

Faith practice for the non-Jew
Part 1 – The Gospels

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MEN OF TORAH

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Manly Time of Study	6
Class Time	7
Lesson Zero	9
Second Temple Period	10
Talmudic Period	11
Historical Summary	13
Review Questions.....	13
Lesson One.....	15
Review	19
Lesson Two.....	21
Review	24
Lesson Three	25
Review	28
Lesson Four	29
Review	30
Lesson Five	31
Review	33
Lesson Six.....	35
Review	36
Lesson Seven	37
Review	38
Lesson Eight	39
Review	41
Lesson Nine	43
Review	45
Lesson Ten	47
Review	49
Lesson Eleven	51
Review	53
Lesson Twelve	55
Review	57
Appendix.....	i
Remaining Chronological Readings	i
References	ii
Lesson Summaries	iii
Lesson One Review	iv
Lesson Two Review	vii

Lesson Three Review	ix
Lesson Five Review.....	xi
Lesson Nine Review.....	xii
Lesson Ten Review	xiv

Introduction

Those of us who have grown up in the Bible-belt or were raised in believing homes have been introduced to an anomaly in our lifetime. The faith of our fathers is being questioned from nearly every angle because of the Torah movement. This changing perspective is affecting both Protestant and Catholics. Families are being disrupted, fellowships are being fractured and questions that are never asked – are being asked – to Pastors and Sunday School teachers around the globe.

Today Israel is experiencing the eroding of its alliance with the United States under its second term liberal President and the threat of Iran's nuclear capabilities are raising questions regarding Israel's continued existence. Yet Jews are cautiously finding friendships with non-Jews throughout the world. Orthodox rabbis are heralding this resurgence of Torah-obedience in non-Jews as a harbinger of Messiah's coming.

If we accept that *Yeshua ben Yosef* (Jesus son of Joseph) is the promised Jewish *Mashiach* (Messiah) then several questions must be answered for the non-Jew who has put his faith in this Messiah, as I have.

1. Jews are clearly commanded and exhorted throughout the *Tanakh* (Hebrew Bible) to keep the commandments of G-d. *But what about me?*
2. Jews are taught they are bound by the *halachah* (laws of faith practice) laid down by the Sages of Israel, and codified in the *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law). *But what about me?*
3. Christians have taught that Jesus abolished the law of Moses and those of attempt to keep the law trample the blood of Messiah. *But what about me?*
4. Karite Jews have found common ground with "Messianic" (Christians observing or acknowledging some or all of the Torah as applicable or binding) teachers wary of the teachings handed down by the Church, agreeing that Rabbinic Judaism is burdensome and silly, so Jews and Messianics together should reject the *halachah*. *But what about me?*
5. Similar to the varying perspectives found in Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism, Messianics have varying views on kosher eating, Sabbath observance and other *halachah*. *But what about me?*
6. Well-known Messianic groups have defined certain Torah commands as "sign commands" which are only to be kept by Jews. *But what about me?*
7. Orthodox Judaism teaches that non-Jews should formally convert to Judaism or keep the Noachide laws described in the Talmud. *But what about me?*

In this study we will probably not answer all these questions definitively, but each man should be able to come to a Biblically-sound conclusion on which to base his life's walk and the raising of his children. We will review the political climate leading up to the days of *Yeshua*; examine what He said and did; study the Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles; review Church history to

conclude how *Yeshua's* immediate followers understood their role within Judaism and taught others. Finally, we will study the eventual schism that brought Christianity and Judaism to the place they are today, and see if there are conclusions which can be drawn.

Our texts for this study include the *Tanakh*; the Apostolic Writings; the Babylonian Talmud; the works of Josephus; texts of the Pre-Ecumenical Councils and the Catholic Encyclopedia.

In most cases we will be using the English Standard Version of the Bible, but I will be referring to The Delitzsch Hebrew Gospels as well. Every effort will be made to provide the reading texts for you.

Manly Time of Study

We study in a men-only group so that men can bring their sons and learn together. Our desire is to be an adjunct and assistance to men teaching their wives, sons and daughters. This is not meant to be derogatory or chauvinistic. We practice a patriarchal faith. Men need to be held to a high standard or they flounder. Men need accountability or they stray. Our ministry focus is on men, because strong men make strong families and strong families make a strong nation.

Much has been given us, and much will rightfully be expected from us. We have duties to others and duties to ourselves; and we can shirk neither. We have become a great nation, forced by the fact of its greatness into relations with the other nations of the earth, and we must behave as beseems a people with such responsibilities. Toward all other nations, large and small, our attitude must be one of cordial and sincere friendship. We must show not only in our words, but in our deeds, that we are earnestly desirous of securing their good will by acting toward them in a spirit of just and generous recognition of all their rights. But justice and generosity in a nation, as in an individual, count most when shown not by the weak but by the strong. While ever careful to refrain from wrongdoing others, we must be no less insistent that we are not wronged ourselves. We wish peace, but we wish the peace of justice, the peace of righteousness. We wish it because we think it is right and not because we are afraid. No weak nation that acts manfully and justly should ever have cause to fear us, and no strong power should ever be able to single us out as a subject for insolent aggression.

Theodore Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933

How important these words have become, in the United States of America, in these last days. May we live up to the high calling of Messiah *Yeshua*.

Class Time

Our class time will allow for discussion and review of the reading material. Our primary source will be the Apostolic Writings. We shall not refer to these Scriptures as the “New Testament” because this invites the false belief that the Hebrew Scriptures are in some way passé or old. This is not the case. We shall not refer to these Scriptures as the “New Covenant” (*Brit Chadasha*) implying that they contain, describe or define the New Covenant, as referenced by the prophet Jeremiah.

Our expectation is that you will attend if at all possible. You will enrich the time of others by being punctual and prepared, having read the homework assignment before class begins. If you cannot attend, please let me know ahead of time and review the audio at your earliest convenience.

I understand what it is to be a man under authority, and a man with too many responsibilities. If you will invest in your spiritual growth for the next four months, I promise to provide the venue for which that growth can be nurtured and developed, so that you can be a better husband, father and employee/owner.

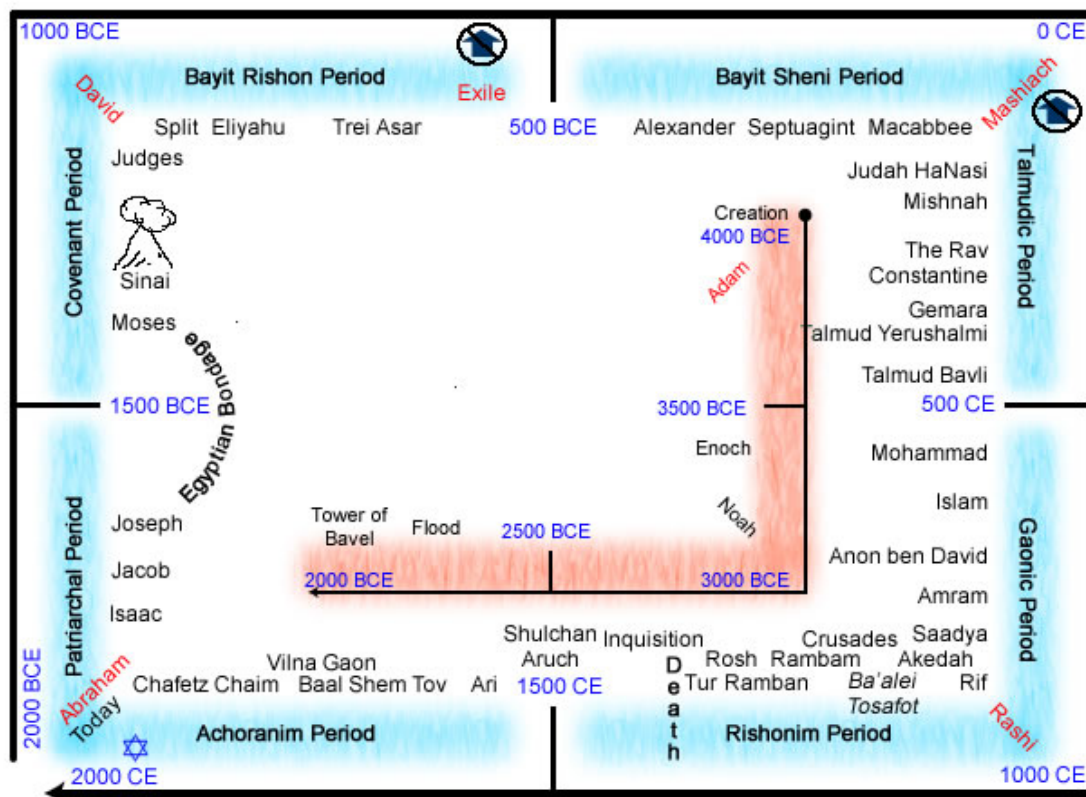
*Open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of your Torah.
Psalm 119:18*

Lesson Zero

Before we can begin an in depth study of the Apostolic Scriptures we must review the circumstances surrounding the events of which we read and the statements that are made. While our dating system is based on the birth of *Yeshua ben Yosef*, He was actually born a few years before 0 CE (Common Era). Some four thousand years had passed from the creation of the world.

- What was going on in the days of the Master?
- What was the political climate?
- What was the national sentiment in Israel in those days?
- Who was ruling Israel?

So let us make a broad review of history up to the writing of the Apostolic Scriptures, which happened *after* *Yeshua* died around 30 CE, but before the Jewish Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE.

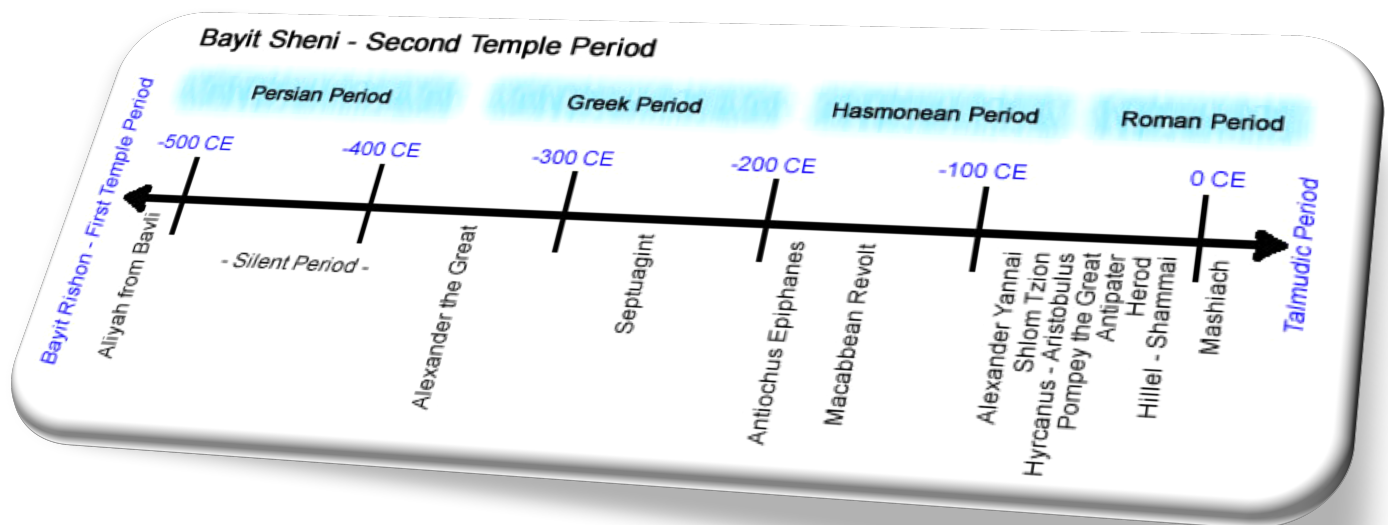


The diagram above shows the first two thousand years of history in the center, beginning with Creation, then jumps over to the outer timeline in the lower left corner and the time of Abraham.

Our focus will be in the top right corner, the *Bayit Sheni* (Second Temple) and Talmudic Periods.

Second Temple Period

Some Jews did not return from Babylon, staying in exile during the Persian period. By this time there was a strong Jewish community in Alexandria, Egypt. This explains why Joseph and Mary went down to Egypt to escape Herod's murderous decree.



As Alexander the Great conquered the known world in the Greek period. Hellenism was taking over the world and spreading like a cancer into the Jewish people. The Greeks taught that wisdom and knowledge came from man rather than G-d. Aristotle was Alexander the Great's tutor. This was the first time enemies had come to Judea from the West.

The Seleucids controlled the land to the north and the Ptolemys controlled land to the south of Israel. The Ptolemies asked for the Torah to be translated into Greek. Antiochus, of Chanukah fame, was a Seleucid.

