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"Foundations of the Faith" Series

The Everlasting Gospel

*Finding the Source of Paul's "Gospel of Christ"
in the Law and the Prophets*

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www.BibleTruth.cc
1st Edition: March 2007
Updated: August 2012

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What is "the Gospel"? The Baptist Church I came from, like many other Christian churches and denominations, taught that the "Gospel" is a simple message of belief in Jesus. This, of course, is based on Paul's summary statement of his gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures....

Thus, in most Christian churches today, the Gospel proclaimed is the simple message that one need only to believe that Jesus died for your sins, was buried and was raised from the dead. A simple confession of this formula is sufficient to open heaven's doors for you and secure for you eternal life.

Now, this "Gospel of Christ" as interpreted by Christianity is NOT the gospel that Messiah himself preached. The Christian Gospel is a different gospel that teaches "about Christ." They don't proclaim the message which Messiah himself taught. Instead, they teach a Gospel which says that Christ died for them on the cross - a message that says to believe on Jesus Christ to be saved. They teach that simply "accepting" Jesus as your personal Savior secures your relationship with God the Father and transforms you into a Child of God.

But Yeshua Messiah, like Yochanan the Immerser before him, taught his disciples a message of repentance for their sins and to return to obedience to God's commandments in light of the soon coming kingdom of God. Christians by and large do NOT teach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. They instead preach a Gospel about Jesus. Which begs the question, "Is the Christian Gospel message the 'other Gospel' that Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 11:4"?

Paul speaks of that "other gospel" which is different than the Gospel which was Messiah's message:

For if someone comes to you and preaches a Yeshua other than the Yeshua we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

Is the Jesus that Christians are preaching the same as the Yeshua of Scripture? And is their Gospel the same as Yeshua's Gospel? We will provide an answer to these questions as we proceed through this study.

Does the Bible present several different gospels aimed at several different audiences, as many Christians believe? Is God's message to mankind constantly morphing so that the "Good News" needs to be adjusted for different people in different times? Or is there a single, coherent message found throughout the Bible which is the Good News from the Eternal One? I would argue for the latter.

It is my intent to show in the forthcoming Bible study that there is only one Gospel and that one Gospel is taught from Genesis to Revelation. Paul's "Gospel of Christ" is the very same gospel message which Messiah taught to his disciples. Moreover, I am convinced by the overall teaching and revelation of Scripture that the Gospel is a single message consisting of many components and which is for all generations of people. The message of the Eternal Gospel is that the Creator of heaven and earth has a plan and a way to restore fellowship to a fallen people who seek relationship with the Living God.

Gospel Defined

The word "gospel" is a commonly accepted translation of the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (pronounced "eu-angelion"). So, let's take a look at the Lexicons to see what our word means and how it can be translated. *Eu-angelion*, according to *BDAG Lexicon* is **1. God's good news to humans, good news** as proclamation. **2. details relating to the life and ministry of Jesus, good news of Jesus.** **3. a book**

dealing with the life and teaching of Jesus, a *gospel* account. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* more precisely renders this word as, **1. a reward for good tidings, 2. good tidings.** Thus, it is usually translated as ***good news***.

If we break down the word *eu-angelion* even further, it is a compound word combining the Greek words, *eu*, which means "good" and *angelion* which means "message." Similarly, an *angel* is a "messenger." An *eu-angelion* is a message of good news which is delivered by a herald (messenger). The Gospel, then, is a delivered message.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon notes that the Greek *eu-angelion* corresponds to the Hebrew בְּשׂוּרָה and בְּשָׂרָה, (pronounced *be-sorah*), which also means *tidings, messenger's reward* and refers to the message that a runner (courier) brings to a king. So, here in the Hebrew word *besorah* we find the root source of the New Testament Greek word *eu-angelion*. Again, the actual "gospel" is the message delivered.

What can we glean from this? The Gospel is not merely a New Testament teaching. We find that all of the Law and the Prophets and Writings bring us Good News about Elohim's love and compassion toward fallen human beings. He has always been working toward bringing redemption and salvation to his people. This is the story of the Bible - that the human race is fallen and that the Creator has made a way for sinners to repent and to be restored to right relationship with their Creator.

In the beginning, Adam and Eve fell into sin, but Elohim provided a covering for them of animal skins by the death of a substitute - an innocent animal. Noah's wicked generation was destroyed but on account of his righteousness, Noah and his family were provided deliverance from the judgment and survived a world-wide flood.

Abraham was led out of Babylon to a promised land because he repented of sin and transgression and walked in the righteous commandments of Elohim, as the record tells us:

After all, Avraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using his name. I have chosen him so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Yehovah by doing what is right and just. Then Yehovah will give to Avraham what he promised him. (Bereshith 18:17-19)

And later, the record says that Yehovah spoke to Yitzchak (Isaac) about his father Abraham, and made promises to him:

Then I will be with you and will bless you, for I will give all these lands to you and to your descendants, and I will fulfill the solemn promise I made to your father Avraham. I will multiply your descendants so they will be as numerous as the stars in the sky, and I will give them all these lands. All the nations of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using the name of your descendants. All this will come to pass because Avraham obeyed me and kept my charge, my commandments, my rules, and my Instructions. (Bereshith 26:3-5)

The pages of Scripture tell story after story of the Good News of the redemption Yehovah provided his people, including the deliverance from ruthless slavery in Egypt, the establishment of the nation of Israel in the land that was promised to the patriarchs, and the promises given to the Prophets of a Messiah

who would come and establish a Messianic Kingdom in which righteousness would reign.

Paul's Gospel - the "Gospel of Christ" - is Proclaimed in the Law and in the Prophets

When we take a bird's eye view of the true Bible Gospel, we find that the themes Paul presents with his "Gospel of Christ" are the same themes being proclaimed in all of Scripture. The Gospel is a message that brings hope to all humans in every generation. It is much more than the Evangelical's "death, burial and resurrection of Christ" message. The "death, burial and resurrection of Christ" is merely the pinnacle of a much more comprehensive message which makes up the Everlasting Gospel. So, to understand the Everlasting Gospel, we must survey the whole Bible to see what the Word of Elohim is proclaiming.

Paul's "Gospel of Christ" had been proclaimed long ago by the Law and the Prophets. Paul himself quotes over and over again the source of his Gospel which was found throughout the Scriptures. Paul presents his gospel message as the "Gospel of Christ" on many occasions. In Romans 1:16 he says,

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (KJV).

And in another place,

So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19, KJV)

And there are many other references Paul makes to the "Gospel of Christ" which we could have recited. These are only a few of them.

Yet, that is not the only designation Paul uses to make reference to the gospel he proclaimed. He also refers to his gospel as the "Gospel of God."

to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God (Romans 15:16, KJV)

What is the significance of Paul using such a phrase to describe his gospel? Is the "Gospel of God" a different gospel than the "Gospel of Christ"? Such an idea is surely absurd. I'm quite sure they are not different gospels.

Paul's Gospel must be the same message as that which Messiah himself proclaimed. What is the evidence of this? All of the elements of the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Everlasting Gospel and the Gospel of Christ are found in Paul's description of the Gospel which he himself proclaimed.

So I would say that the Gospel of Christ is both the Gospel about Messiah and it is the very same message that Messiah himself proclaimed. The gospel that Messiah preached is the message of the Law and the Prophets which would find their fulfillment in Messiah. We find evidence of this in the many references Paul makes that connect his gospel message with the entire body of the Tanach (Old Testament) . Let's begin to list them here.

First, Paul says that the gospel he is proclaiming is "**from first to last**" and is for all people:

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of Elohim for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Yehudi, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from Elohim is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17).

The Greek text literally says that this righteousness is "**from faith to faith.**" Every true faith experience exhibits righteousness. Thus, the Gospel of faith that he is proclaiming must be a Gospel that we can find from the beginning of the Bible, throughout the Bible and all the way to the end of the Bible. In other words, the Everlasting Gospel must be found from Genesis to Revelation.

Second, Paul tells us that the Gospel was foretold in advance to Abraham:

The Scripture foresaw that Elohim would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Avraham: "All nations will be blessed through you" (Galatians 3:5).

and

He took him outside and said, "Peer into the sky and count the stars--if you are able to count them!" Then he said to him, "So will your descendants be." Avram believed Yehovah, and He counted it for righteousness (Bereshith [Genesis] 15:4-6).

Paul's Gospel had already been preached to Abraham! It is NOT new with Paul. This Gospel proclaims righteousness by faith and the blessing of the nations through Abraham's offspring (Messiah).

Moreover, Paul's Gospel is described as "Mystery." This mystery involves the grafting in of the Gentiles into the Body of Messiah - the nation of Israel. The Torah provides for this grafting in of anyone who desires to join in covenant relationship with the Living Elohim.

The writer to the Hebrews also tells us that the one, true Gospel was also preached to the sons of Israel who were brought out of Egypt and were being led to the Promised land:

For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith (Hebrews 4:2)

This Gospel that was preached to them included salvation by lamb's blood, deliverance by the Father's powerful arm, and life and inheritance in the Promised Land while Elohim's Presence leads every step of the way.

Next, Paul's Gospel had also already been preached and proclaimed by the Law in the establishment and explanation of the Appointed Times. Paul's proclamation of His Gospel is focused on the death, burial and resurrection of Messiah. But this was not new with Paul, either. This revelation had been proclaimed in the Passover story and the Firstfruits offering made during the Passover week for fifteen hundred years

before Paul ever arrived and proclaimed it.

Furthermore, Paul's Gospel was a message of obedience. Paul begins his letter to the Romans this way:

From Paul, a slave of Messiah Yeshua, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of Elohim. This gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the set-apart scriptures, concerning his Son Through him we have received favor and our apostleship to bring about the obedience of faithfulness among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name (Romans 1:1-3, 5).

So, the Gospel is a message of obedience. But obedience to what? He mentions here that this Gospel was proclaimed by the Prophets of old and in all the Scriptures. Keep in mind that at the point of the writing of Romans, the New Testament had not yet been written. Thus, the Scriptures Paul is referring to must be the Tanach or Old Testament, which includes the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. And this obedience he speaks of must refer to obedience of what was proclaimed by the Law and the Prophets.

Peter's Gospel is also a message calling for repentance. It is well known that John the Baptist and Messiah taught that people should "repent and believe the Gospel." Likewise, Peter's Gospel issues in a call to repentance:

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each one of you be baptized in the name of Yeshua Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Set-apart Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far away, as many as Yehovah our Elohim will call to himself." (Acts 2:38,39).

But Paul taught this SAME message of repentance in his Gospel, as did Peter. He told the Athenians:

therefore, although Elohim has overlooked such times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he designated, having provided proof to everyone by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:30, 31).

And in his defense before King Agrippa, Paul states,

"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but I declared to those in Damascus first, and then to those in Yerushalayim and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to Elohim, performing deeds consistent with repentance (Acts 26:19, 20).

The "deeds that are consistent with repentance" are the acts of obedience to the commandments of Yehovah.

For Paul, the very first act of one turning to God is to repent. Paul explains his message of repentance elsewhere. To the elders of Ephesus, he said,

I have declared to both Yehudim and Greeks that they must turn to Elohim in repentance and have faith in our Master Yeshua. (Acts 20:21)

Turning from sin is a must for anyone turning to Elohim. If people don't turn from sin and to obedience, the person really isn't seeking God.

These have been a few of the statements that Paul has written about the Gospel which he was preaching. Throughout his writings, Paul affirms the nature of the Gospel and the message of the Gospel as having as its source the Law and the Prophets. So, let's begin to take a deeper look into Paul's Gospel and its underpinnings in the Torah and the Prophets. We will see that the Everlasting Gospel has been proclaimed since the beginning of human history. And Paul's Gospel message is merely summary and explanation of all that the Law and the Prophets before him had proclaimed.

The Gospel Proclaimed in Advance to Abraham

Let's begin with our examination of Paul's Gospel by looking at a curious statement he made to the Galatians. He speaks of the Gospel as having been proclaimed in advance to Abraham:

Consider Avraham: "He believed Elohim, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Avraham. The Scripture foresaw that Elohim would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Avraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Avraham, the man of faith. (Galatians 3:6-9)

Paul is telling us that his Gospel was first spoken about in the promises Yehovah made to Abraham. Thus, one of the sources of the message of Paul's Gospel is found in the Book of Genesis. Paul mentions here two aspects of the Gospel as it was proclaimed to Abrams. First, all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham. And second, those who follow in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham would be counted as righteous.

Genesis 12:1-3: The Nations Will Be Blessed Through Abraham's Seed (Messiah)

Yehovah had called to Abram and had instructed him to leave his homeland and go to a place which Yehovah would tell him of on the journey:

"Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:1-3)

Now the Gospel is contained and summarized in this promise. All the nations or peoples of the earth would be blessed through Abram.

