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"Teachings of Messiah" Series

*Messiah Yahusha's
Sermon on the Mount*

Teaching on the Walk of Faith from Matthew 5-7

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The Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew's gospel chapters 5-7, stands as the "Inaugural Address" of Messiah Yahusha (a.k.a. "Jesus" or "Yeshua"). Its position in Matthew's gospel as the first of many teaching discourses sets the tone for Messiah's mission on earth to men. Matthew recognizes the preeminent importance of this teaching in the ministry of Yahusha where He establishes the Law (Hebrew, *Torah* which means "Instruction") which he has come to fully explain.

From the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount to its end, the theme Messiah lays out for his disciples is the proper interpretation and observance of the Torah. He emphatically makes the case for, not only observing the Law at face value, but going further and observing the spirit of the Law, as well. The commandment is either cited or alluded to, followed by Yahusha's proper interpretation of the Law, which takes our understanding to a deeper level. He establishes the full intent of each of the commandments which he references by explaining the deeper meaning of that instruction and by exploring the proper faith walk in compliance with the Law for his disciples.

At the end of the day, the Messiah does not annul the Law, or "do away with" the Law, or suspend the Law. He most emphatically lifts up the Torah as the proper walk and lifestyle for those who follow him and the way to receive favor from Elohim (Hebrew for *God*, which means "Mighty One"). The Sermon on the Mount, when studied without theological or denominational bias, is a clear presentation of the need for all who claim relationship with the Almighty to not only keep the "letter of the Law" but to go all the way and keep the "spirit of the Law" as well.

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Shades of Mount Sinai

But when He saw the crowds, He went up on a mountain. And when He was seated His taught ones came to Him. And having opened His mouth, He was teaching them, saying... (Mattityahu 5:1,2)

Certainly, Mattityahu (the Hebrew name usually Anglicized to "Mathew") included the detail about Yahusha ascending the mountain to remind his readers that Yahuwah had descended upon Mt Sinai to give the Torah to the children of Israel. In other words, Yahusha was ready to rehearse the Instructions of the Torah and to give a proper interpretation of their meaning. We can surmise this, because not only is the setting the same but the teaching that follows is an elaboration of the meaning and correct interpretation of those Instructions given at Sinai.

If Yahusha was claiming to be a teacher or a prophet of Yahuwah or even "The Prophet like Mosheh," he must teach and uphold all the commandments of the Father. Yahuwah clearly indicated that anyone proclaiming any other "teaching" or "law" other than that which was given at Sinai, was to be branded a false prophet - for this is what the Scriptures require.

Suppose a prophet or one who foretells by dreams should appear among you and show you a sign or wonder, and the sign or wonder should come to pass concerning what he said to you, namely, "Let us follow other elohim (gods or mighty ones)"--elohim whom you have not previously known--"and let us serve them." You must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer, for Yahuwah your Elohim will be testing you to see if you love him with all your mind and being. You must follow Yahuwah your Elohim and revere only him; and you must observe his commandments, obey him, serve him, and remain loyal to him.

As for that prophet or dreamer, he must be executed (cf. Paul's "be accursed" in Gal 1:8-9) because he encouraged rebellion against Yahuwah your Elohim who brought you from the land of Egypt, redeeming you from the place of slavery, and because he has tried to entice you from the way Yahuwah your Elohim has commanded you to go. In this way you must purge out evil from within (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 13:1-5).

Loyalty to Yahuwah is defined by the text above as following him, loving him, fearing him, serving him and obeying his commandments. Yahuwah has declared a very clear standard for discerning a true prophet from a false one. Since "**the way Yahuwah your Elohim has commanded you to go**" is a reference to the Torah as the correct walk of faith for those belonging to the family of the Almighty, then

anyone proclaiming any other Law or teaching than that which Yahuwah gave through Moses on Mt Sinai was to be recognized as a false prophet.

Any true prophet or teacher in Israel must, by definition, teach the Torah as the correct way to conduct oneself because Father has commanded that Law from his own lips. The Torah is the standard by which all teachings and teachers are to be measured. Any teacher, preacher or prophet who teaches rebellion against the Torah is to be rejected because they are not truly from the Father. And any other Torah than that given at Sinai by Father is to be rejected as false. Therefore, Yahusha could NOT have been teaching that the Torah was being done away with, nor is it even possible that if he is the true Messiah that he would be offering a new Law for his followers. It is an absurd theory of the Christian theologians that Messiah "did away with the Law." Had he even hinted at doing so, he would have been branded as a false prophet and would have been ignored.

But if Yahusha were claiming to be "The Prophet," then he must teach Torah and all Israel must obey his teachings. "The Prophet" is described by Moses with these words:

Yahuwah your Elohim will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you-- from your fellow sons of Yisrael; you must listen to him....I will raise up a prophet like you for them from among their fellow sons of Yisrael. I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them whatever I command. I will personally hold responsible anyone who then pays no attention to the words that prophet speaks in my name (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 18:15,18,19).