The Priesthood was being corrupted during the Hasmonean period. The *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) position was offered by Antiochus to the highest bidder, instead of being passed down from the previous High Priest to his son. Jason (*Yehoshua*) offered to build a gymnasium next to the Temple in order to get the job. The gymnasium became so popular that Jews were reversing their circumcision! Ouch!

Eventually the Greek mindset affected even the sacrifices, as pigs began to be offered in the Temple. Jews began to give up on Judaism and monotheism, until the Maccabees revolted. The Maccabees were Hasmoneans, which are the Sadducees mentioned in the Apostolic Scriptures.

Simon Maccabee and two of his sons were assassinated at a banquet by his brother-in-law, but John Hyrcanus was not present. Hyrcanus ruled during a period of expansion and many military campaigns, but apparently shared his authority with the Sanhedrin. Under his reign Israel began minting their own coins. He forcibly circumcised the *Idumeans* (Edomites) making them convert to Judaism. Ouch! The Mishnah (*Parah 3:4*) relates that during the tenure of John Hyrcanus' High Priesthood, he had prepared the ashes of two Red heifers used in purifying those who had become unclean by touching a corpse. He had been a Pharisee, but at the end of his life he became a Sadducee, prompting the famous rabbinic line,

*Do not believe in yourself until your dying day.
- Babylonian Talmud (Berakhot 29a)*

Hyrcanus was succeeded by his son Alexander Yannai (*Yonatan*), who was both King of Israel and the High Priest, possibly prompting the creation of the Essene community in the wilderness. He was not a nice man. One year during *Sukkot* (the Feast of Tabernacles), he refused to perform the water libation ceremony and his soldiers killed 6,000 Jews. Yannai's wife Salome Alexandra, ruled for 9 years as Queen of Israel, supporting the Pharisees (her brother was one.) John ruled afterwards and he shared his mother Salome's religious views, but John's brother, Aristobulus agreed with the Sadducees. So the schism between Pharisee and Sadducee was clearly defined before the birth of *Yeshua*.

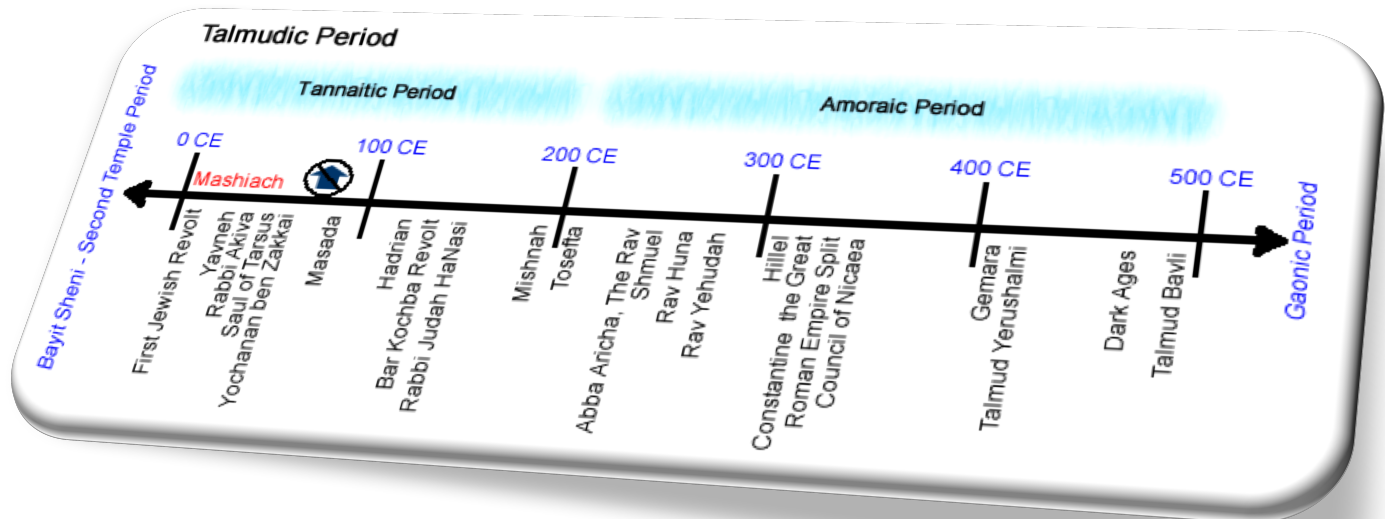
After the many assassinations and issues, Rome sent in General Pompey and cleaned up. Julius Caesar defeated Pompey with Antipater's help. He was an Idumean and was allowed to rule Judea. Before Antipater was poisoned, he appointed his son, Herod the Great, to govern the Galilee. Herod married the Hasmonean princess Mariamne. It was about this time that a Jewish insurrectionist group started known as the *Kanaim* (Zealots). They sought to rebel against Rome, and the rest we read in the Apostolic Scriptures.

Talmudic Period

At the turn of the century Israel had a thriving Sanhedrin composed of the last two *zugot* (pairs) of Israel's elders, *Hillel* and *Shammai*. *Yeshua* was born at this time, and began His ministry in the same year in which Hillel died.

The prevailing question facing the elders of Israel in those days was what to do with the overwhelming number of non-Jews who wanted to worship and serve the Holy One of Israel, blessed is He. G-d had clearly communicated His choice of Abraham and the continuation of His

covenant with Abraham's descendants, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons. How do non-Jews participate in the covenant promises or the daily worship of the G-d of Israel?



Things were tough for the Jews under Rome, and after the crucifixion of *Yeshua*, they got worse under Emperor Caligula. Aggressive taxes were levied against the Jews by Roman procurators who were allowed to keep whatever they collected beyond their goal. In 66 CE, procurator Florus stole a large amount of silver from the Temple. The Jewish people revolted against Roman rule that had been in place for nearly 130 years. The Zealot ranks surged in the Galilee, as the Jews were victorious over the small Roman garrisons in the area of Jerusalem and Syria. Rome sent in professional troops and wiped them out. 100,000 Jews were killed or sold into slavery. The moderate Jews in leadership in Jerusalem had not helped during the revolt, and the soured refugee fighters fleeing the Galilee killed them all. The Jewish leadership in place at the beginning of the First Jewish Revolt in 66 CE were all dead by 68 CE, all killed by fellow Jews in a suicidal civil war. In retrospect, the Sages determined that the Temple, and Jerusalem, were destroyed because of *sinat khinam* (baseless hatred).

The Zealots ordered anyone advocating surrender to Rome be killed. Rabbi *Yochanan ben Zakkai* was smuggled out of Jerusalem disguised as a corpse, made peace with Vespasian and was permitted to move the Sanhedrin to Yavneh, under *Rabban Gamliel*. In 70 CE the walls of Jerusalem were breached (17 Tammuz), and the following month (9 Av) the Temple was destroyed.

When Hadrian became Emperor in 118 CE, he began deporting Jews to North Africa. He also made circumcision a crime. The Zealots began to revolt again, encouraged by Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph's belief that the Zealot leader Shimon bar Kokhba was the Messiah, encouraged the final rebellion against Rome. The final battle of the war took place in Bethar, Bar-Kokhba's headquarters, which housed both the Sanhedrin and the home of the *nasi* (prince) in 135 CE.

Hadrian renamed Judea to Palestina and forbade Torah study, Sabbath observance, circumcision, Jewish courts, meeting in synagogues and other ritual practices. Many Jews assimilated and many sages and prominent men were martyred including Rabbi Akiva and the rest of the *Asara Harugei Malchut* (the Ten Martyrs).

The Jewish community suffered horrendous losses during the First Jewish Revolt and the Bar-Kokhba rebellion. Well over a million Jews were killed in the two uprisings, and the leading schools, along with thousands of their rabbinical scholars and students, were devastated. This decline in the number of knowledgeable Jews seems to have been a decisive factor in Rabbi Judah *haNasi's* (the Prince) decision around the year 200 CE to record in writing the Oral Law (*Mishna*), as well as the dispersion of Jews throughout the world (*diaspora*).

Historical Summary

Here is a brief summary of the 400-year span from 200 BCE to 200 CE.

- Judaism was losing ground to Hellenism
- The Hasmonean Dynasty began with the Maccabean revolt
- The Romans ended the Hasmonean Dynasty and established the Herodian Dynasty
- The Priesthood had been corrupted
- The long-awaited Messiah was born, killed and raised
- The Jews revolted against Rome, ultimately causing the Temple's destruction and exile

In this latter portion of this period in history, eight men wrote the entirety of the 27 books of the Apostolic Scriptures.

Review Questions

1. What effect do you think this tumultuous time had on the original question with which the Jewish leadership was wrestling, namely, "What do we do with these non-Jews?"
2. How does this alter your understanding of the Gospel accounts?
3. Read Matthew 10:1-4, Mark 3:16-19 and Luke 6:12-16. Do you think the writers were communicating anything with their chosen order?
4. The ESV (English Standard Version) gives a cross-reference to Simon the Zealot in both Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13 which refer to Acts 21:20. Based on our study so far, do you think that is wise?

5. Scholars are divided regarding the etymology of Judas Iscariot's last name. Some think it is from the Hebrew *ish k'riot* (man of Keriot) while others think it identifies him as a member of the *sicarii*, a group of assassins among the Zealots. Considering the names of the apostles are often in pairs, do you find it curious that Shimon is often paired with Judas?

Lesson One

This week's chronological readings are about the conception and births of John and *Yeshua*. Before those stories begin, read the last words of the last prophet of Israel, some 500 years earlier. **Read Malachi 1 – 4.**

Malachi was written just before Nehemiah came to Jerusalem with Ezra about 445 BCE, to begin the Second Temple period. The end of First Temple period was littered with deception, murders, unrest between Jews, and the destruction of Jerusalem and ultimately the exile of G-d's people from the Land.

Who does Malachi describe as seeking and desiring the L-rd? (Malachi 3:1-4)

What are G-d's people to remember in Malachi 4:4?

Now read Luke 1. Luke is a physician. He is specific in his descriptions and accurate with his timing markers. He tells Theophilus (lover of god) that he will give him an *orderly* account. You will notice that when Luke tells us there was a priest, he not only gives us his name, but even what order of priests to which he belonged. Luke is a very detailed writer who focuses on *Yeshua's* humanity, the perfect Son of Man.

As we saw in Lesson Zero, the Second Temple period seems to be on the brink of the same type of conflagration when *Yeshua* is born. The sense of expectation for Messiah must have been palpable in Jerusalem. In fact, we find this sentiment in Zechariah's words when the L-rd opens his mouth during his son John's circumcision.

*"Blessed be the L-rd G-d of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a **horn of salvation** for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be **saved from our enemies** and from the hand of **all who hate us**; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being **delivered from the hand of our enemies**, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days."*

(Luke 1:68–75 ESV)

We can see that Zechariah is looking for *physical* deliverance from enemies who hate G-d's people, in order that His people might "serve him *without fear*."

Who are the enemies to which Zechariah is referring?

Now read the opening of John's Gospel, John 1:1-14. This is a very famous passage. Note how differently John begins his account from Luke. John is bringing us back to the genesis of the word, literally Genesis itself. His identification of *Yeshua* is clear from the beginning. John's focus is the divinity of *Yeshua*. Try to memorize this passage. If you don't have the time, at least get verses 1-3 and 14.

Now read the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel. His account is very Jewish. He begins with the genealogy, because Matthew will show us that *Yeshua* is the rightful King of Israel. He opens with the two most important men in the lineage: David and Abraham.

Why do you think he mentions those two people from the start?

Verse 17 of Matthew 1 is the summation of the genealogy. You may think that Matthew is focusing on the number 14, but he is focusing on 15. The *Midrash* (teaching) draws a connection between the waxing and waning of the moon and the rise and fall of Israel's kingship.

The moon on the first day of the month of Nissan begins to shine, and as it continues to wax it shines more and more until fifteen days have elapsed and its circle is full. And then, from the fifteenth day of the month until the thirtieth day its light continually diminishes, and on the thirtieth day it cannot be seen. Similarly, with regard to Israel, there were fifteen generations from Abraham until Solomon.

(Midrash Rabbah Exodus 15:26)

Matthew is using this *midrash* to show that just as Solomon shined as Israel's greatest king, so too, does the lunar math continue after Solomon to the exile, then from the exile to Messiah *Yeshua*. Perhaps you should study the *midrash*!

Notice that Matthew's description of *Yeshua*'s birth is very sparse. The details are provided by Dr. Luke. Read Luke 2:1-38.

Yeshua was placed in a manger. This is a free-standing stone box normally placed against a stable wall. The wooden ones we see in the movies and story books are too flimsy to be jostled by the animals.