This promise is further developed in subsequent appearances of Yehovah to Abraham. One of the important promises Elohim made to Abraham was the promise to give him a "seed" as a co-inheritor of the land of Canaan: **"But Yehovah appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring (seed) I will give this land'"** (Genesis 12:7). And again, **"the whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their Elohim"** (Genesis 17:8).

Furthermore, as the apostle Paul argues in his epistle to the Galatians, Elohim promised not only descendants, but a specific 'seed' who would be the recipient of the promise. This 'seed' is Yeshua the Messiah, who also is Abraham's descendant. Paul writes that **"the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Messiah"** (Galatians 3:16). This promise, therefore, is fulfilled in the person of Yeshua and in those who belong to him.

Yet again, when Elohim promised to raise up countless descendants from Abraham and to bless them, he was not talking about just Abraham's physical descendants. Elohim's intention was to raise up and bless a multitude of believers who had faith like Abraham. In Galatians 3:29, Paul explains that **"if you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."** This is the very essence of the Gospel which was revealed to Abraham; that Elohim would raise up a seed to be the Savior and that people from all nations of the earth would be blessed through him and become heirs on account of that Seed.

Ephesians 1:12-17: The Gospel as Mystery

In the book of Ephesians, Paul refers to the Gospel as a mystery. Paul himself defines a mystery:

When reading this, you will be able to understand my insight into this secret (mystery) of Messiah. Now this secret was not disclosed to people in former generations as it has now been revealed to his set-apart apostles and prophets by the Spirit... (Ephesians 3:4,5).

A mystery is a truth of Scripture which was not understood in the past, but with Messiah's work of redemption (part 1) completed, and with its subsequent understanding by the followers of Messiah, this "secret" truth of Scripture is becoming understood. A mystery, then, is NOT something which was never revealed before. Rather, it is something that was not UNDERSTOOD in its fullness before.

What is this mystery Paul is speaking of? Let's begin in Ephesians chapter 1:

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight. He did this when he revealed to us the secret (mystery) of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Messiah, toward the administration of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Messiah--the things in heaven and the things on earth. In Messiah we too have been claimed as Elohim's own possession, since we were predestined according to the one purpose

of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Messiah, would be to the praise of his splendor. And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation)--when you believed in Messiah--you were marked with the seal of the promised Set-apart Spirit, who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of Elohim's own possession (1:7-14).

Here is Paul's summary statement of what this "secret" is. He calls it "the secret of his will." The mystery which was discussed by the Torah and the Prophets but was not understood until after Messiah came is that Elohim was going to **"head up all things in Messiah."** Thus, Paul calls it **"the gospel of your salvation."**

This mystery was, indeed, talked about in the Torah and the Prophets. The Torah describes "the Prophet" who was to be like Mosheh, who was to be obeyed like Mosheh. The Prophets describe the Messiah's reign in so many ways and in so many places that we don't have space here to contain it all. The secret (mystery) Paul is referring to is that "the Prophet" would arise and that Elohim's people need to obey him in every detail of his teaching (by the way - Messiah upheld the Torah of Mosheh - interesting, isn't it!). And the Prophets detail the Messiah and the messianic age as a time of righteousness on the earth.

Paul calls this **"mystery of his will" "the word of truth - the gospel of your salvation"!** Thus, the mystery is the gospel. In formulaic form, that could be displayed as follows:

Mystery = word of truth = gospel = Messiah heading up all things.

The Messiah, who was to "head up all things," would be the One who would fulfill the prophetic utterances. Thus, it was to be "in Messiah" that even the prophecy of the two branches becoming one in Yechezqel 37 would be fulfilled. The secret which is "now being revealed" is that Messiah would bring together the two houses of Israel and make them "one nation" or "one people" or "one Body."

So, Paul goes on to discuss this fulfillment of the two branch (stick) prophesy of Ezekiel 37.

Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh--who are called "uncircumcision" by the so-called "circumcision" -- that is performed on the body by human hands -- that you were at that time (1)without the Messiah, (2) alienated from the citizenship of Yisrael and (3)strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without Elohim in the world. But now in Messiah Yeshua you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Messiah (Ephesians 2:11-13).

And further, in chapter 3 Paul goes on to say that

When reading this, you will be able to understand my insight into this secret (mystery) of Messiah. Now this secret was not disclosed to people in former generations as it has now been revealed to his set-apart apostles and prophets by the Spirit, namely, that through the gospel the Gentiles are (1)fellow heirs, (2) fellow members of the body, and (3)fellow partakers of the promise in Messiah Yeshua (Ephesians 3:4-6).

Those who were at that time without the Messiah are now fellow heirs with Messiah. And those who

were formerly alienated from the citizenship of Yisrael are now fellow members of the body. And those who were strangers to the covenants of the promise are now fellow partakers of the promises.

We will return to Ephesians 2 and 3 and his revelation of the gospel as "mystery" a bit later. But we must first discover who these "Gentiles" are that Paul is addressing.

Hosea 1: Who Are the Gentiles?

To understand who these "Gentiles" are that Paul is constantly referring to in his letters, we must pay a visit to the writings of the prophet Hoshea. Here is chapter 1 in full with commentary. Please take the time to read this prophesy carefully, noting who is being addressed here:

This is the word of Yehovah which was revealed to Hoshea son of Beerī during the time when Uzziāh, Yothām, Ahāz, and Yechezqiyāhu ruled Yehudāh, and during the time when Yaravām son of Joāsh ruled Yisraēl (verse 1).

This revelation was given during the days when both houses of Israel were still standing. The northern kingdom, known as "Yisrael" (Israel), and the southern kingdom, known as "Yehudāh" (Judah), were standing side by side.

When Yehovah first spoke through Hoshea, he said to him, "Go marry a prostitute who will bear illegitimate children conceived through prostitution, because the nation continually commits spiritual prostitution by turning away from Yehovah." So Hoshea married Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim. Then she conceived and gave birth to a son for him. Then Yehovah said to him, "Name him 'Yezreel,' because in a little while I will punish the dynasty of Yehu on account of the bloodshed in the valley of Yezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Yisrael. At that time, I will destroy the military power of Yisrael in the valley of Yezreel" (verses 2-5).

The first son of Hoshea was to be a remembrance of the fact that Elohim was going to put an end to the northern kingdom of Yisrael. According to other related prophesies, Israel was to be taken into captivity by Assyria and scattered among the nations of the earth.

She conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then Yehovah said to him, "Name her 'No Pity' (Lo-Ruhamah) because I will no longer have pity on the nation of Yisrael. For I will certainly not forgive their guilt. But I will have pity on the nation of Yehudāh. I will deliver them by Yehovah their Elohim; I will not deliver them by the warrior's bow, by sword, by military victory, by chariot horses, or by chariots" (verses 6-7).

Hoshea's daughter, Lo-Ruhamah, was so-named to be a reminder that Yisrael, the northern kingdom, was not to be showed pity or compassion by the Almighty, anymore.

When she had weaned 'No Pity' (Lo-Ruhamah) she conceived again and gave birth to another son. Then Yehovah said: "Name him 'Not My People' (Lo-

Ammi), because you are not my people and I am not your Elohim" (verses 8-9).

Hoshea's next son, named Lo-Ammi, was a statement of Yehovah's divorce and separation from the northern kingdom of Israel. No longer were they to be considered to be his people. They had been disobedient and had chosen to worship the other gods of the pagans. They were scattered and dispersed among the nations.

Now, here is where the prophetic picture becomes fascinating. This is where Paul connects to it in his writings:

However, in the future the number of the people of Yisrael will be like the sand of the sea which can be neither measured nor numbered. Although it was said to them, "You are not my people," it will be said to them, "You are children of the living Elohim!" Then the people of Yehudah and the people of Yisrael will be gathered together. They will appoint for themselves one leader, and will flourish in the land. Certainly, the day of Yezreel will be great! (verses 10-11).

The northern kingdom, which was no longer to be called "my people" were to become a huge crowd of people, innumerable. These Israelites, the descendants of the scattered house of Israel, are to be called the "**children of the living Elohim.**" At that time, the nations of Yehudah and Yisrael are to become one nation in the Land of promise.

Watch carefully how Paul quotes and applies this prophesy of Hoshea to the New Testament congregation:

And what if he is willing to make known the wealth of his splendor on the objects of mercy that he has prepared beforehand for splendor-- even us, whom he has called, not only from the Yehudim but also from the Gentiles? As he also says in Hoshea: "I will call those who were not my people, 'My people,' and I will call her who was unloved, 'My beloved.'" And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living Elohim.' (Romans 9:23-26).

In Paul's explanation of the gospel, he notes that Elohim is calling the Yehudim ("Jews") and the Gentiles. And he cites Hoshea as evidence that we should have expected Elohim to call the Gentiles! **But he is quoting that passage which we have looked at above, where the prophet Hoshea is clearly speaking of the northern House of Israel, the scattered descendants of the northern kingdom! It is these that he is referring to as "Gentiles."** And that does make sense. The northern kingdom of Israel was scattered among the nations ("Gentiles") and intermingled and intermarried with the nations. So it is accurate to refer to the descendants of the house of Israel as Gentiles!

Thus, the Gospel, as it is explained in Ephesians, is that Elohim is calling Jews (the Yehudim of the southern kingdom) and Gentiles (the scattered northern kingdom of Israel) to become one people in and through the work of Messiah. This is the work of fulfilling the prophesy of the two branches in Yechezqel 37. And all the other prophets agree. The two kingdoms will be brought back together as one, in the last days, by the work of Messiah.

Who are the Gentiles? By Paul's usage of the term in quoting from the prophets, the term *Gentile* refers to the descendants of the scattered house of Israel, and all of the other peoples of the nations, who,

through the work of the Messiah and the promises of the Scriptures and the testimony of the followers of Messiah, are coming into Covenant relationship with Elohim through Messiah. So Paul's constant reference to "Jews and Gentiles" in his letters refers to the prophetic utterances about the northern and southern kingdoms - the two houses of Israel - coming together.

Ephesians 3:4-6: The Mystery of Messiah

Paul is speaking to these "Gentiles" when he writes,

Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh--who are called "uncircumcision" by the so-called "circumcision" -- that is performed on the body by human hands -- that you were at that time (1)without the Messiah, (2) alienated from the citizenship of Yisrael and (3)strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without Elohim in the world. But now in Messiah Yeshua you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Messiah (Ephesians 2:11-13).

Why are these Gentiles called "uncircumcision" by the Yehudim, who call themselves "the Circumcision"? Let's see what the Scriptures say (a novel concept, wouldn't you say?). First Paul says elsewhere,

For circumcision has its value if you practice the Law, but if you break the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision (Romans 2:25).

Here he is saying that just being circumcised is nothing if you are not also obeying all of the Instructions of Scripture. Your being "cut in the flesh" becomes "uncircumcision" if you don't obey the rest of the Torah.

The prophet Yirmyahu (Jeremiah) says the same.

If people want to boast, they should boast about this: They should boast that they understand and know me. They should boast that they know and understand that I, Yehovah, act out of faithfulness, fairness, and justice in the earth and that I desire people to do these things," says Yehovah. Yehovah says, "Watch out! The time is soon coming when I will punish all those who are circumcised only in the flesh. That is, I will punish the Egyptians, the Judeans, the Edomi, the Ammoni, the Moabi, and all the desert people who cut their hair short at the temples. I will do so because none of the people of those nations are really circumcised in Yehovah's sight. Moreover, none of the people of Yisrael are circumcised when it comes to their hearts, either." (Yirmyahu 9:24-26).

Those who circumcise their flesh but do not obey the rest of the commandments of Yehovah are regarded in Yehovah's sight as though they were NOT circumcised! People who do not obey the Torah are not circumcised in their hearts, either.

So Paul speaks of the "Gentiles" and notes that the Jews call them "the uncircumcision." Why? Because, though they are the scattered remnant of the northern house of Israel and they are circumcised in

the flesh, they continue in rebellion against Elohim by their resistance to the rest of the commandments of Scriptures! The Gentiles are rightly called the "uncircumcision" because, though they may have a physical circumcision, they are still in rebellion against the Almighty.

Paul furthermore describes them as "**alienated from the citizenship of Yisrael.**" The term is defined by the *Freiberg Lexicon* as "*to alienate, estrange; only passive in the NT be a stranger to, be separated from.*" What were these Gentiles once separated from? Citizenship in Israel, of course. And how can one be estranged or separated from something which they were never connected to? Paul's use of language is implying, again, that he is speaking to a people (the Gentiles - scattered northern Kingdom) who were once connected to citizenship in Israel, and circumcised, according to the Covenant, but now in their state of estrangement, they are separated from the promises.