The prophet like Mosheh was to teach Torah as Mosheh had taught it and was to be obeyed as Mosheh was. Therefore, if Yahusha (Jesus) is believed to be the Prophet and the Messiah, he MUST teach the whole Torah as valid and as the proper way to express faith in the Almighty. He must teach all Israel to obey every commandment that proceeded from the mouth of Elohim.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a new Law that Jesus is introducing to his disciples, as many Christians foolishly believe. That would be like Jesus telling us not to obey his Father's commandments because they are too hard, but to obey his NEW commandments, which are much easier. Nonsense. That would be pure foolishness. No, Yahusha was upholding and reinforcing his Father's Law and commandments, just as any genuine and true prophet of the only Living Elohim would do.

So we see in Mattityahu 5, Yahusha is sitting on a mountain and begins to teach his disciples the correct meaning and interpretation of the walk of faith in terms of one's obedience to the Torah of Elohim. As the "Prophet like Moses", and as one who came in the name of Yahuwah, he is to be obeyed in every detail.

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs is the reign of the heavens. Blessed are those who mourn, because they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, because they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, because they shall be filled. Blessed are the compassionate, because they shall obtain compassion. Blessed are the clean in heart, because they shall see Elohim. Blessed are the peacemakers,

because they shall be called sons of Elohim. Blessed are those persecuted for righteousness' sake, because theirs is the reign of the heavens. Blessed are you when they reproach and persecute you, and falsely say every wicked word against you, for My sake. Rejoice and be glad, because your reward in the heavens is great. For in this way they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Mattityahu 5:3-12).

The Sermon on the Mount begins with a series of blessings and woes. Mattityahu's record of this sermon cites only blessings. But in Luke's parallel version of this same sermon, Luke lists the curses which Yahusha pronounced, as well:

Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of Elohim belongs to you. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you and insult you and reject you as evil on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and jump for joy, because your reward is great in heaven. For their ancestors did the same things to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your comfort already. Woe to you who are well satisfied with food now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all people speak well of you, for their ancestors did the same things to the false prophets (Luke 6:20-26).

Luke records 4 "blessed are you" statements followed by 4 "woe to you" statements. On the other hand, Mattityahu records 9 "blessed are" statements but no woes. Likely, each account of this sermon has left out parts that the other records, and probably both left out additional blessings and woes which Yahusha pronounced that day.

Just as Mattityahu's statement that Yahusha went up on a mountain was to remind his disciples of the teachings of Yahuwah from Mt. Sinai, the blessings and woes of Yahusha are meant to recall the second giving of the Torah in the fortieth year of their wanderings, while the nation of Israel was in Moab (see Devarim [Deuteronomy] 1:1-5 and 29:1). The blessings and curses are an integral part of the message of the Law.

Blessings are pronounced upon those who are living in compliance with the Instructions of the Covenant:

If you indeed obey Yahuwah your Elohim and are careful to observe all his commandments I am giving you today, Yahuwah your Elohim will elevate you above all the nations of the earth. All these blessings will come to you in abundance if you obey Yahuwah your Elohim... (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 28:1,2).

And curses are pronounced upon those who are living in rebellion against Yahuwah's Instructions, commandments and Covenant:

But you must not turn away from all the commandments I am giving you today, to either the right or left, nor pursue other elohim and worship them. But if you ignore Yahuwah 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 (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 28:14,15).

All of the blessings found in Mattityahu's account of the Sermon on the Mount are addressed to those who are walking in obedience to Yahuwah's Law. The curses or woes as recorded in Luke's account are addressed to those who walk in disobedience to the Torah.

The first of those blessings, "**blessed are the poor in Spirit**" is not addressed to "poor people." The "poor in Spirit" has a specific meaning in Scripture which is lost by those who don't have an understanding of the Old Testament. It is an echo of a statement of the prophet Yeshayahu (Isaiah) who notes that

this is what Yahuwah says: "The heavens are my throne and the earth is my footstool. Where then is the house you will build for me? Where is the place where I will rest? My hand made them; that is how they came to be," says Yahuwah. "I show special favor to the humble and contrite, who respect what I have to say" (66:1,2).

Another version translates it more literally as the Hebrew reads:

"Yet to such a one I look: on him who is poor and bruised of spirit, and who trembles at My Word" (The Scriptures)

This is the prophetic utterance which Yahusha is referring when he speaks of the "poor in Spirit." The favor of Yahuwah rests upon those who are "poor in Spirit." Yeshayahu explains very succinctly that those who are "**poor and broken in spirit**" are those who "**tremble at My Word.**" The poor in spirit are those who honor Elohim and fear him reverently and obey his Torah.

Messiah was not pronouncing this blessing upon "poor people." Yahuwah does not show special favor to people just because they are without money. If he did, he would be discriminating, which is transgression of his own Law, as James notes,

But if you show prejudice, you are committing sin and are convicted by the Instruction as violators (James 2:9).

The poor being referred to in Yeshayahu and by Messiah Yahusha in the Sermon on the Mount are those who "**tremble at his Word**" and "**have respect**" to what He says. They are the ones obedient to the Torah.

Ya'acov (James) also makes clear that those "poor in spirit" who are "blessed" are not just "poor people" The blessed ones are those who are "rich in faith" and who "love him."

My brothers and sisters, do not show prejudice if you possess faith in our glorious Master Yahusha Messiah. For if someone comes into your assembly wearing a gold ring and fine clothing, and a poor person enters in filthy clothes, do you pay attention to the one who is finely dressed and say, "You sit here in a good place," and to the poor person, "You stand over there," or "Sit on the floor"? If so, have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil motives?