Read Matthew 2. There are three prophecies of the Messiah referenced in this one chapter. The first is from Hosea 11:1. Read that passage now. Is the passage talking about Messiah or the nation of Israel? We can learn from this that Matthew sees the Messiah as the ultimate Jew, representing the nation, while the nation represents Him.

The second prophecy is from Jeremiah 31. Read that passage now. Surprisingly, this mourning passage is turned to joy, if you read to the end of the chapter. In the story of the Master's birth is a prophecy about the New Covenant.

The last verse of the chapter has our last prophetic reference. Can you find this in the *Tanakh* (Hebrew Scriptures)? Write down what you find.

Now read Luke 2:39-52. Here we find one of the only descriptions of *Yeshua's* childhood in the canonized Scriptures. We note first that his parents were Torah keepers, and obviously teaching their Son the same love and desire for G-d's word.

I must confess to leaving a child behind once, but she was safe, at home, and I had five to keep track of. When traveling with three boys, my father, of blessed memory, was fanatical about knowing exactly where each boy was at every moment. We were never out of his sight. This gives us a glimpse into the trusting culture of the caravans that went up to Jerusalem for the *sh'losh regalim* (three pilgrimage festivals.) The author seems to imply that *Miriam* (Mary) was the type of quietly wise mother who regularly went, "Hmmm..." I like that.

If you're like the Sages of Israel, or a regular reader of the *Tanakh*, you may have noticed another reference back to an earlier day, when another boy was left in the Temple. Read 1 Samuel 2 and compare the two boys, as Luke expects you to do. These quiet references back to the Scriptures is called *remez* (hint) and as non-Jews, we normally miss them.

Read Matthew 3. We last heard of *Yeshua* as a 12-year old boy. Now He is starting His ministry and being baptized. As you read through the Torah, it is very common to immerse oneself in order to become ritually clean. In fact, the Second Temple was built with *mikvot* (immersion baths) all around the structure, since it was most often the case that everyone required a *mikveh* before drawing near to G-d, according to the Torah. That's what daily life is about when there is a Temple available. Quickly scan Leviticus 14 and 15 for the word *rachatz* (bathe) to get an idea of how common it is to visit the *mikveh*.

John's baptism of repentance is consistent with the Torah. Ritual purity is obtained through repentance and the outward act of immersion in the *mikveh*. We have a reference to the prophecy in Isaiah 40. Read it in context. *Yeshua's* answer is curious when John would have prevented Him from being baptized (v14). One would think He was quoting from the *Tanakh*. While there is no direct quote, I believe the Master is living out and referring to Psalm 101, and that John's statement to Him became a *remez* back to the Psalm. Let me know what you think.

Now read Mark 1, the last of our three synoptic Gospel writers. John's Gospel is fast. It's like watching a video as you read. His use of the word "immediately" is unprecedented in all of literature. In v4 we have, "John appeared, baptizing..." No description of his birth, just the facts.

His is the shortest of the Gospels. He doesn't waste words. Compare his wilderness temptation account with Matthew's or Luke's later and you'll see what I mean. *Yeshua* is presented as the authoritative Son of G-d, triumphant over death.

Mark jumps right in to *Yeshua*'s ministry in his first chapter. By the way he writes, you would think it was a few very, very long days. After His baptism, *Yeshua* was tempted, selected His disciples (in pairs) and healed the sick. Notice that *Yeshua* tells the cleansed leper to follow the instructions in Leviticus 14.

Yeshua seems entirely focused on "proclaiming the gospel." Isaiah 61 bears this out. Mark 1:15 says that His reason for such focus is because the "time is fulfilled." Read Daniel 9:25 and Isaiah 61 in context and write what you think *Yeshua* was talking about.

Read Luke 3. This is Luke's account of John's baptism ministry. There are some extra details this time, such as his exhortation to the tax collectors. What was John's message to the tax collectors in Luke 3:12-14?

We noted in our last lesson that the Priesthood had become corrupted. The office of *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) was basically sold to the highest bidder by Rome or its procurator. For a time, the High Priest was also the King of Israel! The separation of powers, as described in the Torah, was not in place. Among Luke's time-markers at the opening of chapter 3, we find that Annas and Caiaphas were *both* High Priests in that time. That's only possible if they are father son, and the father dies. But Annas was actually Caiaphas' father-in-law. In fact, Annas was the head of a politically powerful family that held the High Priesthood from 6 CE until the First Jewish Revolt. Annas had five sons and a son-in-law that rotated through the High Priesthood position, always guided by their father, Annas. A modern-day Kennedy or Bush political family, to be sure.

John's response to the Pharisees and Sadducees is right along the party line for the Essenes (which I believe he was.) He calls them snakes, and as we learned last week, he was probably correct.

Read Matthew 4. Matthew adds another prophecy to our list, Isaiah 9:1. Read it in context.

Read Luke 4 – 5. Luke covers the same ground prophetically as Mark does. These same promises of G-d are also found in Isaiah chapters 42 and 58.

Luke 4:16 begins one of the oldest recorded descriptions of a first century Torah service. What must it have been like to have the reader look at you and say, "This prophecy was just fulfilled, right here." Wow! *Yeshua*'s comments following seem to present the healing of several non-Jews (v23-27) in the past as being provided by G-d *only* because the Jews of the day simply did not believe. Their reaction seems to prove His point.

We often hear that the Pharisees were all against *Yeshua* or couldn't be bothered with Him. As we see in Luke 5:17, they apparently came all the way from Jerusalem to sit and hear him teach. They were troubled that He forgave the man's sins. Read Psalm 32 and Isaiah 43:25-28 and write down if you believe they were correct to be troubled. By forgiving sins, what was *Yeshua* doing?

Now finish up by reading John 1:15 – 51 and John 2 – 4. We have folks baptizing others in the church, but this has not been the norm in Judaism. When a *mikveh* was required or desired, one simply immersed oneself in an appropriate place. Often a witness was available to ensure you immersed completely, but they didn't get in the water and put you under. This appears to be a special circumstance in the minds of the Priests and Levites, sent to John. They ask in John 1:25, "Why are you baptizing if you're not the Messiah, Elijah nor the Prophet." Who is this Prophet to whom they are referring? Read Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and write the answer.

In John 2 we have what most folks call *Yeshua's* first miracle. However, taken chronologically, we see that healing the sick throughout the Galilee was His first miracle. The large jars were used for the *mikveh* we mentioned earlier. I'm a wine drinker, and I have to say, one of the best gifts I could have on my wedding day would be 180 gallons of the best wine available! There are about 5 bottles of wine to a gallon. That's a gift of 900 bottles of wine!!

Yeshua kept the Passover, just as His parents had. After He had proclaimed the good news throughout the Galilee and raised the attention of the leadership in Jerusalem, he went to the wedding, then up to Jerusalem for the feast.

John 3 is the famous nocturnal visit from Nicodemus. Note that *Yeshua* identifies Himself as the Son of Man Who descended from heaven. He would be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Read Numbers 21:4-9 and write down your thoughts. What did Moses provide? What did the people have to do?

In John 4 *Yeshua* meets the Samaritan woman at the well. She was considered a half-breed. The Samaritans lived in the land given to Ephraim and Manasseh. When the northern ten tribes were taken into captivity, the King of Assyria planted non-Jews in the land who intermarried with the Jews that remained. They were strongly disliked by the Jews, to say the least, yet *Yeshua* preaches the Gospel to her – and then stays two days with them. While I would not call this people non-Jews, they are the first step outside true Jews. What do you think about this?

Review

Walk through your responses to each question in this lesson and be sure you understand the basic facts about *Yeshua's* birth and start of ministry.

Lesson Two

Remember that we are looking to gain three things as we walk through the Apostolic Scriptures. First, an amazing review and understanding of each section. Second, a better understanding of the relationship between G-d's chosen people, the Jews, and us – non-Jews. Finally, we're examining where the origins of statements by and about *Yeshua HaNotzri* (the Nazarean) in the *Tanakh*.

Last week we read the birth and opening ministry of *Yeshua* from four different perspectives. You should already be able to discern the difference in their writing styles by now. There is already some tension, or at least questioning, from the Jewish leadership. However, we would not be just if we didn't mention that *Yeshua* had obviously gained some respect from the Pharisees by this point. His healing and teaching brought them from all over the Land, including Jerusalem.

Read Mark 2 and Matthew 12:1-21. In an off-handed way, when *Yeshua* contrasts the well/righteous against the sick/sinner, He is judging the Pharisees as a righteous group, not in need of His message at that time. Remember, *Yeshua's* message up to this point is, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." His healing and preaching demonstrated that the kingdom of heaven was indeed at hand.

I believe there is a simple explanation for the fasting question that is raised (Mark 2:18). The Pharisees practiced additional fasts, including the four fasts mentioned in Zechariah 8. The question of fasting becomes one of tradition and choice, rather than Torah. In fact, enhancing another's *simchah* (joy) is a legitimate and recognized reason to break fast, just as the disciples were doing. A truly *halachic* issue is raised with the grain heads being plucked on the Sabbath. Read Deuteronomy 23 and write down if you agree with the Pharisee's concern.

Like many of the Apostolic authors, Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-3 (12:18-21) from the Septuagint. I suspect that last line is *not* in your regular Bible "...and in His name the Gentiles will hope."

Read John 5. We've seen *Yeshua* heal people before. In this case He gives a warning (v14.) Read Ezra 9:13-14 and Psalm 107:17 and write down your thoughts.

John is pressing the Divinity case over and over in this chapter. Compare v21 with Deuteronomy 32:39 and there is no doubt, *Yeshua* is claiming to be equal with G-d. He is the Son of Man and has authority (v27.)

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."

(John 5:39–40 ESV)

Now read Mark 3, Luke 6 and Matthew 5-7. These are the three parallel passages for what we call the Sermon on the Mount or the Beatitudes. Read each carefully and note the differences and similarities.

Read Matthew 8:1-13, Luke 7 and Matthew 11. Here we have *Yeshua's* first interaction with a non-Jew, the Centurion. (The Samaritan woman was half Jew.) In v5, Matthews uses the Greek παρακαλέω (parakaleō) for "appealing," which is the same root as the word "Helper" used for the Holy Spirit, παράκλητος (paraklētos) in John 15 and 16. So the Centurion is appealing to him, looking for help and comfort. In the same way, the Jewish elders sent to the Master used the same entreaty, coming alongside and encouraging Him. *Yeshua's* reaction is surprising. He immediately says, I will come and heal him." This is good news indeed for us non-Jews!

Yeshua was actually surprised that this non-Jew understood – and believed – the power of the Holy One of Israel. Do you have that type of faith? What do you think of the Master's rebuke of the "sons of the kingdom?" Surely these are His chosen people, the Jews. Write your thoughts below.

Luke 7 has 50 verses, so there's a lot for us to review. The widow from Nain received her son back in a miraculous display of G-d's power of life and death, demonstrated through the Son of Man. Like Mary, the mother of our L-rd, hide this in your heart: *Yeshua* became unclean by touching the lad's coffin, stopping the funeral procession. For Him to enter the Temple would require a week of purification with the water of purification (the ashes of the red heifer) thrown on him twice, then immersion in the *mikveh*. That's a major hassle, adding a week to His next visit to the Temple.

"For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Messiah, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to G-d, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living G-d."

(Hebrews 9:13–14 ESV)

Only Luke, the doctor, records the story of the widow from Nain, but it caused the people to recognize that "G-d had visited them."

The next vignette is about *Yochanan HaMakvil* (John the Baptizer). Suffice it to say, John was one of the most righteous men to ever grace the planet, and he was persecuted for righteousness sake.

In v36 one of the Pharisees (Simon) invites *Yeshua* to dinner. This is big! The Pharisees did not associate with “regular folk” the *am ha’aretz* (people of the Land,) like the woman of the city who brought the flask of ointment. They ate with their own, those who maintained strict purity rites. We have Pharisees following the Master through the fields of Galilee and inviting Him to dinner in their homes. Glory! The kingdom of heaven must be at hand!!

The woman is behind the Master because He is reclining next to a table, his legs are bent and His feet are behind Him. That changes the scene in my head, as I always pictured Him in a chair and she was kneeling in front of Him.

*“Come to me, **all** who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

(Matthew 11:28–30 ESV)

Read Matthew 12:22-50 and Luke 11. Here *Yeshua* copies the diatribe of John against the Pharisees. James gives the same rebuke about the tongue, which we will read later.

Yeshua gives His only sign, (other than constantly healing the sick, providing sight to the blind, enabling the lame to walk, and raising the dead to life) that of Yonah (Jonah.) The Son of Man will spend three days and nights in the heart of the earth. If you’re a “Friday crucifixion” person, your math will fail you if you try to make that coincide with a “Sunday resurrection.” If our L-rd was in the ground three days AND three nights and rose sometime on the first day of the week, you might want to rethink your holiday calendar.