Paul uses a third allusion to identify these Gentiles. He says that "**you who used to be far away have been brought near.**" Again, this calls to mind the prophetic utterance with regard to the scattered northern kingdom of Israel.

"Son of man, your brothers, your relatives, your fellow exiles, and the whole house of Yisrael are those to whom the inhabitants of Yerushalayim have said, 'They have gone far away from Yehovah; to us this land has been given as a possession.' 'Therefore say: 'This is what Adonai Yehovah says: Although I have removed them far away among the nations and have scattered them through foreign lands, I have been a sanctuary for them for a short while among the lands where they have gone.' 'Therefore say: 'This is what Adonai Yehovah says: I will regather you from the peoples and will assemble you from the lands where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Yisrael.' (Yechezqel 11:15-17).

Thus, those of the whole house of Yisrael who were removed far away will be brought near when they are re-gathered back to the land of Yisrael.

Paul details yet further the content of this mystery, which is his gospel. He writes in chapter 3:

When reading this, you will be able to understand my insight into this secret (mystery) of Messiah. Now this secret was not disclosed to people in former generations as it has now been revealed to his set-apart apostles and prophets by the Spirit, namely, that through the gospel the Gentiles are (1)fellow heirs, (2) fellow members of the body, and (3)fellow partakers of the promise in Messiah Yeshua (Ephesians 3:4-6).

The "**mystery of Messiah**" that Paul preaches is that the gospel provides the way for the Gentiles to become heirs of the land which Elohim deeded to Avraham, members of the body - which is the nation of Israel - and partakers of the promise Elohim made with Avraham. Thus, the Gentiles become full citizens with all the same rights as those already citizens of the commonwealth of Israel.

Christian theologians and thinkers have made the mistake for many centuries now of thinking that in Messiah, the "church" has different promises than those made to the sons of Israel. But by re-evaluating the statements of Paul and seeing the roots of these statements in the Torah and the Prophets, we have been able to discern that the promises in Messiah are being fulfilled in conjunction with the fulfillment of the prophesies which map out the re-gathering of the lost sheep and the scattered house of Israel back into the

fold and returning to the Land.

The Gospel of Righteousness By Faith

The Gospel that was proclaimed in advance to Abraham included the message that a heart's attitude of true faith and fidelity to Elohim is counted for righteousness. Elohim saw the heart of Abraham when he promised him that his seed would be as numerous as the stars in the sky:

But look, the word of Yehovah came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but instead a son who comes from your own body will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Peer into the sky and count the stars--if you are able to count them!" Then he said to him, "So will your descendants be." Avram believed Yehovah, and He counted it for righteousness (Bereshith [Genesis] 15:4-6).

Genesis 15:6: The Message that God Credits Righteousness By Faith

The statement, "**Avram believed Yehovah and he counted it for righteousness**" is cited by Paul several times in his letters. This is the account and the text which Christian theologians use as "proof" that one only has to "believe" and that one never has to "do" anything to merit a standing of righteousness in Elohim's sight. Christians insist that "just believing on Jesus" will merit you righteousness and salvation. But is that really what the testimony of Scripture is saying about Abraham?

The problem with the Christian doctrine which is derived from this statement about Abraham is that the English word *faith* does not mean the same thing as the corresponding Hebrew word really conveys. The Hebrew word here translated "believed" is from the root word אָמַן (aman). *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* defines this word as "to confirm, support, uphold (Qal); to be established, be faithful (Niphal); to be certain." *The BDB Hebrew Lexicon* defines it as "confirm, support, made firm, sure, lasting, established." And the *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* defines *aman* as "to be firm, trustworthy, safe; to occupy oneself constantly with; to prove to be firm, reliable, faithful" as well as "to think, to believe."

If we frame the statement of Bereshith 15:6 with this understanding of the Hebrew root word *aman*, the intended meaning of the text begins to emerge. The Bible is telling us that when Abraham received this promise from Elohim, he made a firm commitment in his heart to live out this promise. His heart and mind were firmly committed to faithfulness to this revelation from Yehovah. He would follow and obey the instructions which Elohim would give him. Thus, Abraham believed Elohim and the Almighty saw the integrity and sincere intention of Abraham's heart and counted this for righteousness.

Here is my amplified version of verse 6: "Abraham was confirming and supportive of Yehovah's statement by being faithful in his heart to what he said, and He counted it for righteousness." Another way to put it is this: "And Abraham in faithfulness to Yehovah found the declaration to be reliable and committed himself to it, and He counted it as righteousness." Or even, "Avram counted as trustworthy

what Yehovah promised and acted in faithfulness to His declarations, and He counted this for righteousness." It was more than just superficial belief on Abraham's part that Yehovah saw which He credited as righteousness. Abraham had a track record which testified to his fidelity to the promises of Yehovah.

In another place - following the offering of his son Isaac - Yehovah describes the reason he will bless all the nations through Abraham:

The angel of Yehovah called to Avraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares Yehovah, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." (Genesis 22:15-18)

It is precisely because Abraham was obedient to Yehovah that Yehovah promised to bless all nations through his offspring.

Abraham was already in the habit of obeying the instructions given to him from his Maker and Master. When told to leave Ur of the Chaldeans, the Scripture says Abraham immediately left and went to the place which Yehovah was to show him. Avram, when instructed to do so by Elohim, left his father's household and his family and his place of residence and became a tent-dweller in a foreign land. Abraham always obeyed the commandments given to him from Elohim. So, when the Scripture says that "Avram believed Yehovah," it is speaking not just of a mental acknowledgment or agreement about what Elohim was saying. Avram obeyed the voice of Yehovah; he acted positively on the commandments of Yehovah and he complied with all Elohim's instructions. Thus, when Avram "believed" Elohim, Yehovah saw the faithful commitment of Abraham's heart to do the will of Elohim, "**and He counted it for righteousness.**"

This testimony is confirmed several times in the biblical account of the life of Abraham. When the three visitors came to Abraham (and one of them was Yehovah), the four of them were having a discussion:

When the men got up to leave, they looked out over Sodom. (Now Avraham was walking with them to see them on their way.) Then Yehovah said, "Should I hide from Avraham what I am about to do? After all, Avraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using his name. I have chosen him so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Yehovah by doing what is right and just. Then Yehovah will give to Avraham what he promised him." (Bereshith 18:16-19)

Elohim had chosen Avram to fulfill those promises to him because He saw in Avram a willingness and faithfulness to obey Yehovah's instructions. And because so, Abraham would teach and command his children to do the same - to do what is right and just. "Doing what is right and just" is another way of saying "he will obey all my righteous and just commandments" and will live out his life walking in the will of Elohim. Abraham was always "keeping the way" of Yehovah. This means fidelity to the instructions and faithfulness to the path Yehovah commands him to walk in. And this instruction he was to pass on to his children so that they, too, would inherit righteousness by faith - the righteousness that is a result of

faithfulness and loyalty to Yehovah.

Another testimony about Abraham's faithfulness and fidelity to Yehovah comes in the form of a promise being made to his inheriting son, Yitzchak:

Yehovah appeared to Yitzchak and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; settle down in the land that I will point out to you. Stay in this land. Then I will be with you and will bless you, for I will give all these lands to you and to your descendants, and I will fulfill the solemn promise I made to your father Avraham. I will multiply your descendants so they will be as numerous as the stars in the sky, and I will give them all these lands. All the nations of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using the name of your descendants. All this will come to pass because Avraham obeyed me and kept my charge, my commandments, my rules, and my Instructions." (Bereshith 26:2-5)

Just as the promises were given to Avram on account of his fidelity to Yehovah, these same promises are passed on to his son Yitzchak because of Abraham's faithfulness. It says that he "obeyed me," literally in the Hebrew, "he *shema*'ed my voice" (heard or obeyed my voice). And he "kept my charge" which literally means "he guarded my guardians" (here the commandments of Yehovah are described as "guardians" because they act like a protective fence keeping guard around those who obey them). And Abraham obeyed the *chukim* and the *torot* (the rules and instructions) of Yehovah.

Thus, the Gospel that was proclaimed in advance to Abraham is the message that says that those who are faithful to Elohim in their hearts, deeds and actions will be considered righteous in his sight. And so, Abraham believed Yehovah's promise and demonstrated his "belief" by obeying all the will of Elohim, and Elohim credited this for righteousness.

Romans 1:16-17: Paul's Righteousness By Faith Message

Paul's "righteousness by faith" message is based on the citation of the very texts of Scripture which describe Abraham's faithfulness and his heart's intent to obey all the commands of Elohim. Paul proclaims the Gospel message as a communication of the obtaining of "righteousness by faith." In Romans 1, Paul describes the Gospel:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is Elohim's power for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Yehudi first and also to the Greek. For the righteousness of Elohim is revealed in the Gospel from faith to faith, just as it is written, "The righteous will live by faithfulness" (vs. 16-17).

So, the Gospel that Paul preached was the one that reveals and explains the principle of "righteousness by faith."

How does the Gospel reveal the righteousness of Elohim? The popular Christian teaching about "righteousness by faith" is that Elohim's righteousness is "imputed" to those who "believe" in "Jesus." In other words, in their view the righteousness which the believer has is a "theoretical" righteousness - you don't actually have to be living in a righteous way to be seen by Elohim as "righteous"!! They say, "When

God looks at you, he looks through the blood of Jesus and he sees the righteousness of Christ, because you are in Christ" - to which I respond, "Not quite!"

Yochanan (John) makes it very clear about who is considered righteous in the Almighty's sight, by making this simple to understand statement:

Little children, let no one deceive you: The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as he (Messiah) is righteous (1 John 3:7).

It doesn't get any easier to understand than that. There is no "imputing" of righteousness on those who are not committed to faithfulness in their hearts and who do not practice walking in obedience to the righteous commandments. The declaration of truth is simple and clear: the righteous one is the one who is practicing righteousness, that is, by walking in obedience to the instructions of Scripture.

In Paul's statement above, he explains how the Gospel reveals the righteousness of Elohim. He quoted Habakkuk 2:4, "**the righteous will live by faithfulness.**" The righteousness of Elohim is obtained by "living by faithfulness." "**Live by faith**" should more properly be translated as "**live by faithfulness (i.e. 'fidelity').**" This principle of "living by faithfulness" is a reference to remaining loyal to Elohim. Using the analogy of marriage, we remain faithful through fidelity, which means "not fooling around with someone else." Faithfulness to Elohim means walking in obedience to the commandments and worshipping only him. So if the Gospel reveals the righteousness of Elohim, then the Gospel must be the message of Scripture which tells us to obey the commandments of the Almighty!

Listen to what Paul says about "righteousness by faith." Paul compares the righteousness of Elohim as taught in the Torah (books of Moses) with the righteousness as revealed by Elohim as Paul himself is teaching it:

For Mosheh writes about the righteousness that is by the Torah (law): "The one who does these things will live by them." Moreover, the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Messiah down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Messiah up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we preach)- (Romans 10:5-8, quoting Devarim 30:11-13).

Paul is clearly saying here that his Gospel of righteousness by faith is one and the same as that Gospel as taught by Mosheh in Deuteronomy 30! This entire section of Romans 10 is based on quoting Deuteronomy 30 which tells us of the righteousness of Elohim as proclaimed through the Law. The righteousness of Elohim as taught by Torah is one and the same as the righteousness which Paul preached!

Most English Bible translations confuse their readers into thinking that Paul is talking about two different messages - they say that righteousness by Mosaic Law is different than righteousness by faith. In verse 11, Paul is writing about righteousness by the Law. Then he speaks of "righteousness by faith." The Greek conjunction *de* is used to introduce "righteousness by faith" and it is rendered by most translations as "but." This leads many to think that Paul is contrasting two different teachings about righteousness.

However, though that Greek conjunction often is used to contrast statements, it can also be utilized for other reasons. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* explains another usage of the particle *de*:

it is joined to terms which are repeated with a certain emphasis, and with such additions as tend to explain and establish them more exactly; in this use of the particle we may supply a suppressed negative clause and give its force in English by inserting *I say, and that, so then*, etc.

This is clearly Paul's usage of the conjunction because he is not contrasting, but comparing, righteousness by Mosaic Law with righteousness by faith, because righteousness by Torah *is* righteousness by faith. So, as Paul describes what "righteousness by faith" says in Romans 10:5-8, he is quoting Deuteronomy where Mosheh is talking about righteousness by the Law!