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters! Did not Elohim choose the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him? (James 2:1-5).

So, those who are blessed because they are "poor in spirit" are those who are humble and contrite before

Yahuwah and tremble at his Word. These have the favor of Yahuwah upon them because of their faith in him and love for him.

The second blessing, "**blessed are you who weep**," is not addressed to all people who weep. Everyone weeps from time to time, but not all people are blessed. Messiah has in mind a more specific weeping. There is a weeping that is a result of seeking righteousness. Those who weep and mourn on account of sin and who weep for Jerusalem because of her fallen state are in mind here.

Be happy for Yerushalayim and rejoice with her, all you who love her! Share in her great joy, all you who have mourned over her! For you will nurse from her satisfying breasts and be nourished; you will feed with joy from her milk-filled breasts. For this is what Yahuwah says: "Look, I am ready to extend to her prosperity that will flow like a river, the riches of nations will flow into her like a stream that floods its banks. You will nurse from her breast and be carried at her side; you will play on her knees. As a mother consoles a child, so I will console you, and you will be consoled over Yerushalayim" (Yeshayahu [Isaiah] 66:10-13).

Messiah is talking about those who mourn for Yerushalayim. Those who weep on account of her sinful state, and who mourn over her tragic circumstances will one day rejoice over her.

The prophet Yechezqel was shown a vision in which those who weep and mourn over Yerushalayim are given a mark and become the only ones who are protected from the judgment of Yahuwah:

Then he shouted in my hearing with a loud voice, "Approach, you executioners of the city, each with his destructive weapon in his hand!" I saw six men coming from the direction of the upper gate which faces north, each with his war club in his hand. Among them was a man dressed in linen with a writing kit at his side. They came and stood beside the bronze altar. Then the splendor of the Elohim of Yisrael went up from the cherub where it had rested to the threshold of the temple. He called to the man dressed in linen who had the writing kit at his side. Yahuwah said to him, "Go through the city of Yerushalayim and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who moan and groan over all the abominations practiced in it." While I listened, he said to the others, "Go through the city after him and strike people down; you must neither show pity nor spare anyone! Old men, young men, young women, little children, and women--wipe them out! But do not touch anyone who has the mark! Begin at my sanctuary!" So they began with the elders who were at the front of the temple (Yechezqel [Ezekiel] 9:1-6).

Those who mourn and weep over Yerushalayim are those who truly love Yahuwah and desire Messiah's coming to restore right living. Thus, those who weep (over Yerushalayim and over unrighteousness) are blessed because Yahuwah has promised to restore Yerushalayim to its former glory when he comes to rule and reign over all the earth from Yerushalayim. Those who were weeping over her will be rejoicing with Messiah in his reign.

The third blessing, "**blessed are the meek**," is not a blessing on "wimpy people." It does not refer to people with no backbone. Yahusha does not encourage people to inaction. Rather, it speaks to those who are objects of injustice, but who nonetheless, serve Yahuwah faithfully. The meek are those who suffer insult or personal injury because of their faithfulness to Yahuwah and his commandments. They are "meek" because they tolerate the injustices of wicked men and suffer financially and sometimes physically

because they walk in the commandments of the Scriptures. The Psalmist notes this:

But the oppressed will possess the land and enjoy great prosperity (Psalm 37:11).

This is certainly the Scripture Yahusha is referencing when he proclaims that the meek are blessed because they shall inherit the earth. When Yahuwah reigns on earth, all those wrongs will be righted and the oppressed will enjoy the justice they deserve.

The fourth blessing, "**blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness**," uses hungering and thirsting as a metaphor for one's longing for the Word of Elohim. Messiah is referring to the lessons in the wilderness:

So he humbled you by making you hungry and then feeding you with unfamiliar manna. He did this to teach you that mankind cannot live by food alone, but also by everything that comes from Yahuwah's mouth (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 8:3).

The lessons in the desert, especially the hungering and thirsting, were meant to bring Israel into an understanding of their dependence upon Yahuwah's provision and his Instruction. So those who "hunger" really are blessed because they seek to know Yahuwah and to understand his Word. And those who seek Yahuwah's Word will be filled and satisfied because the Spirit will give understanding.

The fifth blessing, "**blessed are the compassionate**," is pronounced upon those who, out of love for their fellow human beings, demonstrate loving sympathy for one in need or in pain. The Greek word used there, ἐλεήμων, (pronounced "ele-ay-mown") comes from the root word usually translated "merciful" or "sympathetic" or, as in our translation, "compassionate." It pertains **to being concerned about people in their need.**

That Greek word corresponds to the Hebrew רַחֲמִים (pronounced, "rakhamim"). This word also refers to the tender love and compassion one has for another human, especially a mother's love and compassion for her children. The same Greek root word is used in the passage where Messiah Yahusha rebukes the Pharisees:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-- mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former (Mattityahu 23:23).

The "mercy" he is talking about here is at the very heart of the Torah. It is this loving, caring mercy that all followers of Messiah should have in taking care of orphans and widows. The orphans and widows are the needy ones who should be the primary object of *rachamim*, compassion.

The command in the Torah to care for the orphans and widows is at the very core of what it means to love Yahuwah and your neighbor as yourself. Ya'acov (James) says that

Pure and undefiled religion before Elohim the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their misfortune and to keep oneself unstained by the world (Ya'acov 1:27).

