we have been doing a lot of research, and discovered a lot of information through the videos and Bible studies done by Elder Don. We have realized that we cannot do this without the support and

community of a congregation here in Australia. We also need to be baptized correctly. And would appreciate the companionship and learning we could get from fellow true believers of Yahweh.

Secondly, we would be keen to learn about the community in SA which was mentioned by Elder Don in sermons. We're convinced that it is time to go to the wilderness and want to find out how to do this, and be able to do it according to the will of our father.

Best Regards,
Australia

Greetings!

We just want to say we received our Bible yesterday and we were so elated. My husband and I dove right in and started reading it. We thank you so much for your hard work in bringing this publication for us all, the world. I pray many people hear it and read the true Word of (Yah) in its original and honest language.

Thank you,
USA

Dear brother Esposito in Messiah,

My name is _____ and I continue being incarcerated in a minimum-security prison in Texas. You are a man we respect as a Yah fearing person who is serving Yahweh's Kingdom.

We've used your translated Scriptures, Hebraic Roots Bible, in our services and recommend everyone who is within our Messianic Community to have one. This will help them in their walk through Yahshua. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to YHWH's Kingdom and its community. Thank you for your teaching books you have provided the members of this Messianic Community. We love you in Messiah and continue praying for you and the ministry YHWH entrusted you with. May YHWH always provide ALL your needs according to His riches in Glory.

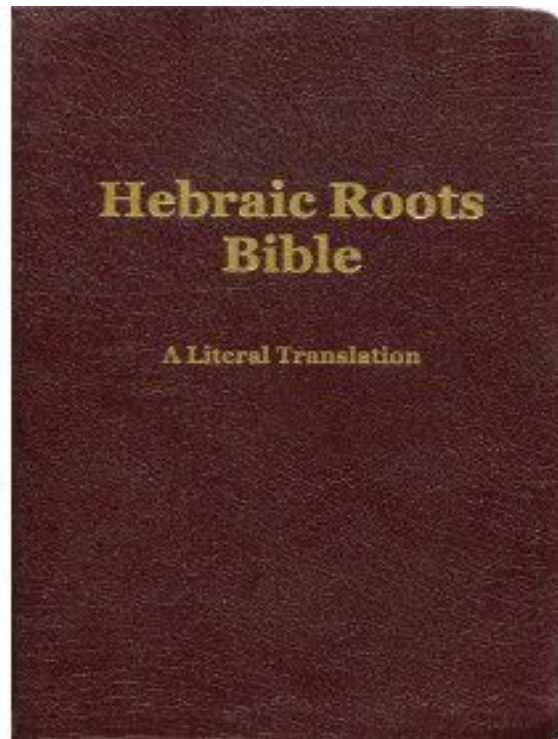
The purpose of this letter is to request your prayers for a new Messianic volunteer for our Sabbath Services. Please pray and be on the lookout for anyone desiring to come in once a month and share their life with us by means of study, message or even a testimony. Our prison has now opened up for volunteers to enter and assist religious groups.

If you know anyone in our area that would like to guide us in this unit, please write me and tell me, so I can relay it to our chaplain. We desire a volunteer that believes in YHWH's and Yahshua's sacred name and also lives YHWH's commandments including the dietary laws. I hope it not too much to ask. These laborers are scarce in this type of walk.

May Yahweh hear us and bring us someone who will edify our community. TDCJ's requirements is that he must have the COVID-19 (Chinese Virus 2019) vaccination and a will to serve. The last one we had did not believe in the sacred names nor the dietary laws taught which made many confused in their doctrine. Please pray that we may find one. Keep us in your prayers and we will likewise for you and your ministry. May YHWH bless you, keep you and cause His face to shine upon you, your family and your ministry. May his mercy and grace accompany you until we see Him face to face. May He always provide our needs.

Your Brother in Messiah, serving the Most High Elohim.
Brother in Prison

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Did you Know:

- *How the first century congregation started and what the first century congregation believed and practiced?*
- *That most beliefs of Christianity today come from the 4th century Emperor Constantine and not from the early congregation?*
- *That millions of true covenant believers were martyred by the Roman Empire in the Middle Ages?*
- *That the remnants of the true congregation started in 30 AD are still around today?*

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Stand by the roads,
look, and ask for the
ancient paths, where
the good way is; and
walk in it, and find rest
for your souls.

Jer. 6:16