Let's take a look at what Mosheh teaches about the righteousness that is of the Law. First, he talks about the commandments of the Covenant. He does not describe them as "difficult or impossible to keep" as some Christian denominations teach today. On the contrary, Moses says that the Torah is NOT too difficult:

This commandment (Covenant) I am giving you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it too remote. It is not in heaven, as though one must say, "Who will go up to heaven to get it for us and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" And it is not across the sea, as though one must say, "Who will cross over to the other side of the sea and get it for us and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" For the thing is very near you--it is in your mouth and mind so that you can do it. Look! I have set before you today life and prosperity on the one hand, and death and disaster on the other. What I am commanding you today is to love Yehovah your Elohim, to walk in his ways, and to obey his commandments, his rules, and his right-rulings. Then you will live and become numerous and Yehovah your Elohim will bless you in the land which you are about to possess (Devarim 30:11-16).

The commandments under the "Old Covenant" (as it is often called) are NOT too difficult to keep. In fact, it is described as "**very near you - in your mouth and in your mind - so that you CAN do it.**"

This should ring a bell for anyone who has read and studied the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans (you know, the book that is so often quoted as being the case for "righteousness by faith alone"). Paul writes about righteousness by faith(fulness),

But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Messiah down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Messiah up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we preach) - (Romans 10:6-8).

Keep in mind that Paul is here describing "righteousness by faith." Paul is describing the righteousness by faith as "near you" and "in your heart" by quoting that portion of Scripture that is describing the righteousness of Elohim as revealed through the Law! *This righteousness that was revealed through the Law is that one and the same righteousness by faith(fulness/fidelity) which Paul is explaining.*

Paul then asks concerning "righteousness by faith":

But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"

(that is, the word of faith that we preach), because if you confess with your mouth that the Master is Yeshua and believe in your heart that Elohim raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and thus has righteousness and with the mouth one confesses and thus has salvation (Romans 10:8-10).

Give careful consideration to what Paul is saying here. Paul's message of "righteousness by faith" is one and the same as the message given by Moses to the children of Israel! He quotes Devarim 30:14 where he notes that **"it is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart"** He is talking about the righteousness that was revealed at Sinai which is obtained by obedience to Yehovah's instructions! That righteousness that was revealed through the Law at Sinai is the righteousness by faith that Paul is speaking of! It is near you and in your mouth and in your heart. Righteousness is realized through faithful obedience to the Creator. Faith, by its very definition, means "fidelity/faithfulness" to the Elohim we serve. This is the message that brings us life!

Going back to the Torah - the Law teaches that life and righteousness are attained through fidelity to the Covenant:

"Look! I have set before you today life and prosperity on the one hand, and death and disaster on the other. What I am commanding you today is to love Yehovah your Elohim, to walk in his ways, and to obey his commandments, his rules, and his right-rulings. Then you will live and become numerous and Yehovah your Elohim will bless you in the land which you are about to possess (Devarim 30:15, 16).

The message of the covenant given at Sinai, and the message given by Paul in the book of Romans are one and the same. Salvation is by faithfulness (obedience to the commandments) and life is obtained by obedient fidelity to Yehovah.

But the converse is also true. Life is forfeited through disobedience to the commandments which is the same as "unfaithfulness" to Yehovah. Death is the result of disobedience.

However, if you turn aside and do not obey, but are lured away to worship and serve other elohim, I declare to you this very day that you will certainly perish! You will not extend your time in the land you are crossing the Yarden to possess. Today I invoke heaven and earth as a witness against you that I have set life and death, blessing and curse, before you. Therefore choose life so that you and your descendants may live! I also call on you to love Yehovah your Elohim, to obey him and be loyal to him, for he gives you life and enables you to live continually in the land Yehovah promised to give to your ancestors Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'acov" (Devarim 30:17-20).

The call to all who will hear his voice is to "choose life" by "obeying him and being loyal to him" because "he gives you life and enables you to live...."

Thus, Paul's gospel of "righteousness by faith" is the same gospel that was proclaimed to Abraham in advance. It is the eternal, unchanging message that "the revealed righteousness of Elohim" is realized through steadfast "faithfulness" to his Covenant and expresses itself through obedience to his commandments.

The Gospel Proclaimed To Israel In the Exodus and In the Wilderness

In the letter to the Hebrews, the writer exhorts those believers in Messiah through the referencing of the experiences in Israel's history - particularly the wilderness wandering.

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith (Hebrews 4:1-2)

The Gospel which the writer to the Hebrews is proclaiming, and which his readers have heard, is the same one that Israel had preached to them. But that generation who left Egypt and crossed the wilderness rejected the Gospel. It was of no value to them because they didn't combine it with faith.

What does it mean that they didn't combine it with faith? What do we know of their experience? We know that they grumbled and complained. We know that they were consistently disobedient. We know that they rebelled against the Word of Yehovah. They heard the word from Yehovah, but they didn't believe it to obey Him. And this is what it means to have faith - it means to do it, to obey.

So, what was that Gospel that they heard? Were they told to "pray to Jesus and receive him into your heart" so that you might be saved? Well, this is what Christians believe is the only way to be saved! That is exactly what many pew dwellers think the Gospel is! Of course the sons of Israel did no such thing. But the Gospel the sons of Israel heard was the SAME Gospel that Paul was preaching. This is emphatically what he says over and over again. How can that be? Let's look at that Gospel that was proclaimed to Israel.

Exodus 12: Deliverance Through Lamb's Blood

The story of the Exodus is that Gospel that was proclaimed to Israel. And it begins with the deliverance of Israel from Egypt through the shedding of lamb's blood. We all know the story of the plagues Yehovah brought upon Egypt and a stubborn Pharaoh. But the tenth of those plagues was their climax.

Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops

of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs (Exodus 12:3-7).

The sparing of the sons of Israel from the messenger of death was accomplished by the shedding of lamb's blood and sprinkling its blood on the door of the house where they were living.

And, of course, Paul's gospel begins with the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of Elohim. Just as the slaughtering of the yearling lamb in Egypt was the means of finding deliverance from death, so the blood of Messiah is the necessary first step in procuring salvation for those who put their trust in him. The gospel as preached to Israel and the gospel as preached by Paul both have this element of lamb's blood at the core and heart of their messages.

Exodus 14: Baptism in the Sea of Reeds

After they left Egypt, Pharaoh decided to chase after the sons of Israel to bring them back into captivity as slaves. So, Yehovah brought Israel along a path from which there was no escape. Their only hope was in another unlikely deliverance. He brought them to the place called Pi Hahiroth on the edge of the sea. Mosheh was told,

Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the sons of Yisrael can go through the sea on dry ground (Exodus 14:16)

And so it came to be that the whole nation of Israel crossed the sea on dry ground because Elohim had split the sea and made a path to cross through. The Egyptians followed them through the split sea, but the waters came back over them and drowned them all. Thus, Yehovah rescued Israel again.

Paul describes this event as a "baptism."

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Mosheh in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Messiah (1 Corinthians 10:1-4)

The crossing of the Reed Sea is viewed by Paul as a type of baptism. The Israelites were "burning their bridges" as they closed the option of returning to Pharaoh. This crossing sealed their decision to move on to the Promised Inheritance. Likewise, the baptism believers in Messiah are called to perform seals their decision and empowers them to move on in their walk of faith.

Exodus 19-20: Instructions For Living the New Life

But there was more for Israel as they prepared to be the people of Elohim. They had to learn how to walk in the new life that Elohim was giving them. They needed instructions, laws, commandments and

judgments in order to walk uprightly in the sight of their Elohim, who had rescued them and made them his own.

So on the day called Shavuot (or Pentecost), Elohim came down to the mountain and had Mosheh gather all the people at the foot of the mountain. From there, He spoke to them the Ten Commandments:

And Elohim spoke all these words: "I am Yehovah your Elohim, who brought you out of Mitzrayim, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, Yehovah your Elohim, am a jealous Elohim, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:1-6).

Elohim continued to speak the rest of the Ten Commandments. And the people bowed down and worshipped. These were a summary of all the Laws and Rulings Yehovah would speak to Mosheh to speak to all the people. And these were the laws which Israel was to live by while in covenant relationship with their Elohim.

This is the Gospel that was preached to Israel. And it is the SAME gospel Paul proclaimed and wrote about in all his letters and writings. The scope of this Gospel is much broader than the "death, burial and resurrection of Christ" gospel which most Christians are familiar with. The Gospel includes all the promises Elohim made to the patriarchs, and includes all the works and miracles he performed to rescue his people out of all their tribulations.

Messiah's death on the tree laid the foundation for those who put their trust in him to be rescued. But after the deliverance is the decision to be baptized - to declare one's commitment to follow through on this new relationship with Elohim. And it includes receiving instructs on how to live the righteous life that pleases Elohim.

The followers of Messiah received the gift of the Holy Spirit on Shavuot (Pentecost), who was given to enable them to follow the commandments and do what pleases Elohim (see my study on [Walking in the Spirit](#)). So they were then equipped to walk the path of faith and follow in the footsteps of the Master. This is all part of the Gospel that was preached to Israel and by Paul, alike.

The Gospel Proclaimed Through the Appointed Times Shadow Pictures

The Gospel is most prominently proclaimed by the Appointed Times which were established by Yehovah. Sometimes called "the Jewish Festivals," the appointments of Yehovah were established to be times of special observation. These appointment days served as "the Gospel" in two distinct ways. First, each one of these set-apart days was to be a remembrance of something that Yehovah had done to provide redemption for his ancient people Israel. And second, each one of those set-apart days was to be a foreshadowing of Messiah's work of redemption which he was to accomplish at his first coming and will yet complete at his second coming.

Leviticus 23: The Appointments of Yehovah

The Appointed Times are delivered to us in Vayiqra [Leviticus] 23:

Yehovah spoke to Mosheh: "Speak to the sons of Yisrael and tell them, 'These are Yehovah's appointed times which you must *proclaim* as set-apart assemblies--my appointed times: Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there must be a Sabbath of complete rest, a set-apart assembly. You must not do any work; it is a Sabbath to Yehovah in all the places where you live. These are Yehovah's appointed times, set-apart assemblies, *which you must proclaim at their appointed time.*' " (Vayiqra [Leviticus] 23:1-4).

Each one of these days is to be a "proclamation" of Elohim's good news for his ancient people Israel. But the appointment days also serve as shadow pictures of the work of redemption to be accomplished by the work of Messiah. Thus, the Appointed Times proclaim the Everlasting Gospel!

The Hebrew verb קָרָא (pronounced *qara*) means *to read, to call, to proclaim*. It is used of a message spoken from the mouth. Here in Vayiqra 23 it is utilized four times. He says,

These are Yehovah's appointed times which you must *proclaim* as set-apart assemblies--my appointed times...(v1)

These are Yehovah's appointed times, set-apart assemblies, *which you must proclaim at their appointed time* (v4)

On that same day you are *to proclaim* a set apart assembly and do no regular work. (v21)

'These are Yehovah's appointments, which you are *to proclaim* as set apart assemblies (v37)

Thus, it is required that Israel proclaim the message of each of the appointed times. They were "Good News" to all of Israel.

The Pesach (Passover) and associated Feast of Unleavened Bread was an appointed time which remembered the redemption of all Israel by the shed blood of a lamb, and the subsequent march to freedom out of Egypt. In rehearsing and remembering the Pesach on its anniversary year after year, the Israelites were proclaiming the Good News of the great work of deliverance and redemption which the power of Yehovah performed for them.

The Festival of Shavuot (Pentecost) was the appointed time when Yehovah appeared on Mt Sinai and delivered the Ten Commandments to his people, which is a summary of the Covenant of Love he enacted with his people. In remembering and observing this day year after year, the true worshippers of Yehovah are celebrating their anniversary with him and his proclaiming the commandments of the covenant as the marriage vows they took with their Creator.

The observance of Yom Teruah (a blowing of trumpets) was another reminder of Mt Sinai when Yehovah appeared on Mt Sinai and met with and spoke to his people. It is an appointment which tells us when Yehovah is going to appear to his people again. The sons of Israel did not fully understand the meaning of this day of appointment.

The day of Yom Kippur (or Day of Atonement) was an appointment Yehovah made with his people to perform a cleansing of the nation by separating his people from their sins. One goat was slaughtered for the sins of the people, while the other goat was removed from the camp, symbolically taking with him all the sins of the nation into an obscure place.

And finally, The Festival of Sukkoth (Temporary Shelters) was a week long proclamation that Yehovah had been dwelling with his people, and would one day again come to "tabernacle" with his people.

Each of these appointed times on the Hebrew calendar were proclamations of the Good News of Yehovah's work of redemption, deliverance and re-established fellowship with his people. This Gospel was proclaimed at each of the appointed times throughout the year. And each one of these Appointment Days speaks of the redemptive acts that Messiah has performed or will perform for those attached to him.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8: Paul's "Death, Burial and Resurrection" Gospel

Now, dispensational fundamentalists are fond of defining "The Gospel" by quoting 1 Corinthians 15:1-8:

Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel that I preached to you, that you received and on which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received--that Messiah died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Kepha, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to Ya'acov, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as though to one born at the wrong time, he appeared to me also.