This is the truest expression of "mercy" and "compassion." When the follower of Messiah reaches out to the widow and orphan with that same love a mother has for her children, and takes in the orphan or widow, he is truly blessed, because he is expressing Elohim's kind of love.

The sixth blessing, "**blessed are the clean in heart, for they shall see Elohim,**" is reminiscent of the 24th Psalm:

Who is allowed to ascend the mountain of Yahuwah? Who may go up to his set-apart dwelling place? The one whose deeds are blameless and whose heart is pure, who does not lie, or make promises with no intention of keeping them. Such righteous people are rewarded by Yahuwah, and vindicated by the Elohim who delivers them (vss. 3-5).

The one with a pure or clean heart is he who honors Yahuwah by fidelity to his Covenant and who obeys his commandments. David, in his time of repentance, longed for the blessedness of having a clean heart:

Create for me a pure heart! Transform me and give me integrity! (Psalm 51:10).

His longing stands in contrast to his sinful state of having committed adultery and having orchestrated the needless killing of that woman's husband.

The "pure in heart" which Yahusha speaks of as blessed are not just "good people." He is referring specifically to those who keep themselves free of evildoing of all sorts and who do not practice transgression of his Torah. Thus, the blessing which Yahusha pronounces lands on Torah keeping followers of Messiah

The seventh blessing is conferred upon "**the peacemakers.**" Again, Yahusha is not talking about "peace activists" and people who slap "Give Peace a Chance" bumper stickers to their automobiles. He is not talking about people who seek to compromise with evildoers in the hope of obtaining peace. He is not talking about people who want to give away the Promised Land to a bunch of moon-god worshipping haters who strap bombs to their children and wives in order to kill those who don't agree with their religion.

Messiah is speaking of the peacemaker who seeks the peace of Covenant fidelity with Yahuwah and who rebukes and confronts unrighteousnesses of all kinds. The peacemaker who is blessed is the one who defends the defenseless at the peril of his own life. The truly blessed peacemaker is the one who fights to the death all evildoers who would harm Yahuwah's name and Yahuwah's people.

Probably the best example of a peacemaker who is blessed is Phinehas. He is the only individual in Scripture who is explicitly connected with "making peace." The account of Phinehas goes like this:

Just then one of the sons of Yisrael came and brought to his brothers a Midianite woman in the plain view of Mosheh and of the whole community of the sons of Yisrael, while they were weeping at the entrance of the tent of meeting. When Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aharon the priest, saw it, he got up from among the assembly, took a javelin in his hand, and went after the Yisraeli man into the tent and thrust through the Yisraeli man and into the woman's abdomen. So the plague was stopped from the sons of Yisrael. Those that died in the plague were 24,000. Yahuwah spoke to Mosheh: "Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of

Aharon the priest, has turned my anger away from the sons of Yisrael, when he manifested such zeal for my sake among them, so that I did not consume the sons of Yisrael in my zeal. Therefore, announce: 'I am going to give to him my covenant of peace. So it will be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of a permanent priesthood, because he has been zealous for his Elohim, and has made atonement for the sons of Yisrael.'" (Bamidbar [Numbers] 25:6-13).

The scriptural example of a peacemaker is the one who thrust a javelin into an Israelite man and woman who had committed flagrant sin before the whole house of Israel. He did this to stop the plague and to save others from the judgment which was being executed on the whole community.

The true "peacemaker" Messiah is talking about is the person who takes action to restore peace by confronting evil and insisting upon its destruction. It is only through the repentance or destruction of the ungodly that peace will be obtained. Scripture exhorts us to "**pray for the peace of Jerusalem.**" This can only be accomplished when all the wicked are destroyed and Yahuwah's people repent and keep the commandments as we have been instructed. Peacemakers are activists - that's for sure. But picketing and protesting is useless unless they are accompanied by repentance and the removal of all wrongdoing.

In the Messianic age, Yahusha himself will make peace on the earth. How does he do this? First, he will remove sin from the earth by destroying those "who destroy the earth" (Revelation 11:18). Next, he will "rule with a rod of iron" (Yeshayahu 2:9). This implies the forceful implementation of the Torah over all the inhabitants of the earth. The prophet Yeshayahu explains the nature of the rule of Messiah:

Yahuwah will issue edicts from Yerushalayim. He will judge disputes between nations; he will settle cases for many peoples (Yeshayahu 2:4).

And Micah concurs:

For Zion will be the source of instruction, and Yahuwah's teachings will proceed from Yerushalayim. He will arbitrate between many peoples, and mediate for many distant nations (Micah 4:3).

The true peacemaker is the one who works toward bringing peace on the earth by administering Yahuwah's laws and right-rulings.

And the final blessing is conferred upon those who are "**persecuted on account of righteousness.**" Yeshayahu describes how the "prophets before you" were persecuted for righteousness sake:

Hear the word of Yahuwah, you who respect what he has to say! Your countrymen, who hate you and exclude you, supposedly for the sake of my name, say, "May Yahuwah be glorified, then we will witness your joy." But they will be put to shame. The sound of battle comes from the city; the sound comes from the temple! It is the sound of Yahuwah paying back his enemies (Yeshayahu 66:5,6).