*“For **everyone** who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”*

(Luke 11:10 ESV)

The last two verses I quoted use the same Greek word for “all” and “everyone.” It is the Greek word *πας* (*pas*) which means exactly what it says. It is not exclusive to Jew or Greek, slave or free. The gift of salvation from our sins – this is the good news – is available to all.

We close this week’s lesson with the Master’s diatribe against the Pharisee’s hypocrisy. In Luke 11:38, we read that the Pharisee was astonished that *Yeshua* did not wash His hands before He ate. Later we will hear the other synoptic writers describing a similar “concern” regarding His disciples. It was, and is, a tradition to wash one’s hands ceremonially before saying the *ha-motzi* blessing and eating bread.

Water is likened to Torah and wisdom. Water is the essence of physical life. Without water we die. Wisdom is the essence of spiritual life. Our hands are our means of interacting with the

physical world around us. Bread is the very symbol of physical sustenance. We take water and pour it over each hand, as a reminder that every interaction I have with this physical world must be guided by knowledge of the Holy One, blessed is He. It is a reminder that our table is holy, and just as the *Kohanim* (Priests) are commanded to wash before they serve G-d, so should I.

The washing wasn't the problem. The tradition wasn't the issue. The problem was the heart.

"But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of G-d. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."

(Luke 11:42 ESV)

Yeshua had no problem with the traditions, in fact, He commends them for tithing above and beyond what was required, but they had lost their way. They became consumed with the intricacies of the Torah, and forgot the Giver of the Torah. May G-d grant us mercy as we examine ourselves. Let us not be quick to condemn the Pharisees for the wrong things, but use them as examples to propel us to righteousness and love for the Father.

Review

That was a loooong lesson with a lot of reading. While we're in the Gospels we need to remember we're possibly reading a situation three or four times. Let's do a quick recap.

1. You should have a good idea of how the Master's ministry got into full swing. Can you think through a few of the interactions and happenings? Jot a few down.
2. *Yeshua* contrasts the sick and healthy with the sinners and righteous. Name some characters we read about that fall into each category.
3. Sometimes quotes from the *Tanakh* are not word for word. Why is that?
4. Some say that *Yeshua* never claimed to be G-d. Are they right?
5. What was *Yeshua's* first interaction with a non-Jew. How did it go?

Lesson Three

We're getting into the thick of *Yeshua's* ministry now. I think it's more important during this lesson to compare the accounts of each Gospel writer to the others.

Read Matthew 13, Luke 8 and Matthew 8:14-34. These passages relate the parables, of which, some are very famous. The parable of the Sower and the Seed is one, Weeds Sown by the Enemy is another – and part of the impetus for the “Left Behind” series by Tim LeHaye.

In Luke 8 we have four dramatic miracles performed by *Yeshua*. There is a strong theme running between them all. The passage opens with a description of the group that is going from town to town. We read of several women of high position that had been previously healed traveling with the disciples, including the Magdalene (pronounced *mag-dalay-NAY*), a woman from *Magdala* (tower).

We pick up the story in Luke 8:22 after the parables. The first miracle is the calming of the sea. What was *Yeshua's* question to the disciples? What are the opposing character traits? (Hint: Paul uses the same pairing when he picks up *Eutychus* after he falls out a window.)

When they make land in Gerasa, they meet one or two violent non-Jewish men, possessed by demons. These little piggies never went to market. How did the people (non-Jews) from the surrounding area react to this great miracle?

Jairus' daughter is the next topic, but not the next miracle. On the way, we are introduced to the woman who could not stop bleeding. What healed her, according to the Master?

Apparently taking too long to arrive, word comes that Jairus' daughter has passed away. *Yeshua's* exhortation to Jairus contains the same juxtaposed reactions as the disciples. What are they?

How many disciples? How old was Jairus' daughter? How long had the woman bled? Write down your thoughts.

Read Mark 4 – 5 and Matthew 9 – 10. Why do you believe *Yeshua* only taught in parables?

What other man in Scripture was asleep in a boat, oblivious during a terrible storm? Write your thoughts.

The woman with the discharge of blood came up behind *Yeshua* and touched the “fringe” of His garment. She believed that all she had to do was touch his garment, and she would be made well. The Greek word for fringe in Matthew 9:20 is κράσπεδα (*kraspeda*) and is the same Greek word used in the Septuagint for *tzitzit* (fringes) in Numbers 15:38-39 and Deuteronomy 22:12. A *midrashic* exposition of Malachi 4:2 (3:20 *Tanakh*) about the coming of Messiah refers to Psalm 84:11.

“For the L-RD G-d is a sun and shield; the L-RD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.”

(Psalms 84:11 ESV)

“But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.”

(Malachi 4:2 ESV)

The Hebrew word translated “wing” in Malachi is *kanaf* (corner,) the same word used in the above Numbers and Deuteronomy passages. This ailing daughter of Zion believed in her heart that touching the corner of *Yeshua*’s garment would, as the Prophet and Psalmist had taught, bring healing to her body. Her faith had made her well, and *Yeshua* was the vehicle through Whom G-d’s power came.

Matthew 9:26 says *Yeshua* had compassion on the crowds because they were “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd,” that’s literally “troubled and cast down.”

“who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the L-RD may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.”

(Numbers 27:17 ESV)

“So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered;”

(Ezekiel 34:5 ESV)

We will see in later books of the Apostolic Scriptures that teachers are responsible for this situation, and as such, are held to a higher standard than others. Write your thoughts about the current state of teaching in the Gentile church as well as the Jewish synagogues today.

Yeshua commissions His first evangelistic effort in Matthew 10:5. This mission is strictly for Jews. Their task is to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Their proof will be healing, raising, cleansing and casting out, the marks of the *Mashiach* (Messiah.) They are to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Read Genesis 3:1. The Septuagint uses the same Greek words with reference to the serpent and being wise (crafty.) Paul uses the same word for

innocent in Romans 16:19, hoping that his recipients will be innocent as to what is evil. Write down what this means, practically.

Matthew 10:23 refers to the Son of Man coming, as does Matthew 16:28. Compare these two verses and write down how *Yeshua* could speak of His coming while He was yet with His disciples.

Read Matthew 14, Mark 6 and Luke 9:1-17. You're almost done with this week's reading. We open with John's beheading and quickly move to the feeding of the 5,000. As when counting a minyan, only the men were counted, meaning that it's possible that over 10,000 people were actually fed from five loaves and two fish. (Make a mental note of how many baskets of leftovers there were.)

Yeshua walks on the water, hovering over it, as it were, not unlike the spirit of Messiah in the Creation narrative. When Peter asks *Yeshua* to call him onto the water, but his faith is mixed with fear. As we've seen, these two cannot coexist.

Matthew's indicates that the sick merely wanted to touch the corner of the Master's garment. I suspect word got around about the woman who was healed earlier. Mark 6 opens with the second time we see *Yeshua* "marveling." Unfortunately, this time He marvels at the unbelief of His home town.

Read John 6, Matthew 15 and Mark 7. Here are two more verses to commit to memory.

"Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him G-d the Father has set his seal."

(John 6:27 ESV)

"For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

(John 6:40 ESV)

Take some time to review John 6. *Yeshua* gives more insight into Who He is and what mission He was given than in any other passage in the Gospels. Write down your thoughts.

In Matthew 15, *Yeshua* openly offends the Pharisees. We will see later what effect this rebuke had. Meanwhile, the Master deals with a non-Jew, again, in Matthew 15:22 and Mark 7:26. Unlike the previous times that *Yeshua* deals with non-Jews, He does not immediately agree to

help her, in fact, He doesn't even answer her. When she persists, He makes it clear she is a Gentile dog, outside His mission field. Her response changes His mind. She does not claim equality with G-d's chosen ones, but rather accepts her position willingly. Her great faith permitted *Yeshua* to heal her daughter. I believe this story teaches us, non-Jews, a very practical and important lesson about our rightful position in G-d's economy. Perhaps you disagree. Explain.

OK, **read** the last three passages, **Matthew 16, Mark 8 and Luke 9:18-27**. In Matthew 16:19 *Yeshua* tells Peter that he has the authority to loosen (permit) and bind (forbid) specific actions in *halachah* (walk of faith.) Until that time, the Pharisees had always possessed this authority.

"... these Pharisees ... became themselves the real administrators of the public affairs; they banished and reduced whom they pleased; they bound and loosed [men] at their pleasure; and, to say all at once, they had the enjoyment of the royal authority, whilst the expenses and the difficulties of it belonged to Alexandra."

(War 1:111 JOSEPH)

Review

1. What are the two opposing character traits discussed in this week's reading?
2. Those who were in a prolonged state of uncleanness (leprosy, bleeding, etc.) were to cover their upper lip with their hand and declare their uncleanness whenever people were nearby, lest they too became unclean. When the woman with the discharge of blood touched *Yeshua*, again, He became unclean. She was afraid, yet she had healing faith. Explain.
3. To whom did *Yeshua* come to minister? How does this make you feel as a non-Jew?
4. Try to recall all the non-Jews with whom *Yeshua* came in contact. List them below.
5. We have not encountered any *halachic* rules for non-Jews thus far, but we have a very good idea of *Yeshua's* concerns with some of the Pharisee's *halachah*. What is His greatest concern in this regard?

Lesson Four

We will have a shorter reading schedule this week to let the words of the Living G-d resonate in your soul. Take advantage of this time to reflect on the life and times of *Yeshua haNotzri*.

Matthew's Gospel has 28 chapters. Luke takes 24 to relate the life, death and resurrection of *Yeshua* of Nazareth. John, does it in 21, and Mark needs only 16. Our reading so far has taught us that *Yeshua* is compassionate with those who are ailing. He is also very clever with the choice of His words, often baiting the religious leaders to question Him. He has been clear in His message: The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, therefore, repent. Those in leadership are falling into neat categories. Some of the leaders are seeking to trip Him up, being threatened by His popularity or strict adherence to the Torah, while others are leaning towards faith in Him. Regardless, it's astonishing that *Yeshua* spends His time making a name for Himself, but exhorting those who understand Who He is to keep it to themselves.

The Gospels are broken into two parts. First is the life of *Yeshua* and His 3 ½ years teaching throughout Israel. He begins in the Galilee and heals life's miseries until the crowds are overwhelming. The second part is the last week of His life, spent in the Temple teaching the crowds who have come up to Jerusalem for the upcoming Feast of Unleavened Bread. This portion ends with His death, burial and resurrection. The pivot point in all four Gospels is *Yeshua's* entrance into Jerusalem, from Bethany, on the colt.

To give you a sense of how far along we have come in the narrative, consider that Matthew and Luke, who have the longest discourses from *Yeshua's* sermons, record the Master's arrival in chapters 21 and 19, respectively. Mark, the writer jumping from scene to scene records this in chapter 11. Thus, the synoptic Gospels spend roughly 75% of their writing on the first part, the life of the Messiah. John, on the other hand, has the arrest in chapter 11, nearly equally dividing his Gospel between His life and His death.

Read Matthew 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9:28-62. You may be familiar with this story of *Yeshua* going up a mountain with Peter, James and John. The Son of Man is transfigured before them. The Greek word used by Matthew is μεταμορφώω (metamorphoō), from which we get our English word metamorphous. This story doesn't appear in John's account, but chronologically he has the time of year at the Festival of *Sukkot* (booths, tents), giving Peter's comment about building *sukkot* make more sense.

Yeshua tells His disciples not to share the vision with anyone until after the Son of Man is raised from the dead. Why do you think that is?

Read Matthew 18. Two of the three accounts of The Transfiguration included discussion about who is the greatest in the kingdom. Matthew's account includes teachings about temptation,

innocence, conflict resolution and true forgiveness. Write down your thoughts about your own walk at this point.

Read John 7 – 10:1-21. This is 3 ½ chapters of *Yeshua's* greatest teaching. Try to read this in one sitting.

We've learned a lot *about* the Master and *from* the Master. You've also done a great job keeping up with the reading. It's time to take a break. Soak up what the Son of Man is teaching us, His disciples, in these chapters. Write your thoughts.

Review

1. In John 7, *Yeshua* articulates the *halachah* regarding circumcision – and that this command supersedes the Sabbath. He likens circumcision with healing. How?
2. John 7:35 presents the astonishing question, “Does He intend to teach the Greeks?” This can be used to refer to the Hellenist Jews or to non-Jews. To whom do you think they were referring? Defend your answer.
3. In John 8, *Yeshua* unequivocally identifies Himself. Write a concise statement of Who He is, and how you know.
4. In John 9, *Yeshua* has healed a man who had been born blind. The Pharisees say that this man was born “utterly in sin.” Why would they say that? The man gives a little sermonette to the leaders of his day. What's his bottom line?
5. *Yeshua* speaks of sheep that are not of this fold in John 10. Of which fold is He speaking – and who might these be who are not of this fold?
6. Read 2 Kings 12:17 and Ezekiel 21:2. Compare these with Luke 9:51-56. Write your thoughts.