Is the Gospel correctly understood only as the "**death, burial and resurrection of Messiah**"? No. The "**death, burial and resurrection of Messiah**" merely summarizes the proclamation that Messiah accomplished the permanent sacrifice for sin on behalf of me and you. True, Paul calls it "**as of first importance**" (verse 3). It signals the beginning of redemption and the first phase of the work of Messiah to restore his people. And his resurrection is indeed "good news" because it validates that the sin sacrifice is accepted and sufficient to provide atonement. But there is much more that Messiah must do to complete the work in me and you

The Appointed Time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is also "good news" in that it is a

proclamation that sacrifice for sin is followed by an ongoing separation from sin for every disciple of Messiah. In this period of separation from sin, we are experiencing the freedom in Messiah as we are coming out of this world system and becoming conformed to the image of Messiah. Yeshua repeatedly instructed those whom he forgave sin and those whom he healed to "**go and sin no more.**" The message in that saying of Messiah and in the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to "**go and sin no more,**" or to put it another way, "live in obedience to the righteous commandments of God."

The instruction of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to rid your houses of leaven and to eat no leavened thing during the seven days of the Feast. This is symbolic of the ridding of sinful habits from our lives, and our separation from the ways of the world now that Messiah has accomplished a work of forgiveness for our sins. We are called as sons and daughters of Elohim to walk in his ways, to do his Word and to live in obedience to his commandments.

Remember that Yeshua had once warned his disciples to "**beware of the leaven of Herod and of the Pharisees.**" The "leaven," he later explained, is the *teaching* of Herod and the *teaching* of the Pharisees. Thus, the separation from leaven, as commanded in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is fulfilled when the followers of Messiah separate themselves from the teachings, doctrines, traditions and commandments of men and their religious institutions. We have been called out of those places where we formerly worshipped and called away from all their pagan customs. The holy life is now to be lived in obedience to our Maker, to do the things that please Him.

But there is more "good news" which is to be proclaimed. Messiah also furthered the work of redemption at the Appointed Time of Shavu-ot (also called "Pentecost") when he was installed as High Priest (in the order of Melchisedek) in the heavenly sanctuary. At this time, he began the work of intercession for us. This work is described in the books of Romans, Hebrews and 1 John (and in other places).

But there is more "good news" to proclaim. The Appointed Time of the Day of the Awakening Blast (sometimes called the "Feast of Trumpets") is to be proclaimed because it foreshadows the very day when Messiah will come down on the clouds of heaven and with a loud trumpet blast, and with a shout, he will resurrect all those who belong to him and gather them together with those living disciples unto Himself.

But there is more "good news." The Appointed Time of the Day of Atonement foreshadows the day when Messiah will capture our arch-enemy, the devil, and imprison him. With the Deceiver locked up, the kingdom of righteousness of Messiah can move forward. It will indeed be "good news" for us when we see that day arrive when the Devil will get what's coming to him!

And there is yet more "good news" in the proclamation of the Feast of Shavuot. The Appointed Time of the Feast of Tabernacles was a celebration of the time when Elohim "lived among men" while he tabernacled with Israel in a tent while they wandered through the wilderness. It also was fulfilled when Elohim in human flesh, in the person of Messiah Yeshua, "lived among men" because he was born on the appointed day - he tabernacled in human flesh (see John 1:16), the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. And this day is "good news" for us because it pictures and is fulfilled by the reign of Messiah on earth, as Elohim once again will be "living among men" in the person of Yeshua the Messiah.

So Paul's declaration that the gospel is the "**death, burial and resurrection of Messiah**" is just a summary in capsule form of the Gospel of the Scriptures. His death and resurrection are the initial events of fulfillment of the complete redemption which Elohim is performing through Messiah for us. In fact, the Gospel is much more than the "death, burial and resurrection of Messiah." Elsewhere Paul describes and

defines the "gospel" in many other terms.

The Gospel Proclaimed Through the Law

We have already mentioned above that Paul's Gospel message of righteousness by faith is revealed and explained in Deuteronomy 30, where the righteousness of Elohim consists in the commandments of the Covenant which are regarded by Mosheh as "**not too difficult**" nor are they "**too remote.**" Rather, the call to obedience to the commandments of the Covenant are described as "**near you, in your mouth and in your heart.**" Paul writes,

Moreover, the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Messiah down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Messiah up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we preach) - (Romans 10:6-8, citing Devarim 30:11-14).

Let's take a closer look at the Gospel as revealed in Devarim 28-30 so that we may more fully understand what previous generations of Christian theologians and teachers have not grasped.

As the second generation from the exodus from Egypt of the sons of Israel were preparing to enter into the promised land, Mosheh was reiterating the Covenant given to all Israel at Sinai. He was reviewing the Covenant which Elohim has offered their fathers, who subsequently forfeited the promises through unbelief (their disobedience). The offering of covenant relationship could be a blessing or a curse to Israel, depending upon their response to it. If they were to choose to obey the covenant and walk in Yehovah's ways, all manner of blessing was promised them. But if they choose to disobey Him and go their own way, the offering of Covenant was to become a curse to them, because Yehovah promised them all manner of curses if they were to disobey.

Deuteronomy 28: The Blessings for Obedience and Curses for Disobedience

The blessings of obedience are stated as follows:

If you indeed obey Yehovah your Elohim and are careful to observe all his commandments I am giving you today, Yehovah your Elohim will elevate you above all the nations of the earth. All these blessings will come to you in abundance if you obey Yehovah your Elohim: You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the field. Your children will be blessed, as well as the produce of your soil, the offspring of your livestock, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your mixing bowl will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. Yehovah will cause your enemies who attack you to be struck down before you; they will attack you from one direction but flee from you in seven different directions. Yehovah will decree

blessing for you with respect to your barns and in everything you do; yes, he will bless you in the land he is giving you. Yehovah will designate you as his set-apart people just as he promised you, if you keep his commandments and obey him. Then all the peoples of the earth will see that you belong to Yehovah, and they will respect you. Yehovah will greatly multiply your children, the offspring of your livestock, and the produce of your soil in the land which he promised your ancestors he would give you. Yehovah will open for you his good treasure house, the heavens, to give you rain for the land in its season and to bless all you do; you will lend to many nations but you will not borrow from any. Yehovah will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always end up at the top and not at the bottom, if you obey his commandments which I am urging you today to be careful to do (Devarim 28:1-13).

These blessings with which the Almighty promised to bless all Israel **were conditional**. Only those who continue in obedience to his commandments were to receive these blessings.

It can hardly be denied that all these blessings on the obedient ones is indeed "Good News." This proclamation of Good News was to be performed in every household every day. The Torah instructs us this way:

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your minds. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

The path to the blessings was to rehearse the goodness and compassion of Elohim every day, and throughout every day - when you get up and when you lie down, when you sit and home and when you walk along the road. By keeping in mind all his commandments, it was in one's mind to do them.

But Yehovah also promised curses to those who would choose to disobey the commandments and go their own way:

But if you ignore Yehovah your Elohim and are not careful to keep all his commandments and rules I am giving you today, then all these curses will come upon you in full force: You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the field. Your basket and your mixing bowl will be cursed. Your children will be cursed, as well as the produce of your soil, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks. You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out. Yehovah will send on you a curse, confusing you and opposing you in everything you undertake until you are destroyed and quickly perish because of the evil of your deeds, in that you have forsaken me. Yehovah will plague you with deadly diseases until he has completely removed you from the land you are about to possess. He will afflict you with weakness, fever, inflammation, infection, sword, blight, and mildew; these will attack you until you perish. The sky above your heads will be bronze and the earth beneath you iron. Yehovah will make the rain of your land powder and dust; it will come down on you from the sky until you are destroyed. Yehovah will allow you to be struck down before your enemies; you will attack them from one direction but flee from them in seven directions and

will become an object of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth. Your carcasses will be food for every bird of the sky and wild animal of the earth, and there will be no one to chase them off. Yehovah will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, eczema, and scabies, all of which cannot be healed. Yehovah will also subject you to madness, blindness, and confusion of mind. You will feel your way along at noon like the blind person does in darkness and you will not succeed in anything you do; you will be constantly oppressed and continually robbed, with no one to save you. You will be engaged to a woman and another man will rape her. You will build a house but not live in it. You will plant a vineyard but not even begin to use it. Your ox will be slaughtered before your very eyes but you will not eat of it. Your donkey will be stolen from you as you watch and will not return to you. Your flock of sheep will be given to your enemies and there will be no one to save you. Your sons and daughters will be given to another people while you look on in vain all day, and you will be powerless to do anything about it. As for the produce of your land and all your labor, a people you do not know will consume it, and you will be only oppressed and crushed for the rest of your lives. You will go insane from seeing all this. (Devarim 28:16-34).

Note that it is Yehovah who is causing all these curses to come upon all those who reject his ways and refuse to walk in his commandments. Because the protection of Yehovah is not on the disobedient, all these curses come their way.

To drive home the point and to be very clear about the consequences of disobedience, the list of curses continues:

Yehovah will afflict you in your knees and on your legs with painful boils that you will be unable to heal--from the sole of your feet to your head. Yehovah will force you and your king whom you will appoint over you to go to a people whom you and your ancestors have not known and you will serve other elohim of wood and stone there. You will become an occasion of horror, a proverb, and an object of ridicule to all the peoples to whom Yehovah will drive you. You will take much seed to the field but gather little harvest, because the locust will consume it. You will plant vineyards and cultivate them, but you will not drink wine or gather in grapes, because the worm will eat them. You will have olive trees throughout your territory but you will not anoint yourself with olive oil, because the olives will drop off the trees while still unripe. You will bear sons and daughters but not keep them because they will be taken into captivity. Whirring locusts will take over every tree and all the produce of your soil. The foreigner who resides among you will become higher and higher over you and you will become lower and lower. He will lend to you but you will not lend to him; he will become the head and you will become the tail! All these curses will fall on you, pursuing and overtaking you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey Yehovah your Elohim by keeping his commandments and rules that he has given you. These curses will be a perpetual sign and wonder with reference to you and your descendants. Because you have not served Yehovah your Elohim joyfully and wholeheartedly with the abundance of everything you have, instead in hunger, thirst, nakedness, and poverty you will serve your enemies whom Yehovah will send against you. They will place an iron yoke on your neck until they have destroyed you (Devarim 28:35-48).

The Almighty promises to cause all these horrible things to come upon those who claim to be his, but who refuse to serve him by obeying his commandments. The end result of these curses is exile, a scattering of Israel among the nations of the world, and ultimately, separation from Elohim and from his promises for good.

This is what will happen: Just as Yehovah delighted to do good for you and make you numerous, he will take delight in destroying and decimating you. You will be uprooted from the land that you are about to possess. Yehovah will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other elohim that neither you nor your ancestors have known, elohim of wood and stone. Among those nations you will have no rest nor will there be a place of peaceful rest for the soles of your feet, for there Yehovah will give you an anxious heart, failing eyesight, and a spirit of despair. Your life will hang in doubt before you; you will be terrified by night and day and will have no certainty of surviving from one day to the next (Devarim 28:63-66).

We have seen in history how that this is exactly what happened to Israel. The northern kingdom of Israel, which was always following an idolatrous path, was taken into exile by the Assyrians around 740 BCE. These nine and one half tribes of Israel were scattered over all the nations of the world, and to this very day, they have not yet returned as an identifiable people to the Promised Land.

The nation of Yehudah experienced a different history. Though exiled to Babylon around 586 BCE, they, in part, returned to the Land and have maintained to this day their unique identity as "Jews." Though they still are not living in obedience to the written Scriptures (they obey their own Oral Torah made up of Rabbinic law and tradition, not Scriptural Law), they have laid claim to the land of Israel. We see in the Jewish history that they, as a people, have experienced all the curses which Yehovah has promised his disobedient people.