As a matter of fact, all the prophets of old were killed on account of their faithfulness and fidelity to Yahuwah's Covenant. They refused to speak a "word from Yahuwah" which Yahuwah didn't actually speak.

Yahusha told his disciples that the world would hate them as they had hated Him. Those who are

persecuted for righteousness are blessed because they remain steadfast and obedient to the Torah in spite of any threatened consequences, and even in the face of death. Those who are persecuted and killed because they refuse to compromise truth and righteousness will be greatly rewarded in the kingdom age to come.

So we have seen that all of the beatitudes are addressed and pronounced upon those who are faithfully obeying the commandments of Yahuwah. The wimpy, feel-good, weak and spineless "Jesus" who is preached in the pulpits of many Christian churches, who blesses everybody and makes no distinction between evildoers and the faithful, and sees no distinction between clean and unclean, doesn't exist. That "Jesus" is a figment of their imagination. The Messiah of Scripture calls upon his disciples to repent of all transgressions of the Torah, to endure hardship and persecution, to do the compassionate work of caring for orphans and widows, to walk in complete compliance with the Instructions and commandments of Scripture and to stand firm in the righteousness of doing what is just and good. The Beatitudes are the blessings conferred upon such people.

Salt and Light

You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt becomes tasteless, how shall it be seasoned? For it is no longer of any use but to be thrown out and to be trodden down by men. You are the light of the world. It is impossible for a city to be hidden on a mountain. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it shines to all those in the house. Let your light so shine before men, so that they see your good works and praise your Father who is in the heavens (Mattityahu 5:13-16)

Yahusha the Messiah compares his followers to salt and light. Not much is said about salt in the Torah, except in the instructions about food offerings:

Moreover, you must season every one of your grain offerings with salt; you must not allow the salt of the covenant of your Elohim to be missing from your grain offering--on every one of your grain offerings you must present salt (Vayiqra [Leviticus] 2:13).

The requirement to salt all of the meal offerings was on a practical level to make the food taste better. A grain offering without salt was unacceptable on Yahuwah's alter.

So why did Messiah compare his followers to salt? It is used as a preservative, and it is a flavor enhancer. Messiah's followers are to be salt in the world. How is it that followers of Messiah act as salt to the earth? It is the Law of Elohim in the believer that acts as a preserving agent at work in the world. The Torah says that

See, I have taught you decrees and laws as Yehovah my Elohim commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way Yehovah our Elohim is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and

laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today? (Deuteronomy 4:5-8)

Thus, the believing community can be salt to the earth when they are living in obedience to Father's commandments. The believer's works of obedience to the Torah - their acts of righteousness - have a preservative effect in the world. The "saltiness" of Messiah's follower is the effect that his testimony of obedience and walk of faithfulness has on the world.

Thus, if the salt (follower of Messiah) loses his saltiness (has un-atoned sin in his life), he is good only for throwing out on the garbage pile. The end result is that it is vital that a follower of Yeshua be walking in obedience. Otherwise his salt has lost its flavor and no one will believe his testimony.

The truth that "**you are the light of the world**" has obvious and many links to the character of Elohim and to his Law.

You who love Yahuwah, hate evil! He protects the lives of his faithful followers; he delivers them from the power of the wicked. The righteous bask in the light; the morally upright experience joy (Psalm 97:10,11).

But the path of the righteous is like the bright morning light, growing brighter and brighter until full day (Mishlei [Proverbs] 4:18).

The Torah (Heb, "Law" or "Instruction") is light:

Your Instructions are a lamp that shows me where to walk, and a light that shines on my path (Psalm 119:105).

Your Instructions are like a doorway through which the light shines. They give insight to the untrained (Psalm 119:130).

The Proverbs say the same thing:

For the commandments are like a lamp, instruction is like a light, and rebukes of discipline are like the road leading to life, by keeping you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the loose woman (Mishlei 6:23,24).

The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked goes out (Mishlei 13:9).

The disciple of Messiah is a "light" because he walks in the righteous Instruction of Elohim and shines Yah's righteousness to the world through his works and his testimony. The Torah is light and all who keep Torah are "light in the world." Yahusha says that it is the "good works" which the believer shows. These "good works" are their obedience to the Law of Elohim.

Messiah Upholds the Torah and the Prophets

Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to complete. For truly, I say to you, till the heaven and the earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall by no means pass from the Torah till all be done. Whoever, then, breaks one of the least of these commands, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the reign of the heavens; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the reign of the heavens. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the reign of the heavens (Mattityahu 5:17-20).

This saying has to be the most misunderstood, misinterpreted and misrepresented of all the sayings of the Messiah. But you do not need a diploma from an institute in higher learning to perceive what Messiah is saying. You do not need a "Dr." in front of your name to understand the meaning of this text. You do not need to know Greek and Hebrew to ascertain the message of Yahusha.

The teaching here is very simple. Note the contrast between the words "destroy" and "complete." Note also the condition upon which the tiniest detail of the Torah must remain in effect: "**till heaven and earth pass away.**" Then note who Messiah commends and who is minimized in his kingdom. Those who do all of the commandments, even the very least of them are to be called "**great**" in his reign and those who break even one of the least of the commandments and who teach others to transgress the Torah shall be "**least**" in the kingdom of heaven.