Lesson Five

You have just read most of the teachings of *Yeshua* of Nazareth. You should have a good idea of the Messiah you follow.

Read Luke 10:11 and John 10:22-42. For an itinerant preacher without a home, *Yeshua* seems to be doing well, considering He has 72 disciples who will go out to do His bidding. He tells them that if they are fed, this is the wage they deserve, therefore they should *not* go house to house, but remain there.

Luke 11:20 is an amazing *remez*!

“But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

(Luke 11:20 ESV)

If you're uncertain what that is, let's look at two passages that may come to mind.

“Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.”

(Exodus 8:19 ESV)

“And the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words that the LORD had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly.”

(Deuteronomy 9:10 ESV)

In either case, *Yeshua* is making it clear that He is the “finger of G-d,” that He is the visible expression of the Holy One, blessed is He.

Yeshua is clear that the generation that saw Him perform the miracles, signs and wonders would bear the burden of all previous sins against G-d's anointed prophets (Luke 11:49-51).

For those still under the misguided impression that *Yeshua* never claimed to be G-d, I submit that John 10:30 is consummate proof. The Jews certainly understood His claim, and prepared to stone Him for blasphemy.

“The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.””

(John 10:33 ESV)

Read Luke 12-17:10. Chapters 12 and 13 are robust teaching from the Master. Astonishingly, for those who thought that *all* the Pharisees wanted to kill *Yeshua*, we read,

“At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.””

(Luke 13:31 ESV)

Not only was the Master buried by two Pharisees, but the verse above makes it clear that there were several, if not many, who followed Him.

“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’”

(Luke 14:18 ESV)

Ouch! I know there are times when I fall in this category. ‘Nuff said.

“The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.”

(Luke 16:16 ESV)

What does this mean, that the Law and Prophets were UNTIL JOHN? Write your answer below.

Don’t you think it’s amazingly ironic that the L-RD uses a parable about a dead man named Lazarus (whom He is had raised from the dead) yearning to warn his brothers of their fate?

“He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

(Luke 16:31 ESV)

Next week we get close to the end. The Master arrives in Bethany where He raises Lazarus. Not long after, He rides into Jerusalem, beginning the last week of His life.

Write down what you learned this week from the many words of the Master. Did a specific story, parable or situation hit you personally? Write it down.

Review

1. What was *Yeshua's* main message to the masses during these teachings?
2. What is the best thing you can do to be prepared for the coming of the Messiah?
3. If you keep the commandments, love G-d and treat others properly, what can you say about yourself?
4. What is the one thing that *Yeshua* taught in these passages that will leave a bruise on your soul?

Lesson Six

This is the last lesson before Passion Week; that is, the last week of *Yeshua's* life. Each of your readings in each Gospel this week will stop at the colt or donkey, and the ride into Jerusalem. That day is called Palm Sunday by the church.

Read John 11. Lazarus has died and *Yeshua* will raise him from the dead. The account is amazing. This happens in Bethany, but *Yeshua* is not going to stay there now. He leaves, only to return on His way to Jerusalem.

In verse 27, Mary is asked about the resurrection. Her response to *Yeshua* is extraordinary.

λέγει αὐτῷ ναὶ κύριε, ἐγὼ πεπίστευκα ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος.

John 11:27

She claims that *Yeshua* is “the Messiah, the son of G-d Who *is coming* into the world.” She says He “is coming” into the world. That’s an odd way of putting it. Write your thoughts.

John 11:45-52 describes the prophecy made by Caiaphas, the High Priest. His concern is that the whole nation would perish. How so?

Read Luke 17-18:14. *Yeshua* heals 10 lepers. Only one of the 10 return to thank Him and praise G-d. He describes this Samaritan as a *ἀλλογενής* (foreigner). The Greek word is only used this one time in the Scriptures. Given our study and focus on *Yeshua's* intentions toward His brethren, and “second place” status for non-Jews, what do you make of this singular description of this Samaritan leper?

The Pharisee is praying in the Temple and there is a tax collector nearby, who is also praying. The tax collector does not raise his eyes toward heaven and beats his breast. Orthodox men pray this way every single morning of every single day during the work week. The *ArtScroll Complete Siddur* puts it this way.

*Forgive us, our Father, for we have erred; pardon us, our King, for we have willfully sinned; for You pardon and forgive.
Blessed are You, HASHEM, the gracious One Who pardons abundantly.*

Shemoneh Esrei – Amidah, Forgiveness

Do you think it’s appropriate to pray the same prayer each day? If so, what do you think of this prayer? If not, how do you feel about reciting the Lord’s Prayer?

Read Matthew 19. We are introduced some of *Yeshua*'s interpretation of marital law. He speaks with authority about how things were when Moses decreed divorce could be done. Write your thoughts on this topic.

The rich man comes to *Yeshua* and asks how he might inherit eternal life. In your upbringing and past theology, how would YOU have answered his question? How would your church or pastor answer this question? Finally, how did *Yeshua* answer it (Matthew 19:17)? Do you agree or disagree? Take your time and answer fully.

Review Matthew 19:28 considering Revelation 20:4. In Lesson 3 we saw an amazing smattering of twelves throughout one chapter. Considering what *Yeshua* promised to His disciples, Read Revelation 21:10-22:5. Write your thoughts.

Read Mark 10. In verse 33, *Yeshua* names those who will take His life. Many would say it was the Pharisees, but whom does He name? Are you surprised? Name the two groups who will have the Author of Life killed.

Read Matthew 20 and Luke 18 – 19:27. In Luke's version of the Mark 10 passage, the Son of Man will be delivered over to Gentiles. How is this possible considering Mark 10? Is this a contradiction? Explain.

What did *Yeshua* identify as Zacchaeus' reason for salvation in Luke 19:9-10? Expand on your answer considering the focus of our study on non-Jews. If *Yeshua* came to seek and to save the lost, to whom is He referring as lost? Be specific.

Review

1. What did you learn from your reading this week that surprised you?
2. What two groups had *Yeshua* put to death? Who put Him to death?
3. What must you do to be saved or to have eternal life?

Lesson Seven

Well, we've made it to the colt! From this point to the end of each Gospel, we will be reading about the last week of *Yeshua's* life.

Read Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19:28-47 and John 12. As you read, do so with a purpose. Look for timing markers, like "the next day," "the same day," and "in six days." The church teaches that this is the triumphal entry of Messiah into Jerusalem. This is a wonderful passage filled with expectation and meaning.

Read Zechariah 9:9-10, which is quoted, and Isaiah 62:11. *Yeshua* is clearly the Savior for which G-d's people are waiting. Matthew gives us two of *Yeshua's* parables. The first of two sons, the second of the Master and His Son having leased his vineyard to tenants. Write what you understand these to be about.

Mark's Gospel also records very little happened on the first day of the week. Day 2, let's call it Monday, is a question of authority. *Yeshua* puts them to silence by invoking John the Baptizer.

After finishing John 12, do you believe that *Yeshua* knows what is about to occur?

John gives a strong *remez* to his readers with a quote from Isaiah 53:1. Read all of Isaiah 53 to understand John's point fully. Memorize John 12:47 and reflect upon it. Many teach that *Yeshua's* life's work was, and will always be, to save and not to judge. This is a mistake. If we continue to read, we will understand the full scope of His divine mission.

"If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world."

(John 12:47 ESV)

Read Matthew 22, Mark 12 and Luke 20. This chapter of Matthew is one of my favorites. *Yeshua* has such crisp responses to parry blows from His adversaries among the Sadducees, Herodians, and Pharisees.

"And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask Him any more questions."

(Matthew 22:46 ESV)

Read Matthew 23, Luke 21 and Mark 13. Surely the Master never spoke so clearly and decidedly about certain groups as He went about healing the sick and encouraging His people to repent. These passages are our first peak at the end times, both near, in the apostle's days and far, in our near future. The "rapture," which we will study in *Sha'ul's* (Paul's) letter to the Thessalonians, is first mentioned as ἐπισυνάγω (episunagō), to gather. The Master uses this when He emotionally describes "gathering" Jerusalem's children. See if you can put together a timeline of events as described by *Yeshua*.

Read Matthew 24 – 26:13, Mark 14:1-9. Do you feel as though you are included in these admonitions, or do you feel somewhat removed? Make note of references to "nations" as you read. Matthew 25 has three parables the Master uses to teach about the end times. Summarize each below.

Matthew 26 opens with a time-reference. Don't miss it! In whose house was *Yeshua* staying in Bethany? Why is this weird and beautiful at the same time?

Review

Great job! You have read of *Yeshua's* interaction with the religious leaders during the last week of His life. During this lesson, you've moved from the colt to the betrayal.

1. How many days have elapsed since *Yeshua* entered Jerusalem on the colt? Give the references to support your answer.
2. In earlier readings, the disciples are described as not having understood some of the statements *Yeshua* made about His pending death. Do you think they have a better understanding now? Explain your answer.
3. *Yeshua* makes some scathing comments about the religious leaders. Summarize what you understand to be His biggest concerns. Do you have any of these traits? Be honest.
4. How does this week's reading change your view of the religious leaders? How does it change your perspective on the end times? Or the knowing sacrifice which *Yeshua* made?

Lesson Eight

Yeshua is about to be betrayed and have His Last Seder – not His Last Supper. You may not have noticed it thus far, but by this time in history, as it is today, the week-long festival of *Matzot* (Unleavened Bread) is often referred to simply as Passover. The week of Unleavened Bread begins with a point in time between the twilights when the Passover lamb is slain. This is Passover.

Read **Matthew 26:14-29, Mark 14:10-25, Luke 22:1-38 and John 13:1-30**. This is the Seder night with the Master. This is the prelude to redemption. Read slowly and carefully.

According to the Talmud, tractate *Nazir*, a person adopts *nezirut* (prohibitions of a Nazarite) by pronouncing a declaration to that effect. The discussion about how to make the declaration is the substance of this tractate – and it's fascinating. For now, suffice it to say that the intent to adopt *nezirut* must be evident to some degree from the words of the declaration or the circumstances surrounding it.

"I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

(Matthew 26:29 ESV)

Given the declaration regarding the fruit of the vine, a length of time, and the context, there is no question that *Yeshua* has just committed to live as a Nazarite until His return. (Note that a Nazarite and a Nazarene or not the same thing.) Read Numbers 6 and describe what *Yeshua* must do when He returns. What will He look like when you see Him?

Read **John 13:31 – 17:26**. Remember, much of John's Gospel (half, in fact) is during the last week of *Yeshua's* life. Now you can see that much of that second half is during the Seder.

As you focus on our redemption, consider an alternate translation of τόπος (*topos*) from "place" to "passage" or "opportunity" as used elsewhere in the Apostolic Scriptures.

*"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to make ready a **passage** for you? And if I go and prepare an **opportunity** for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."*

(John 14:2-3 Joseph's)

Yeshua's discourse in John 14 focuses on His relationship and oneness with the Father, and our connection with Him, *HaTzadik* (The Righteous One). The Sages of Israel teach that we all need an intercessor or advocate, considering our distractions and lack of holiness. Attaching oneself

to a *tzadik* (righteous one) is the key to connection with the Holy One, blessed is He. John certainly supports this.

*“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Yeshua the
Messiah the righteous.”*

(1 John 2:1 ESV)

John also has a strong focus on keeping the commandments because of this relationship. See if you can find all his references to obedience in John 14 and 15. Write the references below. I count 14ⁱ.

John opened his Gospel by referencing the Creation account. His long discourse ends with similar phrasing.

*“And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had
with you **before the world existed.**”*

(John 17:5 ESV)

*“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me
where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me
before the foundation of the world.”*

(John 17:24 ESV)

Read Matthew 26:30-75, Mark 14:26-72, Luke 22:39-65, John 18:1-27. After they finished the Seder meal, *Yeshua* and His disciples “sang a hymn.” It sounds like they were sitting in church. The word ὑμνέω (*humneō*) is a verb, not a noun. They praised G-d in song, just as is done today at the end of every traditional Seder, no doubt by singing the *Hallel* (Psalms 113-118.)

They crossed the Kidron brook to enter the Garden of Gethsemane, where *Yeshua* was known to spend time. It was His custom. If you’re trying to avoid snipers, always take a different route. It’s obvious from His teaching and His actions, the Master played right into the hands of His enemies.