Deuteronomy 30:18-20: Obedience to Elohim Brings Life and Blessing

But, even in spite of all those curses which do fall upon the disobedient, there is still good news! The Gospel is proclaimed, even to the disobedient:

When you have experienced all these things, both the blessings and the curses I have set before you, you will reflect upon them in all the nations where Yehovah your Elohim has banished you. Then if you and your descendants turn to Yehovah your Elohim and obey him with your whole mind and being just as I am commanding you today, Yehovah your Elohim will reverse your captivity and have pity on you. He will turn and gather you from all the peoples among whom he has scattered you. Even if your exiles are in the most distant land, from there Yehovah your Elohim will gather you and bring you back. Then he will bring you to the land your ancestors possessed and you also will possess it; he will do better for you and multiply you more than he did your ancestors. Yehovah your Elohim will also cleanse your heart and the hearts of your descendants so that you may love him with all your heart and soul and so that you may live. Then

Yehovah your Elohim will put all these curses on your enemies, on those who hate you and persecute you. You will return and obey Yehovah, keeping all his commandments I am giving you today. Yehovah your Elohim will make the labor of your hands abundantly successful and multiply your children, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil. For Yehovah your Elohim will once more rejoice over you just as he rejoiced over your ancestors, if you obey Yehovah your Elohim and keep his commandments and rules that are written in this scroll of the instruction. But you must turn to him with your whole mind and being (Devarim 30:1-10).

This is a very clear declaration of the Gospel. Here, then, is the Gospel as it is delivered in the Torah: If you repent and return to Yehovah with your whole being and keep his commandments, all the blessings of Elohim will come your way as he cleanses your heart and forgives all your sins.

The goal of the Gospel is to bring about "the obedience of faithfulness among all the Gentiles." This is in agreement with Paul's description of the gospel in Romans 10 where he ties the Gospel as preached in Torah with the message of righteousness by faith (read, "faithfulness"). In Devarim 30, the goal of the gospel is to bring about the obedience of all who join Elohim in covenant relationship:

Today I invoke heaven and earth as a witness against you that I have set life and death, blessing and curse, before you. Therefore choose life so that you and your descendants may live! I also call on you to love Yehovah your Elohim, to obey him and be loyal to him, for he gives you life and enables you to live continually in the land Yehovah promised to give to your ancestors Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'acov" (Devarim 30:18-20).

In the gospel, "righteousness of Elohim" is obtained through faithfulness (i.e., obedience to the commandments).

It is at this point in the narrative where Mosheh describes this offer as "not too difficult to do" and "near you."

This commandment I am giving you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it too remote. It is not in heaven, as though one must say, "Who will go up to heaven to get it for us and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" And it is not across the sea, as though one must say, "Who will cross over to the other side of the sea and get it for us and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" For the thing is very near you--it is in your mouth and mind so that you can do it. Look! I have set before you today life and prosperity on the one hand, and death and disaster on the other. What I am commanding you today is to love Yehovah your Elohim, to walk in his ways, and to obey his commandments, his rules, and his right-rulings. Then you will live and become numerous and Yehovah your Elohim will bless you in the land which you are about to possess (Devarim 30:11-16).

Here is more good news. Fidelity to the Covenant commandments of Yehovah are "not too difficult." The commands are "very near you. It is in your mouth and mind so that you CAN do it" The only requirement is to "love Yehovah your Elohim" and to "walk in his ways" and "obey his commandments, his rules and his right-rulings."

Romans 1:1-5: Paul's Gospel Brings About Obedience to Elohim

We have seen that in the Law and the Prophets, the Gospel is the message that the righteousness of Elohim has been revealed from heaven through the revelation of the Instructions given at Sinai. Paul quotes Devarim 30 in Romans 9 to show that the righteousness of Elohim is found in the commandments, which "**if a man does, he shall live by them**" (Yechezqel [Ezekiel] 20:13). The Gospel is offered to all Israel conditionally. If they accept and obey them, they will receive all the blessings of Elohim. But if they refuse to obey, they will be cursed and eventually exiled among the nations to serve all the false gods of the heathen.

For example Paul opens his letter to the Romans by connecting his gospel to the message calling Gentiles to obedience:

From Paul, a slave of Messiah Yeshua, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of Elohim. This gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the set-apart scriptures, concerning his Son Through him we have received favor and our apostleship to bring about the obedience of faithfulness among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name (Romans 1:1-3, 5).

Again, Paul points out that his Gospel is the same Gospel that is proclaimed by the prophets in the set-apart Scriptures. We saw (above) that Moses taught the Gospel of the righteousness of Elohim in Devarim 30.

Going back to Romans 10, we see Paul describing the source of "faith" (faithfulness):

But not all have obeyed the good news, for Yesha'yahu says, "Who has believed our report?" Consequently faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the preached word of Messiah (10:16-17).

Here, Paul notes, the "good news" is not always obeyed. The relationship between "obeying" and "believing" is here established. One who truly "believes" the good news is the one who "obeys" it.

Paul later closes his letter to the Romans with a similar declaration:

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Yeshua Messiah, according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for long ages, but now is disclosed, and through the prophetic scriptures has been made known to all the nations, according to the command of the eternal Elohim, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise Elohim, through Yeshua Messiah, be splendor forever! Amen. (Romans 16:25-27).

Paul's Gospel is a proclamation about Messiah which was disclosed through the Scriptures (the Law and the Prophets) and results in the Gentiles coming to the obedience of faithfulness.

What is this obedience? And what is to be obeyed? Clearly, "faith" (faithfulness) comes from what is heard; that is, the commandments which proceed from the mouth of Elohim. Therefore, the

commandments are the part of the Gospel that is to be obeyed, and faithfulness in obeying the commands is the path to righteousness. This is the natural progression: One who comes to Elohim to join him in covenant hears the stipulations of the covenant (the commandments), practices them, and thereby is participating in righteousness, because the commandments are what sets us apart unto Elohim in righteousness.

Since the commandments are themselves righteous, and outline for us righteous behavior, the one who is doing the commandments is righteous, because he is participating in righteousness. Just as Yochanan (John) says,

Little children, let no one deceive you: The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as Yeshua is righteous (1 John 3:7).

Note that he doesn't say that we are righteous because we are in Messiah. Instead, he says, the one who practices righteousness is righteous as Yeshua is righteous. Those who are in Messiah are righteous, not just because Messiah is righteous, but because those who are "in Messiah" are following Messiah and walking in his footsteps by obeying the commandments. Therefore, "righteousness by faith(fulness)" is fulfilled when we practice doing the commandments as the proper faith walk, just as Messiah showed us and taught us.

Paul claims as "my gospel" the message which calls all Gentiles to obedience to the commandments:

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Yeshua Messiah, according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for long ages, but now is disclosed, and through the prophetic scriptures has been made known to all the nations, according to the command of the eternal Elohim, to bring about the obedience of faithfulness-- (Romans 16:25,26).

Paul's gospel is the one that is revealed "**through the prophetic scriptures,**" which is to say, the Law and the Prophets present this righteousness. This is the gospel message given through Moses that we are to "love Yehovah your Elohim, to obey him and be loyal to him, for he gives you life and enables you to live continually" (Devarim 30:20). And this is the Gospel as Paul describes it in Romans 10! Life, blessing and peace (forgiveness of sins) is obtained when we repent and begin living in obedience to the commandments of Scripture.

The Gospel Proclaimed By the Prophets

Paul affirms that his Gospel is the very same Gospel as spoken by the prophets:

From Paul, a slave of Messiah Yeshua, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of Elohim. This gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the set-apart scriptures, concerning his Son (Romans 1:1-3, 5).

Where do the prophets of old proclaim the Everlasting Gospel - the Gospel that Paul is proclaiming?

The Prophets have much to say about the end time re-gathering of the lost tribes of the house of Israel. This is all part of the Good News that Messiah's redemption was to accomplish in restoring Israel as the people of Elohim. The prophesy of Devarim 28-30 plainly delineates the exiling of Israel due to their disobedience to Covenant. And this is where we find them, literally on earth, today.

Yehovah explains through Yechezqel (Ezekiel) why he scattered the House of Israel:

I am Yehovah your Elohim; follow my rules, observe my laws, and obey them. Treat my Sabbaths as set-apart and they will be a reminder of our relationship, and then you will know that I am Yehovah your Elohim."

But the children rebelled against me, did not follow my rules, did not observe my laws by obeying them (the one who obeys them will live by them), and desecrated my Sabbaths. I announced that I would pour out my rage on them and fully vent my anger against them in the wilderness. But I refrained from doing so, and acted instead for the sake of my reputation, so that I would not be profaned before the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. I also solemnly vowed to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the lands. I did this because they disobeyed my laws, rejected my rules, desecrated my Sabbaths, and looked longingly at their fathers' idols. I also gave them decrees which were not good and laws by which they could not live. (Yechezqel 20:19-25).

In verse 20, Yehovah restates his requirements as stipulated in the Covenant: "follow my rules, observe my laws, and obey them." He then brings his case against Israel: they "rebelled against me, did not follow my rules, did not observe my laws by obeying them." For this reason, he vowed to "scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the lands." And the rest is history.

Accordingly, Mosheh prophesied to that second generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt that one day the nation would go astray from Yehovah. But the Good News is that in the distant future, when they repent and turn back again to Yehovah, then he would be faithful to keep his promise to them:

After you have produced children and grandchildren and have been in the land a long time, if you become corrupt and make an image of any kind and do other evil things before Yehovah your Elohim that enrage him, I invoke heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that you will surely and swiftly be removed from the very land you are about to cross the Yordan to possess. You will not last long there because you will surely be annihilated. Then Yehovah will scatter you among the peoples and there will be very few of you among the nations where Yehovah will drive you. There you will worship elohim made by human hands--wood and stone that can neither see, hear, eat, nor smell. But if you seek Yehovah your Elohim from there, you will find him, if, indeed, you seek him with all your heart and soul. In your distress when all these things happen to you in the latter days, if you return to Yehovah your Elohim and obey him (for he is a merciful Elohim), he will not let you down or destroy you, for he cannot forget the covenant with your ancestors that he confirmed by oath to them (Devarim 4:25-31).

And so it was that Israel did go astray, as Yehovah had said they would. And when they went astray, the

Almighty exiled them and scattered them around the world.

But the Good News in all this is that Yehovah also said that a distant generation who would repent of their transgressing of His Torah would be re-gathered to the Land of promise. This is the message which the prophets proclaimed in their writings....

Ezekiel 37: The Good News of the End Time Re-Gathering

The two-stick prophesy of Yechezqel [Ezekiel] 37 tells of the time in our near future when Yehovah will bring back the exiled but now repenting sons of Israel back to the Land to unite them with a repenting house of Yehudah.:

The word of Yehovah came to me: "As for you, son of man, take one branch, and write on it, 'For Yehudah, and for the sons of Yisrael associated with him.' Then take another branch and write on it, 'For Yoseph, the branch of Ephraim and all the house of Yisrael associated with him.' Join them as one stick; they will be as one in your hand. When your people say to you,, 'Will you not tell us what these things mean?' tell them, 'This is what Adonai Yehovah says: Look, I am taking the branch of Yoseph which is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Yisrael and his associates, and I will place the stick of Yehudah on it and make them into one stick, they will be one in my hand.' The sticks you write on will be in your hand in front of them. Then tell them, 'This is what Adonai Yehovah says: Look, I am taking the sons of Yisrael from among the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from round about and bring them to their land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Yisrael, and one king will rule over them all. They will never again be two nations and never again be divided into two kingdoms. They will not defile themselves with their idols, their detestable things, and all their rebellious deeds. I will save them from all their unfaithfulness by which they sinned. I will purify them; they will become my people and I will become their Elohim. 'My servant David will be king over them; there will be one shepherd for all of them. In my right-rulings (mishpatim) they will walk and and my rules (chukot) they will keep and they will do them. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Ya'acov, in which your fathers lived; they will live in it, they and their sons and their grandsons forever. David my servant will be prince over them forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be a perpetual covenant with them. I will establish them, increase their numbers, and place my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their Elohim, and they will be my people. Then, when my sanctuary is among them forever, the nations will know that I, Yehovah, set-apart Yisrael.'" (Yechezqel 37:15-28).



To this day, the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Yehudah have never been united as they were in the days of King Solomon. Yehovah sent the Northern Kingdom into exile by the Assyrians and scattered them among the nations of the world. And the Southern Kingdom - the people of

Yehudah - were also scattered around the world until this past century. Since the establishment of the nation of Israel in 1947, some of the Jews have returned from their exile.

But this prophesy states that Yehovah will bring back the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone and gather them back to their land. At that time, those repented and re-gathered sons of Israel will obey the commandments of Yehovah by walking in the right-rulings (his *mishpatim*) and keeping the rules (*chukot*). These people will then be obeying the Covenant which Yehovah offered people of all generations, just as the prophesy of Devarim 30 tells us. Though the Southern Kingdom (Yehudah) has returned in part, in our days, the Northern Kingdom has not yet returned from their exile.