The message could not be any clearer. The Torah and the Prophets are here to stay. They are valid and binding in the past age, the present age and in the future age - all the way until heaven and earth are no more. Last time I looked outside, heaven and earth are still here. Therefore, the Torah in all its detail is valid, binding and is to be kept by those who are attached to Yahuwah the Creator and his son, Yahusha Messiah.

So why is it that nearly every last Christian church teaches that Christ did away with the Law? Why do Christians stubbornly resist obedience to the Creator of heaven and earth? Why are Messiah's words so contradicted by so many Churchians? It is because men do not want to come into the light, because men loved darkness rather than light because the light exposes them for who they are. It is also because those people are unlearned in the Torah and so they twist and distort Paul's writings even as they do the rest of Scripture - to their own destruction! (see 2 Peter 3:16).

Let's take a deeper look into the language of Matthew 5:17-20. The widespread misunderstanding of Yahusha's words is due to the failure on the part of Bible interpreters to comprehend the rich meaning of the word "fulfill." In the original language, the word used here by Yahusha is *pleeroo*. A standard Greek-English lexicon makes this important observation regarding Messiah's statement in Matthew 5:17:

Depending on how one prefers to interpret the context, (*pleeroo*) is understood here either as fulfill=do, carry out, or as bring to full expression=show it forth in its true mng., or as fill up =complete...(Bauer, p.671)

"To complete" or "put an end to," although a proper meaning for this word in some contexts, can not be the meaning here, because the context clearly rules this out. Yahusha emphatically stressed that the Law will remain; it has not been done away with.

However, a combination of the first two meanings does convey the thought Yahusha was expressing. Interestingly, Webster's Collegiate Dictionary lists the word *perform* as a synonym for *fulfill*, which means "to adhere to the terms of..., carry out, do..., give a rendition of...", or, "to carry out an action or pattern of behavior." And as a synonym for *perform*, "fulfill implies a complete realization of ends or possibilities." (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, Springfield: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1987, pp.497,873) This is precisely what Yahusha was saying. He had come to completely realize, in his lifestyle and mission, all that the Law and Prophets had said.

By placing this sermon in its context, we will be able to fully comprehend the truth which Yahusha was communicating. From the beginning of Yahusha's ministry to the end, the Pharisees were accusing Yahusha of attempting to undermine their interpretation of the law of Moses with his own teaching. And they accused him on a number of occasions of transgressing the Torah. But Yahusha here emphatically denies these charges. He had, in fact, broken their man-made law (the Oral Law of the Pharisees), but he had NOT transgressed the Torah of Elohim. Yahusha was not overturning the Law of Elohim, because that law is to remain in effect to the end of the age. On the contrary, Yahusha had come to "give a proper interpretation of" the Law. He had come to explain it. His purpose was to shed light on the intention and deeper meaning of the Law and to demonstrate by his own life how Elohim's law should be obeyed.

Those who practice doing even the very least of the commandments and then teach others to do the same are going to be called "Great" in his kingdom. But those who break even the least of the commandments and teach others to do the same will be called "Least" in the reign of Messiah. That's pretty simple to understand. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to "get" what he is saying. Messiah is holding out the Torah as the standard lifestyle for his disciples. The way a follower of Messiah should live is by keeping the commandments - every last one of them!

Messiah said that your righteousness needs to exceed that of the Pharisees and scribes. He was not speaking in hyperbole. He was speaking plainly. The Pharisees were NOT keeping the Torah - the written Scriptures given to all of Israel through Mosheh. The Pharisees were, in fact, transgressing many of the instructions of Scripture. They put their own laws, traditions, practices and customs ahead of the plain teaching of the Law of Moses. Thus, their righteousness was a pretended righteousness. And appropriately, Yahusha called them hypocrites, which means "play actors" or "fakes." So in a very real sense, Messiah was teaching his disciples to "do better than the Pharisees were doing" because the Pharisees were not really obeying the Scriptures

Messiah's instruction to his disciples is to obey all the commandments given through Mosheh, in all their detail. This is what Yahuwah has called his people to do. We are to be "set-apart" as He is "set-apart." The Torah instructs us on how to be "set-apart."

Teaching on Murder

You heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder,' and whoever murders shall be liable to judgment. But I say to you that whoever is wroth with his brother without a cause shall be liable to judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raka!' shall be liable to the Sanhedrin. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to fire of Gehenna. If, then, you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother holds whatever against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go, first make peace with your

brother, and then come and offer your gift. Be well-minded with your opponent, promptly, while you are on the way with him, lest your opponent deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Truly, I say to you, you shall by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny (Mattityahu 5:21-26)

Beginning here and throughout the following section of the Sermon on the Mount, Yahusha uses a formulaic expression to introduce Torah instructions. He says, "**you heard that is was said to those of old.**" He is referring to the commonly taught understanding of the Scripture commandments, such as that found in Shemot 20:13, "**you shall not murder.**" Thus, when Yahusha pronounces, "**but I say unto you...**", he is properly interpreting the deeper meaning of these common teachings.

Yahuwah himself spoke the Ten Words (Ten Commandments) to all the people. It was Yahuwah's voice which was heard saying these words at Mt. Sinai. The record of Scripture speaks:

And Elohim spoke all these words: I, Yahuwah, am your Elohim, who brought you from the land of Mitzrayim, from the house of bondage. You shall have no other elohim before me.... You shall not murder (Shemot [Exodus] 20:1,2,13).