After a long day, the wine during the Seder and considering the late hour, is it any wonder the disciples had trouble staying awake? The Garden arrest is consistent in the synoptic Gospels, but John adds some details to his mystical recounting.

First, we learn that it was Peter who struck with the sword. I believe Peter was setup. *Yeshua* had alluded earlier to a change in times coming, when men would need to fight for their lives. They would sell a cloak to buy a dagger (a better translation of μάχαιρα (*machaira*) than sword) if they didn’t own one. Further, Peter is tired and on edge about possibly denying the Master. So out comes the dagger and he takes off Malchus’ right ear. This is straight out of the

Godfather, with Cousin Vinny biting off Joey Zasa's ear. Lots of blood and drama. I'm sure the real story was later, when Malchus got home from work... and his wife went nuts when she saw all the blood on his shirt... but no wound. #yeshua #authoroflife

"Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

(Hebrews 9:22 ESV)

Have you ever wondered where the shedding of blood is in *Yeshua's* death? Crucifixion is the torturous act of slowly killing a man by suffocation. Arms nailed and outstretched with the feet pinned together. The victim must put all his weight on the nail piercing his feet to exhale. This excruciating process normally lasts for at least a day, ending in exhaustion, which causes asphyxiation. There is very little blood loss. Let's examine the blood of Our Redeemer as we continue through the Gospel narratives. We close this week's lesson with Dr. Luke's description of hematohidrosis, blood-sweat, which is caused by extreme physical or emotional distress. This happened to the Master while wrestling with His destiny. After all, He was born to die.

After the emotional wrestling, the soldiers arrive with swords and clubs. He is taken first to Annas, the puppeteer, then to Caiaphas, his son-in-law. The chief priests, elders and scribes had come together, under cloak of darkness, to find reason to put *Yeshua* to death by false witnesses, but they failed. The corrupt religious leadership found Him guilty of blasphemy.

Review

1. Was Peter setup? Was the use of the sword pre-intended and fixed? Write your thoughts.
2. From morning until morning, our Master was up and working the fields. Did he sleep from the time He rose until the night time trial? It will be morning soon, and the cock will crow. Would you react the same as *Yeshua*?
3. How would you respond if you were Malchus' mother?
4. How can you achieve the oneness and togetherness that *Yeshua* described in John 17?
5. Do you think *Yeshua* took a Nazarite vow? Me too. Why do you think He did so?

Lesson Nine

Read Mat 27:1-56, Mark 15:1-41, Luke 22:66-23:49, John 18:28-19:37. These passages relate the happenings culminating with *Yeshua's* death on the cross. The story begins when morning came. This is a significant time marker. There are considerable procedural problems with what you will read.

The first item to notice is the description of those present at *Yeshua's* trial. Matthew says that "all the chief priests and elders" were present. As discussed in Lesson One, Caiaphas and Annas were both acting in the role of High Priest (chief priest) during the Master's latter years. What's wrong with this?

The Chamber of Hewn Stone, in the Temple, is where the Sanhedrin met. Where did the council meet to interrogate and condemn *Yeshua*?

Tractate Sanhedrin of the Babylonian Talmud describes the norm for the highest legal body in Judaism. The Sanhedrin's sessions were from 9am to 4pm. They never met on the Sabbath or festivals. Trials involving capital punishment were never held on the eve of the Sabbath or festival, to provide sufficient time for the trial. There was always a delay of 24 hours from testimony to verdict. Compare this with *Yeshua's* trial.

Pilate had *Yeshua* scourged. Scourging is not the same as whipping. Whipping leaves welts or marks on the body. A whip is used, which is a single length of rope or leather. Scourging uses a cat of nine tails, or flagellum with long strips of leather attached to a handle. Pieces of stone, glass or bone are tied or glued to the leather strips. The soldier stands to one side and strikes the victim's back so the straps wrap around the victim's torso. The flagellum handle is then twisted and vigorously pulled back, ripping away pieces of the victim's flesh. Significant blood loss was expected.

After the scourging, Pilate's battalion (600 men) put a purple robe on *Yeshua*. This would have caused the bloody wounds to congeal into the robe. After beating and mocking him, they removed the robe, re-opening the wounds to bleed again. Luke indicates that Pilate sent the Master to Herod, where He was "dressed" again by the soldiers, again, opening the wounds.

John's Gospel indicates that *Yeshua* bore His own cross, but in His weakened condition, that did not last long, and Simon was compelled to help. The tall piece of the cross would have been kept at the place of crucifixion, while the cross-member would be carried by the condemned.

After refusing wine, *Yeshua* was crucified. The nails would be placed in each wrist between the two bones of the arm, attaching the victim to the σταυρός (stauros) or crossbar. The legs would be slightly bent with one foot placed on top of the other. The nail would pierce both feet through the navicular bone. When held upright, the victim would not be able to take a full breath without putting his body weight on the nail in his feet to lift his chest. This excruciating process would be repeated for two days or so, until the condemned dies of exhaustion-induced asphyxiation.

It is plain to understand that *Yeshua* had a strong idea of what awaited Him while in the Garden praying. Despite the humiliation, pain, suffering, blood loss, exhaustion and agony, He chose to be obedient to the Holy One, blessed is He.

“... For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth.”

(John 18:37b ESV)

Yeshua rose in the morning and walked from Bethany to Jerusalem. This is probably about 2 miles. He taught all day in the Temple. He washed the feet of His disciples and had His last Passover Seder with them. They walked across the brook and up into the Garden where He prayed fervently. He was arrested that night, probably sometime after midnight. He was bound, beaten, mocked, and tried, after being led to Annas' house and then Caiphas' house. By 6am, He was led to the Governor's mansion where he was scourged, beaten, and mocked. He was then led to Herod's place where He was mocked and beaten again. Upon return to Pilate He was forced to carry His cross for a time, then crucified by 9am. He pushed up on the nail in His feet for three hours, and then the sun went dark. Three more hours and He chose to yield His spirit and die. Write your thoughts.

What was the reaction of those present when *Yeshua* died? Don't forget the soldiers in your response.

Read Matthew 27:57-66, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-56 and John 19:38-42. Write down all the time markers that you see.

Well done! This was emotional. Next week we will pick up with the account of the resurrection.

Review

1. Why do you believe *Yeshua* refuse the wine mixed with gall or myrrh?
2. List all the references to the Pharisees involvement in *Yeshua's* last night on earth.
3. Being mocked is never fun. We may experience this in our own lives from time to time. Normally it's done by a bully or a very small group of pathetic people. Both Matthew and Mark describes they gathered "the whole battalion" to mock *Yeshua*. This is about 600 men. Does this change your understanding of the situation?
4. Sha'ul (Paul) wrote to the Romans that *Yeshua* was declared to be the Son of G-d because of one thing. He told the Corinthians that without this our faith is futile and we are still in our sins. Peter says this same thing is the living hope that all believers have. What is this?
5. *Yeshua's* ministry lasted about 3 ½ years, which in His day was one Torah reading cycle. He commended the Pharisees for searching the Scriptures daily seeking life. It is these Scriptures, the Tanakh, which speak of *Yeshua*, the Author of Life. How do you feel about your own study of the Tanakh? Are you looking for *Yeshua* on each page? Are you intimate with these Scriptures? The Apostles were. This knowledge influenced and guided their writings of the Apostolic Scriptures. Write your thoughts on your present study habits and how our study so far may have changed your perspective.

Lesson Ten

Our study ended last week with the Master's death. We have concluded that the Master entered Jerusalem on the first day of the week, for inspection by the religious leaders. According to the Scripture, the *Pesach* (Passover) Lamb is to be brought into "the house" on 10 Nisan, examined for four days, then sacrificed on 14 Nisan. If *Yeshua* entered *HaBayit* (the house) on Sunday, then His last Seder was on Wednesday evening, the fourth day of the week. After a harrowing night, *Yeshua* was crucified Thursday, the first day of Unleavened Bread, about 9am. This is the same time the morning sacrifice was made in the Temple. He died about 3pm, the same time the afternoon sacrifice was made in the Temple.

A Pharisee who was a disciple of *Yeshua* requested His body for burial (Joseph) and spices were provided by another Pharisee (Nicodemus.) They buried *Yeshua* late Thursday, as the day of Preparation (for the weekly Sabbath) began.

"The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment."

(Luke 23:55–56 ESV)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
4 <i>Nissan</i>	5	6	7	8	9 Supper in Bethany	10 Shabbat HaGadol
11 Travel to Jerusalem	12 Temple Cleansed	13 Questioned Seder	14 Crucifixion Burial	15 Yonah 1 Pesach Yom Tov	16 2 Bikkurim	17 3 Shabbat Chol HaMoed
18 Resurrection Omer 1	19 Return from Emmaus 2	20 3	21 Pesach Yom Tov 4	22 5	23 6	24 7
25 8	26 9	27 Appearance to Thomas 10	28 11	29 12	30 13	1 Iyyar Rosh Chodesh 14

Examine the graphic above and compare it to the passages you finished reading in the previous lesson. Now read [Matthew 28:1-20](#), [Mark 16:1-20](#), [Luke 24:1-53](#), and [John 20:1-30](#), once again, looking for timing markers.

How did each Gospel writer describe the time the women arrived at the tomb? Write them down.

The women arrived at the tomb early, on the first day of the week. As the graphic depicts, *Yeshua* was in the ground, like Jonah, all or part of three days and three nights (Thursday, Friday, and Shabbat.) Once Shabbat had ended, on the first day of the week, the women found the stone rolled away and the empty tomb. While today's church celebrates "good Friday" as the day of crucifixion, this is simply not possible according to the Scriptural text.

Where were the disciples told to meet *Yeshua*? Where did they meet Him? Record the circumstances.

As we noted earlier, there is more of John's Gospel for us to review after the Master's death than the other Gospels. **Read John 21:1-25.** There are two incidents recounted. The first involves seven of the eleven remaining disciples. Which four are missing?

They have been fishing all night using nets (not poles) and have caught nothing. This is the second time the Gospels record Peter and his partners fishing all night and not catching any (Luke 5) fish. The first time, at the Master's word, they catch so many fish their nets begin to break and the boats begin to sink. What's different this time?

Yeshua is cooking the disciples a breakfast of fish and bread. Although there were so many fish, the net did not break. How many fish were there? Why is this significant? Write down your thoughts.

The second incident is the conversation that *Yeshua* and Peter have after breakfast. It's an odd conversation in English, but it's even more odd in Greek. Here's a layout of the wording with English and Greek. Notice how *Yeshua's* question changes, as does His response.

<i>Yeshua's</i> Question		Peter's Response		<i>Yeshua's</i> Response	
Do you <u>love</u> me more than these?	αγαπάω (agapaō)	You <u>know</u> I <u>love</u> you	οίδα (oida) φιλέω (phileō)	<u>Feed</u> my lambs.	βόσκω (boskō) αρνίον (arnion)
Do you <u>love</u> me?	αγαπάω (agapaō)	You <u>know</u> I <u>love</u> you	οίδα (oida) φιλέω (phileō)	<u>Tend</u> my sheep.	ποιμαίνω (poimainō) πρόβατον (probaton)
Do you <u>love</u> me?	φιλέω (phileō)	You <u>know</u> I <u>love</u> you	γινώσκω (ginōskō) φιλέω (phileō)	<u>Feed</u> my sheep.	βόσκω (boskō) πρόβατον (probaton)

Review

To what is *Yeshua* referring when He says, "... more than *these*?" Is it the other disciples or is it the fish? Or is it something else?

Use your favorite Greek Dictionary and look up the difference between the two words for "love," the two words for "know," the difference between the words for "feed" and "tend," and the difference between the words for "lamb" and "sheep." Write your findings below.

agapaō:

phileō:

oida:

ginōskō:

boskō:

poimainō:

arnion:

probaton:

Do you think Peter got the message? What was it?

Lesson Eleven

The “Holy Spirit” in the Gospels

Congratulations – you finished reading all four Gospel accounts of *Yeshua*’s life! Hopefully, this reading has raised some questions in your mind about *Yeshua*, who we are, what we’re supposed to do, and other ponderings with theological implications. For example, did you notice how the Gospel writers dealt with the “Holy Spirit”?

Depending on what flavor of religious upbringing you received, the Holy Spirit may have been presented to you in varying forms: as a supernatural conscience, as a member of the Divine, as a prophetic empowerment, or as spiritual strength to do good. Do all Christians receive the Spirit? And what about all those pre-*Yeshua* believers such as Abraham, Moses, David, and the Prophets? I have even heard from one confused individual that those who don’t speak in tongues—considered a gift of the Spirit—aren’t really believers.