In another word of Yehovah to the prophet Yirmyahu (Jeremiah), Yehovah explains the conditions by which he will forgive his rebellious people and re-gather them from all around the world where he has scattered them:

'For I know what I have planned for you,' says Yehovah. 'I have plans to prosper you, not to harm you. I have plans to give you a future filled with hope. When you call out to me and come to me in prayer, I will hear your prayers. When you seek me in prayer and worship, you will find me available to you. If you seek me with all your heart and soul, I will make myself available to you,' says Yehovah. 'Then I will reverse your fortunes and will **regather you from all the nations and all the places where I have exiled you,' says Yehovah. 'I will **bring you back** to the place from which I exiled you.' (Yirmyahu 29:11-14).**

When his rebellious people repent of their wayward ways and seek Him with all their being by agreeing to obey the commandments of the Covenant, Yehovah will forgive them and re-gather them back to their homeland:

The other Prophets confirm this scattering of Israel and their eventual re-gathering back to the Land.

Therefore say: 'This is what Adonai Yehovah says: Although I have removed them far away among the nations and have scattered them through foreign lands, I have been a sanctuary for them for a short while among the lands where they have gone.' Therefore say: 'This is what Adonai Yehovah says: I will **regather you from the peoples and will assemble you from the lands where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Yisrael.' When they return to it, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their bodies and I will give them a heart of flesh, so that they may obey my rules and keep my right-rulings and observe them. Then they will be my people, and I will be their Elohim (Yechezqel 11:16-20).**

The favor of Yehovah and the re-gathering of his people is always connected to their repenting and their willingness to begin to obey his Covenant commandments - the laws and right-rulings of the Torah.

In another proclamation of the Good News, the re-gathering of the scattered House of Israel is announced:

Hear what Yehovah has to say, nations. And proclaim it in the faraway lands along the sea. Say, "The one who scattered Yisrael will **regather them. He will**

watch over his people like a shepherd watches over his flock." For Yehovah will set the descendants of Ya'acov free. He will secure their release from those who had overpowered them. They will come and shout for joy on Mount Zion. They will be radiant with joy over the good things Yehovah provides, the grain, the fresh wine, the olive oil, the young sheep and calves he has given to them. They will be like a well-watered garden and will not grow faint and weary any more (Yirmyahu 31:10-12).

And again,

I will certainly **regather my people from all the countries where I have exiled them in my anger, fury, and great wrath. I will **bring them back** to this place and let them live here in safety. They will be my people, and I will be their Elohim. I will give them a single-minded purpose to live in a way that always shows respect for me. They will want to do that for their own good and the good of the children who descend from them (Yirmyahu 32:37-39).**

And yet again,

Then I myself will **regather those of my people who are still left alive from all the countries where I have driven them. I will bring them back to their homeland. They will greatly increase in number (Yirmyahu 23:3).**

The Good News of the New Testament is that Messiah has accomplished the work of redemption such that those who repent and return in obedience to all of Elohim's commandments as written in the law of Mosheh will be brought back to the Promised Land which is the inheritance of the people of Elohim. Messiah's work of atonement has made it possible for these prophesies to be fulfilled in our day. And his "fulfillment" of the Law and his correct interpretation of it make it possible for us to understand and obey the Covenant commands of Yehovah.

4th Gospel 10:16: Messiah's Message Includes the Re-gathering of the House of Israel

In fact, this re-gathering of the lost sheep was one of the messages Messiah proclaimed while he taught his Gospel of the Kingdom. He spoke of his need to "find" the "lost" sheep of the house of Israel. To the Canaanite woman who approached him, he said,

"I was sent only to the lost sheep of Yisrael." (Matthew 15:24)

And in Luke 15 are recorded several stories of the "lost" ones who were found.

"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons

who do not need to repent." (Luke 15:4-7)

Next, he tells of the woman who lost a valuable coin and searched until she found it. Then, a story of the prodigal son who left his father's house, lived riotously, came to his senses and came home. The father explains the need to celebrate:

For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. (Luke 15:24)

And finally, the father explains to the other brother why it was appropriate to celebrate the prodigal son's return:

But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

What is Yeshua Messiah referring to in these stories? Surely he always made allusions to the Scriptures - the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. The Psalmist speaks of those going astray into disobedience as "lost sheep."

I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands. (Ps 119:176)

And the prophets also speak of those who have wandered from the commandments as "lost sheep." Take Jeremiah, for example:

My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam on the mountains. They wandered over mountain and hill and forgot their own resting place. (Yirmeyahu 50:6)

And Ezekiel speaks of the false shepherds and their sheep:

The word of Yehovah came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Yisrael; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what Adonai Yehovah says: Woe to the shepherds of Yisrael who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. (Yechezqel 34:1-6)

Again, the prophet speaks of the scattered house of Israel as "lost sheep." But the prophet goes on to speak about how Yehovah would seek out and find these lost sheep:

I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. (Yechezqel 34:16)

This seems to be exactly what Yeshua is talking about in his addresses to Israel about "lost sheep."

Yeshua's gospel message included another reference to the prophecies of the re-gathering of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In the Fourth Gospel, chapter 10, he makes several references to the Good Shepherd, the sheepfold and the sheep. And he speaks of another sheepfold:

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Again, he was clearly alluding to the Prophets who spoke of the "lost sheep" of Israel.

But what did he mean by "sheep that are not of this sheep pen"? No doubt he was speaking about the two stick prophesy of Ezekiel 37, which foretold of the time when Yehovah would gather the lost sheep from Yehudah (the Southern Kingdom) and the lost sheep from Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom) and bring them together as one nation:

Look, I am taking the branch of Yoseph which is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Yisrael and his associates, and I will place the stick of Yehudah on it and make them into one stick, they will be one in my hand.'

and then,

Look, I am taking the sons of Yisrael from among the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from round about and bring them to their land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Yisrael, and one king will rule over them all. They will never again be two nations and never again be divided into two kingdoms.

While Yeshua was primarily ministering to the Jews of his day (the remnant of the Southern Kingdom), he made reference to the "other sheepfold" - the scattered Northern Kingdom - whom his redemption and reconciliation also aimed at. These "sheep of another fold" were the scattered tribes of Israel who were "lost" in the world.

Yeshua's Good News is that he had come for "all Israel" - not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles who were the scattered house of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Thus, he ministered to Gentiles, too! Paul has much to say about the Gentiles and their part in the Body of Messiah - the re-gathered Houses of Israel.

Paul's Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom!

As we further study Paul's "Gospel of Christ" we realize that it is the same gospel as that which is called "the Gospel of the Kingdom." This Gospel tells of Messiah fulfilling the Law and the Prophets. John the Baptist, the Master, and Paul each proclaimed this gospel of the kingdom. And in light of the soon coming Kingdom of God, they each called people to repentance.

Yeshua told his disciples that the Gospel of the Kingdom would be proclaimed all the way to the end times. As he described what was to come in the future, he indicated that the Gospel he preached is the Gospel that needed to be proclaimed to all people:

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

And so it is that the true Gospel that Yeshua endorsed is the Gospel proclaimed by the Law and the Prophets. This is also the Gospel that Paul proclaimed.

The Gospel as a Call to Repentance - "Turn From Evil"

The Gospel as preached by Yochanan the Immerser ("John the Baptist") is identified in Matthew:

In those days Yochanan the Immerser came into the wilderness of Judea proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore produce fruit that proves your repentance, and don't think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Avraham as our father.' For I tell you that Elohim can raise up children for Avraham from these stones! Even now the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water, for repentance, but the one coming after me is more powerful than I am--I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Set-apart Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the storehouse, but the chaff he will burn up with inextinguishable fire." (Mattityahu 3:2, 7-12).

The main thrust of the Immerser's Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven is a call to repentance. Why? What does repentance have to do with the Gospel? Recalling the gospel message as preached in Devarim 30 gives us the connection.

The Gospel as proclaimed by Mosheh is to forsake all false worship, including idolatry and wrong living, and to obey the commandments of Yehovah. This is a very good definition of "repentance." In the Greek mind, repentance means to "change one's mind" about a thing. But, in Hebraic thought, repentance means to "stop doing wrong and start doing right." Thus, repentance is changing one's mind and doing an "about face" in your living experience. Repentance has always been an integral part of the Gospel message whenever and wherever it is preached.

Messiah Yeshua's Gospel message of the Kingdom of Elohim features a call to repentance:

From that time Yeshua began to preach this message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Mattityahu 4:17).

Yeshua went throughout all of Galil, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of disease and sickness among the people (Mattityahu 4:23).

Mark records it this way:

Now after Yochanan was imprisoned, Yeshua went into Galil and proclaimed the gospel of Elohim. He said, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of Elohim is near. Repent and believe the gospel!" (Mark 1:14,15).

Mark calls this message of repentance "the Gospel of Elohim." But Matthew calls this same message, "the Gospel of the Kingdom." These are the same gospel. The Gospel of Elohim is the Gospel of the kingdom and it consists of a message to repent of sin.

What did Messiah mean when he said, "the time is fulfilled." This, too, is part of the gospel of the kingdom. Bear in mind that the Appointed Times of Vayiqra 23 tell the story of the gospel in picture or "shadow" form. The appointed times tell the whole story of the death, burial and resurrection of Messiah, his anointing as High Priest, and his return in the clouds to gather his own in the event commonly known as "the Rapture," judge the world and establish his reign on earth. This is the aspect of the "gospel" that Messiah is referring to when he says that "the time is fulfilled." He had come to accomplish those things that the appointed times foreshadowed.

Repentance is also an integral part of Peter's gospel proclamation. When preaching on the day of Shavuot (Pentecost), he instructs the crowd gathered there.

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each one of you be baptized in the name of Yeshua Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Set-apart Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far away, as many as Yehovah our Elohim will call to himself." (Acts 2:38,39).

And in his exhortation from Solomon's Porch following the healing of the lame man, Peter says,

But the things Elohim foretold long ago through all the prophets--that his Messiah would suffer--he has fulfilled in this way. Therefore repent and turn back so that your sins may be wiped out (Acts 3:18, 19).

Repentance has to be the first step in one's walk with Elohim. Contrary to popular opinion and the teaching of most Christian ministers, Elohim does not "accept us just as we are"! He cannot. He is holy, set-apart in all his ways. He cannot allow unholy, sinful flesh to stand in his presence.

Therefore, whoever comes to Elohim to be cleansed from his sin must first repent of his sin. He must change his mind and abandon sinfulness. Repentance means turning away from sin and turning to right living. Baptism follows repentance because it is symbolic of one's cleansing from sin. This is why baptism always immediately follows repentance. So, Peter's gospel call is to "**repent and be baptized.**"

Paul's gospel also always includes repentance as its first and necessary component. While preaching in Athens, Paul concludes,

therefore, although Elohim has overlooked such times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he designated, having provided proof to everyone by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:30, 31).

This is Paul's gospel: Repent because Messiah has authenticated his work by rising from the dead.

Before King Agrippa, Paul again explains his gospel. His message to Jews and Gentiles alike is to, first of all, repent. This involves turning away from sin and turning to righteous living, by the keeping of the commandments:

"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but I declared to those in Damascus first, and then to those in Yerushalayim and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to Elohim, performing deeds consistent with repentance (Acts 26:19, 20).

The deeds consistent with repentance are, no doubt, a reference to obedience to the commandments of the Covenant.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul includes, as he always does, the initial act of repentance, which is the first step in fellowship with Elohim:

Or do you have contempt for the wealth of his kindness, forbearance, and patience, and yet do not know that Elohim's kindness leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4)

The kindness of Elohim draws us to himself and convinces us of the need to repent - turn from sin to begin to do the good works of the commandments. Repentance is at the very core of Paul's Gospel. In view of Messiah's death on the tree and his rising from the dead, repent of your sins and perform the righteous commandments of your Maker.

The Gospel in the Great Commission - "Obey the Commandments"

The "Great Commission," as Messiah's final instructions to his disciples are often called, contains the same Gospel message which we have been seeing from each of the genres of Scripture. Matthew records the more popular and familiar version of these final instructions:

Then Yeshua came up and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Set-apart Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mattityahu 28:18-20).

The primary commandment here, as anyone who knows a little Greek grammar can tell you, is to *make disciples*. Unfortunately, this little point (I say facetiously) of "making disciples" seems to get lost in

all the (so-called) "evangelism" that goes on in Christian circles. My experience among Christians has shown me over and over again that Christianity places a great deal of emphasis on "getting people saved" - that is, the "numbers game" - but spend little time actually making disciples by showing them how to obey the commands of the Master. Seems to me that the commandment of the Master is to "make disciples" - it is not to "get people saved"!

What does it take to make disciples? This is answered in the rest of the "commission" given to Messiah's disciples. You make a disciple by first "baptizing" him and then by "teaching" him. Still not clear? Let's break it down to its fundamentals. Baptizing is what is done to people who have repented of their sins and have chosen to walk in the footsteps of Messiah. John says, "**but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of Elohim has been perfected. By this we know that we are in him. The one who says he resides in Elohim ought himself to walk just as Yeshua walked**" (1 John 2:5,6).