Men's teachings and "sayings" carry no weight of authority over all Yisrael. Only the words which proceed directly from the mouth of Elohim are authoritative.

Now, the sixth commandment, "**do not murder,**" has a specific meaning. The Hebrew word utilized here, *ratsach*, means "to slay with premeditation." It is talking about the intentional taking of a man's life without sufficient cause. It does not mean "put to death" or "cause to die." There are situations when "putting someone to death" is the right thing to do. But that is in the case of certain "capital" crimes, such as premeditated murder, adultery, rape, kidnapping and the like. The prohibition is against premeditated homicide.

Next, Messiah gives his own authoritative interpretation of this Torah instruction: "**But I say unto you....**" After all, Yahusha had come to "fulfill the Law" which means to correctly interpret it and demonstrate it through practice. Note well that Yahusha does not nullify this commandment. He does not tell his disciples that this commandment is no longer binding on his disciples. He does not "do away with" the commandment prohibiting premeditated murder. Instead, Messiah gives a fuller, more complete understanding of the sixth commandment. He says not to even be angry with your brother without a cause. Just as it would be sin to kill your brother without a just cause, likewise it is sin to be angry with your brother without a just cause. And this is the correct interpretation of the sixth commandment.

Furthermore, He explains, it is wrong (sin) to say "*raca*" or "you fool" to your brother. It is easy to slip off into name calling and character assassination when we are angry with someone. The Hebrews call this "*lashon hara*" or "the evil tongue," about which Ya'acob (the book of James, chapter 3) has much to say. Not only does the sixth commandment forbid this kind of speech, but there are additional Torah commandments which also forbid speaking to or of a brother in this way:

You must not walk about as a slanderer among your people. You must not stand idly by when your neighbor's life is at stake. I am Yahuwah. You must not hate your brother in your heart. You must surely reprove your fellow citizen so that you do not incur sin on account of him. You must not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the children of your people, but you must love your neighbor as yourself. I am Yahuwah (Vayiqra [Leviticus] 19:16-18).

Slander, hatred, vengeance and bearing a grudge are all precursors to "murder." And all are forbidden implicitly in the sixth commandment and explicitly in these other instructions. On the contrary, the Scripture says, "**you must love your neighbor as yourself.**"

This is why it is so important to immediately take care of a situation in which you are angry with your brother or your brother is angry with you. Drop everything you are doing, including offering up gifts to Yahuwah, and do what you can to resolve the conflict. Someone is sinning in his heart, and that sin may lead to additional sins of the flesh (i.e. murder).

The "Letter of the Law"

There is a very important concept that Messiah is teaching in the Sermon on the Mount that we need to correctly discern. He draws our attention to the "letter of the Law" - that which is written. But he then goes on to explain the "spirit of the Law" which is His authoritative interpretation of the Law. Note well that the "spirit of the Law" - Messiah's interpretation and explanation of the meaning of the Law - does NOT nullify the "letter of the Law." The "spirit of the Law" merely enhances the meaning of and our understanding of the intention of the Law.

Therefore it is possible to keep the "letter of the Law" while transgressing the "spirit of the Law." One can control himself enough not to murder his brother while continuing to hate his brother and drag his brother's name through the mud. This is what Sha'ul (the apostle Paul) meant when he wrote:

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (2 Corinthians 3:6, KJV)

Merely keeping the "letter of the Law" and not keeping the "spirit of the Law" is useless. You are still sinning if you do not keep the "spirit of the Law" - which is the intended, deeper meaning of the Law.

However, you cannot be keeping the "spirit of the Law" while breaking the "letter of the Law." For example, you could not be loving your neighbor and showing him loving kindness (keeping the "spirit of the Law") while murdering him (breaking the "letter of the Law")! You cannot be avoiding desiring your neighbor's wife sexually (keeping the "spirit of the Law") while adulterating with your neighbor's wife (breaking the "letter of the Law"). This is absurd and contradictory.

The "letter of the Law" is the surface reading of the Law. The "spirit of the Law" is the deeper understanding and underlying meaning of the commandment. In order to keep the "spirit of the Law" one must, first of all, keep the letter of the Law - and then not stop there, but go further and observe the Law in all its intended meaning and application. Do not misunderstand Paul when he makes contrasting statements about the letter and the spirit of the Law. The problem he is addressing is that the Pharisees would assert the letter of the Law and then turn around and transgress the spirit - deeper meaning and understanding - of the Law. Doing this is deceptive. It has the appearance of doing right. But underneath it all, it is hypocrisy and leads to death.

Read what the New Covenant was to accomplish:

"The time is coming," declares Yahuwah, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares Yahuwah. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares Yahuwah. "I will put my Law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their Elohim, and they will be my people (Yirmayahu [Jeremiah] 31:31-33).

The New Covenant was to feature the Law of Elohim. Not a new law, but the same Law. Nothing is said anywhere in the Torah or the Prophets or the Writings or the New Testament writings of a new law.