The Gospels mention the Holy Spirit in some form or another more than four dozen times, and you may or may not be surprised to know that “slain in the spirit” doesn’t appear once in the English versions ESV, NASB, KJV, or NIV. But what about phrases such as “filled with the Spirit”—which does appear—what does that really mean? And who is the Holy Spirit, what does the Spirit do, and who receives the Spirit and when?

The When

Before we can really understand who the Holy Spirit is and what the Spirit does, we first have to understand when the Holy Spirit plays a role. Christianity has a problem here. The events at *Shavuot* (Pentecost) in the Book of Acts are often described as the “giving of the Holy Spirit” as though that had never happened before.

Furthermore, *Yeshua*’s own words indicate there is something special regarding the Spirit to come after His ascension from earth. So does that mean the Spirit is a non-actor beforehand? **Read the references below** from the Gospels and summarize what you learn about whether or not the Holy Spirit was involved in the affairs of men before the events at Pentecost in Acts 2.

Matthew 1:18-20

Matthew 22:41-45

Mark 1:9-11

Luke 1:13-17, 41-44, 67-68

John 20:22 (this is after *Yeshua*’s death and resurrection, but before his ascension)

Before you get too excited, let's consider *Yeshua's* own words about the timing of the Holy Spirit. Read the below and then comment on how these passages can coexist with what you learned above (Hint: [Read Joel 2:28-29](#), which is referenced by Peter in his sermon in Acts 2):

John 7:37-39

John 16:7

The What

What is the Holy Spirit supposed to do? *Yeshua* lists out a number of the Spirit's tasks in the Gospels. Let's look deeper. [Read the passages below](#) and summarize what you learn:

Mark 13:9-11

Luke 4:17-19

John 6:63

John 14:16-17, 26

John 15:26-27

John 16:8-15

The term "Holy Spirit" isn't a Christian creation. Judaism references it as well. Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel, in his audio series on the Book of Joshua, notes that the Holy Spirit is the lowest level of prophecy, with the face-to-face model of *Moshe* (Moses) as the greatest.

Similarly, there is a discussion in *Makkot 23b* in the Babylonian Talmud about how Judah knew Tamar's children were his. Rabbi Elazar uses this as an example of one of the places the "רוח הקודש" (*Ruach HaKodesh* or "Holy Spirit") appears. He then goes on to say that Judah was told so by a "Heavenly voice", or "*Bat Kol*".

In view of that interpretation of the Holy Spirit, [read the passage below](#) and comment on any similarities between how the Gospels treat the Holy Spirit's activities and the Talmud reference above.

Luke 2:25-32

But wait, is that the only thing the Spirit does? [Read the account](#) of *Yeshua's* birth and *Yeshua's* dialogue about the Spirit below and comment on what else, if anything, the Holy Spirit might be doing:

Luke 1:35

Matthew 12:24-32

The Who

So who is the Holy Spirit? The above discussion by *Yeshua* about forgiveness and blaspheming the Holy Spirit gives us a clue. **Read the passage below** in the Torah and note the similarity to *Yeshua's* words in Matthew 12:

Exodus 20:7

Yeshua also makes an interesting correlation at the end of His time on earth. **Read the passage below** and comment on what it says about who the Spirit is:

Matthew 28:19

The How

So we've looked a lot more at the Holy Spirit, who He is, what He does, and so forth. But who receives Him and how? **Read the references below** and comment:

Matthew 12:15-21

Luke 11:5-13

King David in Psalm 51:11 pleads with *HASHEM* not to take away His Holy Spirit or cast David out of His presence. In view of all we've studied so far, can you explain why David might have been concerned? Do you think this is still true today?

Review

Ok, I know that was a lot. Thanks for fighting through! Before we conclude, there's a passage about the "spirit" that we haven't touched. **Read John 3:3-8** and comment on what you believe *Yeshua* is saying. Is this the "Holy Spirit" or a more general term, and if it is the Holy Spirit, what is His role?

Yeshua has much to teach us in His words. Soon, we'll read through Acts and Paul's epistles, which will further grow our reborn knowledge of the Holy Spirit. But as we do that, keep in mind what we've seen so far. After all, we don't believe the Apostles started a new religion, do we?

Lesson Twelve

How can we derive *halachah* from the Gospels and what *halachot* (if any) are exclusive to Jews or non-Jews? These are the questions we will seek to answer through this lesson. In addition, we will highlight the discouraged practices of “Gentiles” so that we can more closely align with the Master and His disciples.

Halacha as defined by Judaism is “the path that one walks” or simply “Jewish Law” and encompasses 3 sources: Torah, laws instituted by rabbis, and enduring customs.

The written Torah is the first five books of the Bible and Judaism generally accepts that there are 613 commandments contained therein. Our focus will be on the framework of “laws instituted by rabbis.” Orthodox Judaism has agreed upon the *Shulchan Aruch* as the source for this category of *halacha* but within the “laws instituted by rabbis” each of the laws fall into one of three categories:

1. **Gezeirah** - a fence around a mitzvah
ex. Holding money on Shabbat
2. **Takkanah** - rule unrelated to biblical commandments but instituted for the wellbeing of the people
ex. Lighting Hanukkah candles
3. **Minhag** - a custom that developed for worthy religious reasons and has continued long enough to become a binding religious practice
ex. Observing two Yom Tovim (Festival Days) outside the Land of Israel

Now that we know the categories used by Judaism we can use these to differentiate *halachah* from other things in the actions, statements, injunctions, and commandments throughout the Gospels. It may help to phrase each of the categories as a question when we encounter an injunction or action. Is *Yeshua* establishing a fence around a commandment from the Torah? Is *Yeshua* setting a rule that is for our own good but unrelated to a biblical command? Is *Yeshua* perpetuating a longstanding religious custom? This answers “how” we identify *halachah* as we read the words of our *Rebbe Yeshua*.

This lesson is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the *halachah* found in the Gospels but together let’s walk through some easy and memorable examples so that you can apply this framework as you read and study on your own.

Here is an amazing example of a “fence” around the mitzvah of adultery:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
Matthew 5:27-28 ESV

Here is an example of a rule *Yeshua* gives that is unrelated to a biblical commandment but is for our benefit. (As a side note it is amazing how much of what *Yeshua* says is related to biblical commandments! If you have a better example than the one listed below please share.)

“You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Luke 12:40 ESV

Here is an example of the *minhag* of saying a blessing before we eat:

“Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.”

Matthew 14:19 ESV

Now that we have an idea of how the categorizations would look, it is your turn.

Read the **Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7** and write down a couple examples for “fences” (*gezeirah*), customs (*minhag*), and laws unrelated to biblical commandments (*takkanah*). You may find as I did that it is difficult to find anything *Yeshua* says unrelated to biblical commandments! Be prepared to discuss.

It says in Matthew 7:28-29 that those who heard *Yeshua*’s teaching were astonished and they recognized that He spoke with authority. If the crowds reacted in such a way how much more should we react with astonishment and recognition of *Yeshua*’s authority. May this always be our reaction when we read the words of our Master. *Amen*?

Now let’s review the following verses and determine whether the *halachah* (in these cases we will read about customs or “*minhag*”) is exclusive to Jews:

Mark 7:3-4

John 18:28

John 19:40

Should non-Jews be practicing these customs? Write down your thoughts and be prepared to discuss.

Regarding *halachah* for non-Jews, we must remember that the focus of *Yeshua*'s ministry was the Jews - the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is difficult to find an injunction or commandment given to non-Jews specifically. However, we see in John 12:20 that Greeks went up to Jerusalem for the festival to seek *Yeshua*. Also, our very own Mr. Scott Martin pointed out that the Samaritan leper along with 9 other Jewish lepers was told by *Yeshua* to "go and show yourselves to the priests." We do find "gentiles" used as examples for what **not** to do in Matthew 5:47, Matthew 6:7, Matthew 6:32, Matthew 20:25-26, and other places throughout the Gospels so we can take note of these and ensure we refrain from such behavior.

Review

We all desire to be counted as disciples of *Yeshua*. As we draw to a close on this lesson, pause and reflect on the importance of the following verses and be prepared to discuss the practical application.

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 13:34-35 ESV

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

John 15:12 ESV

"These things I command you, so that you will love one another."

John 15:17 ESV

I hope you are now more familiar with the framework of *halachah* and have a better understanding of *halachah* found in the Gospels. We are about to move forward with the rest of the Apostolic Scriptures. We must listen intently to the words of *Yeshua*'s apostles! For they were given the authority to set *halachah* as it says:

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Matthew 16:19 ESV

Source: Judaism 101 <http://www.jewfaq.org/halakhah.htm>

Appendix

Remaining Chronological Readings

[Acts 4-6](#)

[Acts 7-8](#)

[Acts 9-10](#)

[Acts 11-12](#)

[Acts 13-14](#)

[James 1-5](#)

[Acts 15-16](#)

[Galatians 1-3](#)

[Galatians 4-6](#)

[Acts 17; Acts 18:1-18](#)

[1 Thessalonians 1-5; 2 Thessalonians 1-3](#)

[Acts 18:19-28; Acts 19:1-41](#)

[1 Corinthians 1-4](#)

[1 Corinthians 5-8](#)

[1 Corinthians 9-11](#)

[1 Corinthians 12-14](#)

[1 Corinthians 15-16](#)

[2 Corinthians 1-4](#)

[2 Corinthians 5-9](#)

[2 Corinthians 10-13](#)

[Acts 20:1-3; Romans 1-3](#)

[Romans 4-7](#)

[Romans 8-10](#)

[Romans 11-13](#)

[Romans 14-16](#)

[Acts 20:4-38; Acts 21; Acts 22; Acts 23:1-35](#)

[Acts 24-26](#)

[Acts 27-28](#)

[Colossians 1-4; Philemon](#)

[Ephesians 1-6](#)

[Philippians 1-4](#)

[1 Timothy 1-6](#)

[Titus 1-3](#)

[1 Peter 1-5](#)

[Hebrews 1-6](#)

[Hebrews 7-10](#)

[Hebrews 11-13](#)

[2 Timothy 1-4](#)

[2 Peter 1-3; Jude](#)

[1 John 1-5](#)

[2 John; 3 John](#)

[Revelation 1-5](#)

[Revelation 6-11](#)

[Revelation 12-18](#)

[Revelation 19-22](#)

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Some Responses to Nehemia Gordon's Rejoinder

Tim Hegg

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Lesson Summaries

Each week the previous lesson is reviewed in class. The audio files are in the iTunes podcast for *Men of Torah*. The handouts for each review session are in this section.

Note that some classes do not require a handout.

Lesson One Review

John obviously wants us to focus on the Creation story.

Deep mysticism, esoteric secrets and deep divine wisdom were off-limits for new Torah students.

“The laws of *Ma’aseh Bereishit* may not be expounded between two people.”

(Mishna *Chagigah* 2:1)

Wisdom was there... Proverbs 3:19; 8:22-23,30.

Perhaps Wisdom is an aspect of G-d Himself... Psalm 111:10

Targum – an Aramaic paraphrase which includes theology and tradition.

“From the beginning, with **Wisdom**, the L-RD created and finished the heavens and the earth.”

(Genesis 1:1 Targum *Neofiti*)

G-d’s Torah = G-d’s Wisdom

G-d is transcendent. He lies beyond the limits of experience, perception and knowledge.

Yet G-d formed man, breathed life into Adam, rests on *Shabbat*, walks in the Garden, speaks to Moses...

The Mystics explained that G-d interacts with the physical world through the agency of His Word, not written – but Living – and expression of His being.

The heavens were made... Psalm 33:6

Divine, living Word is not less than G-d Himself, but is a finite form of G-d that can interact with the physical world.

Targums use **Dibber** (Divine Speech) and **Memra** (The Word) to refer to the Living Word.

“And when Moses went inside the tent of meeting to speak with him, then he heard the voice of the *Dibber* speaking with him above the cover that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim. And from there the *Dibber* would speak with him.”

(Numbers 7:89 Targum *Neofiti*)

“Then the *Memra* of the L-RD said, “Let there be light,” and there was light, according to the decree of His *Memra*.”

(Genesis 1:3 Targum *Neofiti*)

Dibber = Memra = Logos

“And when the L-RD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, ‘Go up and take possession of the land that I have given you,’ then you rebelled against the commandment of the L-RD your G-d and did not believe him or obey his voice.”