Baptism, remember, is the symbolic act which expresses ones change of mind - that one has forsaken his lifestyle of transgressing Elohim's ways, and has chosen to walk in obedience to the commandments. John also says that "**by this we know that we have come to know Elohim: if we keep his commandments. The one who says 'I have come to know Elohim' and yet does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in such a person**" (1 John 2:3,4).

When the one becoming a disciple makes this choice, the next step is to find out all about the commandments which he is instructed to obey. Messiah Yeshua commissioned his followers to make disciples by "**teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**" (Matt. 28:19). It is amazing how many Christians overlook this "minor" point in the commission (there I go again, being facetious). Messiah has commanded us to "(1) teach them, (2) to obey, (3) everything, (4) I have commanded you." Let's go over these four things in detail so that we actually are doing what was commanded in the Messiah's "Great Commission."

First, a disciple must be taught. The substance, I think everyone would agree, is the Scriptures. We must teach the Bible or else the follower of Messiah won't know what exactly he is supposed to do and how he is supposed to walk in faith. Second, we must teach people "to obey." This is at the very core of "faith" (read "faithfulness"). Fidelity to Messiah is obedience to him. John puts it this way: "**If we say we have fellowship with him and yet keep on walking in the darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth**" (1 John 1:6). Righteousness by faith (read "faithfulness") is "imputed" to those who are faithful in their walk of obedience to his commandments.

Third, we are told to obey "everything." He does not give us the option of picking and choosing which ones we want to obey. We are told to obey "everything." And fourth, "his commandments" are what we are taught to obey. So, then, what are his commandments? Just the "New Testament" stuff? or does this include "Old Testament" commandments? Let's answer this by finding out which commandments Messiah Yeshua has commanded. Fair enough?

Who gave the commandments on Mt. Sinai? Elohim. Right? Yes, right. But was it "the Father" or "the Son" who gave the commandments on Sinai. Because, if the "Son" gave those commandments, then when he instructed his followers to "**make disciples**" by "**teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**," then he must have been talking about the commandments of the "Old Covenant," too. Right?

When Elohim appeared to Mosheh, who was that? The Father or the Son? Yochanan tells us that

No one has ever seen Elohim. The only one, himself Elohim, who is in bosom of the Father, has made Elohim known (John 1:18).

What John is telling us, if we will have "ears to hear," is that Elohim the Father, who is spirit, has never been seen. He cannot be seen because he is not of this creation. He is spirit. It is the Son's "job" to reveal him, that is, to appear and show Elohim. Whenever Elohim is seen, it is the "Son" who is appearing.

We have additional "New Testament" proof that this is so. When we turn to Paul's writing to the Corinthians, we have him explaining that Messiah accompanied our forefathers as they journeyed through the wilderness following the exodus from Mitzrayim (Egypt):

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Mosheh in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they were all drinking from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Messiah (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

The nation of Israel was accompanied by the Presence of Yehovah as they exited Mitzrayim and wandered around the desert. Paul is informing us that the Presence was "the Son." The Messiah was the rock that gave them drink. And it was the Messiah that they were testing when they rebelled against the Presence of Yehovah:

But Elohim was not pleased with most of them, for they were cut down in the wilderness. These things happened as examples for us, so that we will not crave evil things as they did. So do not be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." And let us not be immoral, as some of them were, and twenty-three thousand died in a single day. And let us not put Messiah to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by snakes (1 Corinthians 10:5-9).

Elohim came to them and spoke to them and appeared to them. But that was Elohim "the Son" that appeared to them, because Elohim the Father is Spirit and is never seen.

That being evident from Scripture, its not difficult to now understand that it was Messiah, Elohim "the Son" who also appeared to them at Mt. Sinai and gave them His commandments - the Ten Commandments - the commandments of the Covenant. So when Messiah Yeshua says, "**teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**" (Matt. 28:19), he is speaking of all the commandments of Scripture. We have not properly "made disciples" of anyone until we have taught them to observe and keep all the commandments that Messiah has commanded, which are the commandments of the Sinai Covenant.

A more compelling proof that the commandments of Yeshua are the Ten Commandments and the Torah in general, is what Yeshua himself had taught his disciples,

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Torah (Law of Sinai) or the prophets. I have not come to abolish these things but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter will pass from the law until everything takes place. So anyone who breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do so will be called least in the

kingdom of heaven, but whoever obeys them and teaches others to do so will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mattityahu 5:17-19).

Messiah clearly explained to his disciples that he was not doing away with the commandments of Sinai, which he calls "the Torah." In fact, he emphasizes the need to be teaching these very same commandments down to the last detail and including the "very least" of the commandments given at Sinai. Those who teach otherwise will be called "Least" in his kingdom.

Yeshua had also told his disciples that the words that he spoke are not his own, but his Father's:

The Yehudim were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" Yeshua answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. (4th Gospel 7:15-16)

So, it stands to reason that since Messiah Yeshua taught his disciples only what the Father told him, and that it was his mission to teach and live the Torah in all its detail, that the commandments being referenced in the Great Commission are the commandments of the Torah.

The Great Commission, then, is Messiah Yeshua's charge to his followers to "**make disciples**" by **baptizing** the repentant ones and **teaching them to obey all the commandments of Yehovah**. The true disciple will always forsake transgressing the Law of Elohim and walk in full obedience to all the Law and commandments Elohim gave at Sinai. Thus, the Gospel that Yeshua taught includes the Commission to teach all his followers to obey the commandments of Yehovah.

Revelation 14:6: The Everlasting Gospel

In the beginning of this study we noted that Paul says the Gospel he is proclaiming is "**from first to last**" and is for all people. Again, Romans 1:16-17:

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of Elohim for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Yehudi, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from Elohim is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Thus, the gospel of faith that Paul is proclaiming must be a gospel that we can find from the beginning of the Bible all the way through and to the end. In other words, Paul is referring to the Everlasting Gospel, which is proclaimed from Genesis to Revelation.

The designation "eternal gospel" or "everlasting gospel" is found in the book of Revelation:

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, and he had an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth--to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He declared in a loud voice: "Fear Elohim and give him splendor, because the hour of his judgment has arrived, and worship the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water!" (14:6,7).

The Eternal Gospel is here detailed as consisting of two components: fearing Elohim and worshipping the Creator. Given that this Gospel proclamation is "eternal" then this message is one which has always and will always be proclaimed - including during the present age. This message of fearing Elohim and worshipping the Creator must be for Messiah's disciples also, because it is "eternal."

This Everlasting Gospel, as described in Revelation, brings to mind the last two verses of the Book of Ecclesiastes, in which the writer is summarizing the purpose for which this wise man wrote down his musings:

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear Elohim and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For Elohim will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

It's interesting to note that just as Ecclesiastes summarizes man's response to the living Elohim in light of his inevitable judgment is to be one of fearing Elohim and keeping his commands, the Revelation also exhorts us to fear Elohim and worship him in view of his soon coming judgment. Both passages suggest that we owe our Creator the respect and awe which results in our worship of him and our obedience to him. This is the whole of what matters in our life.

What does the teaching about "fearing Elohim" consist of? We find the command to fear Elohim scattered throughout the Torah. To fear Elohim means to respect his ability to do the good things he promises and to do the bad things he has promised toward the disobedient. Fear of Yehovah springs from the knowledge of his will and the understanding that he will do what he says. A human father is feared by his children if he sets the rules and boundaries, establishes punishment for breaking the boundaries and then carries out the punishment. Same with our heavenly Father. Fear of Elohim means adjusting our behavior in light of the real sense of consequences for our lifestyle choices.

So when we read of "fearing Elohim" in the Law, it is accompanied with instruction about obedience to the rules:

You must not curse a deaf person or put a stumbling block in front of a blind person. You must fear your Elohim; I am Yehovah (Vayiqra 19:14).

You must rise in the presence of the aged, honor the presence of an elder, and fear your Elohim. I am Yehovah (Vayiqra 19:32).

No one is to oppress his fellow citizen, but you must fear your Elohim, because I am Yehovah your Elohim. You must obey my rules and my regulations; you must be sure to keep them so that you may live securely in the land (Vayiqra 25:17,18).

Fear of Elohim means to obey his instructions in light of the fact that there is blessing in it for you when you do obey but punishment if you don't.

This point is brought home in the section of teachings about the promised blessings toward those who obey the commandments of the Covenant, and the curses towards those who disobey the commandments:

If you refuse to obey all the words of this instruction, the things written in this

scroll, and refuse to fear this glorious and awesome name, Yehovah your Elohim, then Yehovah will increase your punishments and those of your descendants-- great and long-lasting afflictions and severe, enduring illnesses (Devarim 28:58,59)

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Here, refusing to fear Yehovah is cleared equated with refusing to obey all the words of this instruction. To fear is to obey.

What, then, does it mean to "**worship the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water**"? Again, "worship" is defined by the instructions of the first four of the ten commandments. We are commanded not to have other gods, not to carve or form an image or idol so that we may use it in our worship of him. We are commanded not to minimize or trifle his name. And we are commanded to set-apart the seventh day unto Him. In performing these four commandments, we are worshipping Elohim in truth.

But the expression, "**worship the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water**" has a special connection to the commandment about the Sabbath. The fourth commandment says to set apart the seventh day because

in six days Yehovah made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore Yehovah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it (Shemot 20:11).

Worshipping the One who made heaven and earth and the sea can only properly be done by setting apart the seventh day as a Sabbath unto Him, because the very act of doing this calls to mind the fact that He is the One who "**made heaven and earth and the sea**" in six days.

The Eternal Gospel is evidently a call to obey the eternal commandments of Elohim which have been in play since the beginning and to worship Elohim in the way he set forth in the beginning. On the day after man was created, Elohim gave him the seventh day to be set apart as a day of rest and communion with Elohim. This convention is to be proclaimed eternally. The seventh day will always be the day Elohim calls his people to stop working and to fellowship with Him. Messiah will do so during his reign on earth. And believers today NEED to participate in this rest on the seventh day as well.

The writer to the Hebrews expresses this same exhortation:

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of Elohim; for anyone who enters Elohim's rest also rests from his own work, just as Elohim did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:9-11)

The one who wants to enter into the blessings, promises and inheritance as depicted and proclaimed through the Eternal Gospel will also rest on the Sabbath day just as Elohim rested from his work. The observance of the seventh day Sabbath rest is also a component of the Eternal Gospel.

Concluding Remarks

Paul's "Gospel of Christ" includes the "death, burial and resurrection of Messiah." But it is much more than that. The Scriptures have always been proclaiming the Gospel. The Gospel is the good news that Elohim is doing a work of redemption, to buy back sinners and draw them to Himself.

Abraham proclaimed the Gospel by showing that "the righteous one will live by faithfulness." Abraham obeyed the instructions of Yehovah and was the example of faithfulness to all who will follow in his footsteps. And even the Gentiles will be brought into Covenant relationship with Messiah by walking as Abraham did.

The Law of Mosheh proclaimed the Gospel by explaining that the Word of the commandments is near you, in your heart and in your mouth. It is not difficult to reach or attain. If one will obey all the commandments Yehovah has instructed, there will be life and peace and blessing. But even those who refuse to obey and who will be subsequently scattered throughout the earth will have descendants who will repent and return to Yehovah in obedience to the Instructions of Scripture.

Mosheh also proclaimed the Gospel in shadow form by giving the Appointed Times of worship, which depict the work of redemption which Messiah is performing. His death and resurrection, enthronement as High Priest, and his return on the clouds to fulfill the promises, bring judgment on all, and establish his reign of righteousness on earth is all a part of the Gospel which all the Law and the Prophets proclaim.

John the "Baptizer" and Messiah Yeshua proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom which was a message urging people to repentance from sinful habits and to obey the written commandments of Scripture as the way of pleasing Elohim and attaining Life. Throughout his ministry, Yeshua emphasized that he had come to explain and carry out the commandments of the Law. And he taught these same commands to his disciples.

The apostle Paul proclaimed the Gospel, emphasizing the need **to bring about the obedience of faithfulness among all the Gentiles.** Peter and John, likewise, emphasize that a proper relationship with Elohim is evidenced by compliance with the commandments, and indeed that not obeying the commandments is a liar and there is no truth in that one.

This is the Eternal Gospel - the Gospel that Mosheh and all the Prophets, the Gospel that Messiah preached, and the very same Gospel that Paul and the rest of the followers of Messiah taught - that the Messiah work of redemption has provided everlasting forgiveness and pardon for sin for all who will turn from that sin (repent) and walk in the righteous commandments of Yehovah.

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