(Deuteronomy 9:23 ESV)

“And when the *Memra* of the L-RD sent you from Rekem of Geah, saying, ‘Go in and inherit the land that I have given you,’ then you rebelled against the utterance of the decree of the *Memra* of the L-RD your G-d, and **you did not believe the holy name of the *Memra* of the L-RD, and you did not hear the voice of His *Memra*.**”

(Deuteronomy 9:23 Targum *Neofiti*)

“And when the L-RD sent you from Rekem Geah, saying, ‘Go up and inherit the land that I have given you,’ then you rebelled against the *Memra* of the L-RD your G-d, and you did not believe Him, and **you did not receive His *Memra*.**”

(Deuteronomy 9:23 Targum *Onkelos*)

Therefore, to believe in the name of the *Memra* is to have faith in G-d, and to receive the *Memra* is to obey the commandments of G-d.

“In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with G-d, and the *Logos* was G-d. He was in the beginning with G-d. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people **did not receive him**. But to all who did receive him, **who believed in his name**, he gave the right to become children of G-d, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of G-d. And **the *Logos* became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

(John 1:1–5,9-14 ESV)

Lesson Two Review

Last week we looked at John's opening account. He brought us back to the Creation story. Tonight we look at Luke's. He starts out with some information about Zacharyah (Zachariah) and Elisheva (Elizabeth). It was in these two faithful ones that "the L-RD remembers" "the oath of G-d," to bring a Redeemer to Israel.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were both "righteous before G-d" and were "walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the L-RD." Yet Elizabeth was barren. Why?

Did *Yeshua* have ½ His DNA from Mary and ½ His DNA from the Holy One, blessed is He?

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the L-RD G-d will give to him the throne of his father David,"

(Luke 1:32 ESV)

"I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,"

(2 Samuel 7:14 ESV)

"I will tell of the decree: The L-RD said to me, "You are my Son"; today I have begotten you."

(Psalms 2:7 ESV)

The *Ruach* (Spirit) came upon Mary not unlike others in the Scriptures, including the disciples.

"And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."

(Luke 1:35 ESV)

"And the Spirit of G-d rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled."

(1 Samuel 11:6 ESV)

"Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the L-RD rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah."

(1 Samuel 16:13 ESV)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

(Acts 1:8 ESV)

Mary is given a sign – Elizabeth’s pregnancy – to give her a hint (*remez*) back to Sarah...

“And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.”

(Luke 1:36 ESV)

“Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.”

(Genesis 11:30 ESV)

Barren women giving birth is a repeating theme of Biblical history. In Luke’s opening he provides two miraculous births, one from a barren woman and one from a virgin.

Two Gospels give us an account of the genealogy of Messiah *Yeshua*. If Joseph was not His father, these are lies. Is that possible?

“and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Yeshua was born, who is called Mashiach.”

(Matthew 1:16 ESV)

“Yeshua, when He began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,”

(Luke 3:23 ESV)

The Scriptures do not bear out the idea that the Holy One, blessed is He, overpowered (against her will) a virgin of Israel to impregnate her with His *physical* seed. This concept is practically impossible (G-d has physical seed???) and morally reprehensible.

Lesson Three Review

We have now reviewed all four Gospel accounts for several weeks and we are near the tipping point – the call for the colt. This ride by our Messiah begins the last week of His life. Then we have exhausted the birth stories from all four Gospels.

We have read of the struggle of Zechariah and Elizabeth. We have learned the lineage of our Master from two perspectives and the direction of a godly man by the inspiration of G-d. We have explored the mystical introduction of the Divine into our world.

Matthew's Gospel opens the second chapter with a report of Wise Men from the East, coming to Jerusalem to worship the King. This fits perfectly in Matthew's focus on the royalty of *Yeshua's* rule. When all is said, and done, the *magi* have foiled Herod's plan – only to have him destroy the next generation of Jewish men. Bible students will recognize the timing markers in the text. Herod determined from the *magi* when the star had appeared. The *magi* worshiped the child – not the baby – but the child. They gave Him gifts and left.

So, the question today is clear. Where is Christmas?

We have read the Gospels. The Savior was born in a Bethlehem manger. Angels proclaimed the announcement. Shepherds were told and they worshipped Him. No one else was there. A few years later the *magi* bring gifts. The righteous couple escape to Egypt, returning later to Nazareth.

Today we hang socks on fireplaces, evergreen trees cut and standing in our homes. Mistletoe and egg nog are abundant. We purchase gifts for family members. We send greeting cards. Why?

It should be obvious even now that this is not a Biblical response to the Gospel narratives.

Why celebrate Christmas? I see no reason at all.

Why celebrate the birth of the Messiah? That's a different question. Let's explore this.

If we are to do so, we certainly would want it to be Biblically done, right? Let's look to the Scriptures.

"On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants."
(Genesis 40:20 ESV)

"King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand.

Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.”

(Daniel 5:1–2 ESV)

“But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod,”

(Matthew 14:6 ESV)

“But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.”

(Mark 6:21 ESV)

Given this review, I think it wise to review the history of the “normal” celebration of Christmas in a believer’s home. Here are some things to consider.

- Why are we celebrating the birth of the Savior when it is His death that brings redemption?
- From where did the customs of this holiday come, if not the Scriptures?
- What does this celebration teach our children?
- Does the focus on material possessions, or even gifts, send the wrong message to our children?
- Did the disciples celebrate the birth of *Yeshua* each year?
- The Jewish tradition is to remember a loved one on the anniversary of their death. This is particularly poignant given the command for ALL Israel to eat the Passover.
- The birth of Messiah can be nearly proven to be during *Sukkot*. Would it not be prudent to teach our children the mystical joining of John’s Gospel opening (The Word dwelling among us with the holiday of Sukkot?

Clearly there is no problem with celebrating the birth of Messiah on any day of the year. Choosing to do so on a day which was/is a part of pagan worship seems foolhardy. The Orthodox Christians celebrate on January 6, which seems a better day, if you can choose your own day.

We MUST teach our children about the miracle of G-d inserting Himself into our world that He might cure the sickness of sin. Wisdom demands that we choose an appropriate time and place.

Lesson Five Review

It is considered a great *mitzvah* of kindness and compassion to make a *shiva* call to mourners who are sitting *shiva*, a practice known as *Nichum Aveilim*. Traditionally, no greetings are exchanged and visitors wait for the mourners to initiate conversation, or remain silent if the mourners do not do so, out of respect for their bereavement.

In the book of *Melachim* (Kings) Gehazi is sent on a mission for a mourning woman. His mission involves death.

*“He said to Gehazi, “Tie up your garment and take my staff in your hand and go. **If you meet anyone, do not greet him**, and if anyone greets you, do not reply. And lay my staff on the face of the child.”*

(2 Kings 4:29 ESV)

Is this the same as the Master’s admonition to His 72 apostles?

*“Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and **greet no one on the road**.”*

(Luke 10:4 ESV)

Is the Master implying those visited in the neighboring towns were as good as dead?

Traditionally, while sitting *shiva* the mourners do not leave the home, but leaving the *shiva* house is permitted when traveling between two locations where *shiva* is being observed by different members of the family. The Master’s injunction regarding travel within a town seems to fit this tradition as well.

*“And **remain in the same house**, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.”*

(Luke 10:7 ESV)

Traditionally, when making a *shiva* call, food has been provided, and both the mourners and visitors eat whatever is set before them. Again, the Master’s comment is consistent with this.

Consider Paul’s admonition to the Corinthian believers.

*“If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, **eat whatever is set before you** without raising any question on the ground of conscience.”*

(1 Corinthians 10:27 ESV)

What do we learn from these passages?

Lesson Nine Review

The resurrection is fundamental to our faith according to the Scriptures!

*“Your **dead shall live**; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.”*

(Isaiah 26:19 ESV)

“The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.”

(Matthew 12:41–42 ESV)

*“For **in the resurrection** they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”*

(Matthew 22:30 ESV)

*“The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of **the saints who had fallen asleep were raised**, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”*

(Matthew 27:52–53 ESV)

*“He is not here, for **he has risen**, as he said.
Come, see the place where he lay.”*

(Matthew 28:6 ESV)

*“And with great power the apostles were giving their **testimony to the resurrection** of the L-rd Yeshua, and great grace was upon them all.”*

(Acts 4:33 ESV)

*“But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the G-d of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, having a hope in G-d, which these men themselves accept, that **there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.**”*

(Acts 24:14–15 ESV)

*“Now if Messiah is proclaimed as raised from the dead, **how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?**”*

(1 Corinthians 15:12 ESV)

*“For as by a man came death, by a man has come also **the resurrection of the dead.**”*

(1 Corinthians 15:21 ESV)

*“For since we believe that Yeshua **died and rose again**, even so, through Yeshua, G-d will **bring with him those who have fallen asleep.**”*

(1 Thessalonians 4:14 ESV)

*“Women **received back their dead by resurrection.** Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, **so that they might rise again to a better life.**”*

(Hebrews 11:35 ESV)

*“The rest of the dead did not **come to life** until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of G-d and of Messiah, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.”*

(Revelation 20:5–6 ESV)

Next week's lesson will require you to search the Scriptures. Peter's discussion with *Yeshua* after the resurrection is confusing in English – and more so in Greek. Using the *Septuagint* (the Greek translation of the Scriptures) as a *rosetta stone* for comparing languages, we can determine what *Yeshua* was teaching Peter at that time.

To do so, use a Bible program or the Internet to search the Scriptures in various languages for some of the terms used in the passage. Then compare the context of the passages to come to a conclusion.

Lesson Ten Review

The questions posed to Peter at the end of the Gospel of John are intriguing when reviewed in Greek. *Yeshua* does not ask the same question three times, nor does Peter respond the same three times, nor are *Yeshua's* responses the same. Here's a colloquial review.

Peter do you *agapaō* Me?

Yes L-RD, you *oida* I *phileō* You.

Boskō my *arnion*.

Peter do you *agapaō* Me?

Yes L-RD, you *oida* I *phileō* You.

Poimainō my *probaton*.

Peter do you *phileō* Me?

Yes L-RD, you *ginōskō* I *phileō* You.

Boskō my *probaton*.

Yeshua uses two different words regarding love of G-d to introduce three commands.

1. Feed my lambs.
2. Tend my sheep.
3. Feed my sheep.

These words only appear together in three places. In these passages, the LXX uses the same words which John chose. *Yeshua* is giving Peter a strong *remez* back to the three prophets, Isaiah, Zechariah and Ezekiel, to effect Peter's perspective on his role in the body of Messiah.

*"He will **tend** his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the **lambs** in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young."*

(Isaiah 40:11 ESV emphasis mine)

In this Messianic passage, the sense of both the Hebrew and Greek is to feed the flock with the tender care of a true shepherd. This is seen in the second phrase describing the shepherd's gathering and gentle leading of the lambs.

Poimainō has two meanings that fit together, implying one another. Not unlike the Hebrew *shema*, which means both to hear and to obey. Hearing is pointless without obedience. In the same way, *poimainō* means to tend and to shepherd. Tending to the flock is pointless without the care and leadership of the shepherd.

This should hit home to Peter and to each of us, as Messiah's representatives on earth until His return. The flock needs proper teaching so they may feed on the word of G-d. The flock requires leadership to remain safe and healthy.

When we consider Zechariah's use of the same two words, this interpretation fits nicely. This is another Messianic passage, beginning in Zechariah 9. Chapter 10 opens with the sad commentary that *HaShem's* anger is hot against the shepherds of Israel.

"Therefore the people wander like sheep; they are afflicted for lack of a shepherd."

(Zechariah 10:2c ESV)

In the very same passage that prophesies of the 30 pieces of silver being thrown into the house of the L-RD for His betrayal, we read:

*"So I became the shepherd of the flock doomed to be slaughtered by the sheep traders. And I took two staffs, one I named Favor, the other I named Union. And I **tended the sheep.**"*

(Zechariah 11:7 ESV)

Yeshua points us to the role of the true shepherd and the reality that He has filled that role. His final *remez* is to Ezekiel's rebuke against the current shepherds of Israel.

*"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the L-rd G-D: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! **Should not shepherds feed the sheep?***

*As I live, declares the L-rd G-D, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, **and have not fed my sheep,***

(Ezekiel 34:2, 8 ESV emphasis mine)

Paul's admonition to Timothy hits the mark.

"And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness."

(2 Timothy 2:24–25a ESV)

Be a righteous shepherd.

ⁱ "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15 ESV)

"Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me..." (John 14:21a ESV)

"Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word..." (John 14:23a ESV),

"Whoever does not love me does not keep my words." (John 14:24 ESV)

“Abide in me, and I in you.” (John 15:4a ESV)

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5 ESV)

“If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.” (John 15:6 ESV)

“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” (John 15:7 ESV)

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.” (John 15:9 ESV)

“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.” (John 15:10 ESV)

““This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12 ESV)

“You are my friends if you do what I command you.” (John 15:14 ESV)

“These things I command you, so that you will love one another.” (John 15:17c ESV)

“If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.” (John 15:20 ESV)