What makes this Covenant "New" is that the Law is to be written on the hearts and minds of the people and not just written on stone. This is exactly what Messiah is talking about in the Sermon on the Mount. He is referring to what was written and is explaining the meaning which is to be in the mind and heart of his disciples. The Torah and the Prophets, he says, is not being "done away with," but it is being explained and interpreted so that the followers of Messiah may have a correct understanding of the Law in their minds and in their hearts.

Teaching on Adultery

You heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone looking at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. And if your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you. For it is better for you that one of your members perish, than for your entire body to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you. For it is better for you that one of your members perish, than for your entire body to be thrown into Gehenna. And it has been said, 'Whoever puts away his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that whoever puts away his wife, except for the matter of whoring, makes her commit adultery. And whoever marries a woman who has been put away commits adultery (Mattityahu 5:27-32)

The next instruction which Yahusha explains is that pertaining to adultery - the seventh Word or commandment. Again, the act of having sex with your neighbor's wife is sin. But even the mental attention a man pays toward his neighbor's wife's sexuality is sin. If a man thinks about having sex with his neighbor's wife, he is guilty in his being of breaking the commandment. The letter of the law is to "not commit adultery." But the spirit of the law says, "don't even keep thinking about having sex with your neighbor's wife." "Get it out of your mind."

Concerning "**your right eye**," Yahusha explains the deeper meaning and application of another Torah principle. The Torah provides the death penalty for evildoers in order to "keep the body clean." The whole nation would be responsible if the individual evildoers were not disciplined and punished in the appropriate fashion.

But the person who acts presumptuously, whether native born or a resident foreigner, insults Yahuwah. That person must be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of Yahuwah and has broken his commandment, that person must be completely cut off. His iniquity will be on him (Bemidbar [Numbers] 15:30,31).

The person who sins intentionally is in rebellion against Yahuwah and must be cut off from the body of his people and his iniquity is solely his responsibility (not the nations).

The same is said for someone who breaks the Sabbath:

Tell the sons of Yisrael, 'Surely you must keep my Sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Yahuwah who sanctifies you. So you must keep the Sabbath, for it is set-apart for you. Everyone who defiles it must surely be put to death; indeed, anyone who does any work on it, then that life will be cut off from among his people. Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete rest, set-apart to Yahuwah; anyone who does work on the seventh day must surely be put to death (Shemot [Exodus] 31:13-15).

Here, "to be cut off from his people" appears to be equivalent to "put to death." The person transgressing the Torah in this way has to be dealt with in the most severe manner in order to keep the whole nation free of that guilt.

Yahusha is taking that Torah instruction and showing us another application and a "spiritual" meaning of it. If a member of your body (i.e. "your neighbor" or "your hand") causes offense (commits intentional transgression), cut it off (i.e. remove that member from the body). You see! He is not talking literally about cutting off your offending hand from your arm. After all, it really isn't your hand that commits the offending sin! You are the one who chose to do that. To cut off your literal hand and five fingers does not take care of the problem. The problem is in your mind and heart. Therefore, we conclude, Messiah is speaking metaphorically about removing the rebellious, offending and unrepentant brother or sister from the community.

Yahusha is here introducing the metaphor of the community of Israel being a body. Paul used this same metaphor frequently in his letters, noting that every individual is like a part of the body, and that when all are doing their part, the body as a whole is healthy. Thus, Yahusha is saying that when a member is malfunctioning - that is, he is bringing sin into the camp, without repentance - then that member should be cut off for the sake of the whole body.

The Torah teaches this "cutting off" of the offending member:

But the person who acts presumptuously, whether native born or a resident foreigner, insults Yehovah. That person must be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of Yehovah and has broken his commandment, that person must be completely cut off. His iniquity will be on him (Bemidbar [Numbers] 15:30,31).

Yahusha is merely reiterating this instruction of the Law.

And third, Yahusha speaks about divorce. He recites, "**whoever puts away his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.**" The Torah instruction reads as follows:

If a man marries a woman and she does not please him because he has found something offensive in her, then he may draw up a divorce document, give it to her, and evict her from his house. When she has left him she may go and become someone else's wife. If the second husband rejects her and then divorces her, gives her the papers, and evicts her from his house, or if the second husband who married her dies, her first husband who divorced her is not permitted to remarry her after she has become ritually impure, for that is offensive to Yahuwah. You must not bring guilt on the land which Yahuwah your Elohim is giving you as an inheritance (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 24:1-4).

The phrase "something offensive in her" is the Hebrew עֲרוֹתָ דְבָרָה, which literally rendered is "a naked thing" or "a shameful thing." This refers to something the man finds while "in bed" which is deprecatory to the woman.

There have been various interpretations of Mosheh. The Pharisees, evidently, attached meaning to this instruction which was not part of the intention of the law. At the end of the day, there were many reasons a man could divorce his wife, according to the Pharisees, including just simply not enjoying having sex with the woman. This, they thought, could be the *ervat dabar* spoken of in Devarim [Deuteronomy] 24:1.

But Messiah clarifies the "spirit of the law." He explains the intention of the law in a later discourse:

Then some Pharisees came to him in order to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful to divorce a wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what Elohim has joined together, let no one separate." They said to him, "Why then did Mosheh command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?" Yahusha said to them, "Mosheh permitted you to divorce your wives because of your hard hearts, but from the beginning it was not this way. Now I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery" (Mattityahu 19:3-9).

According to the Master, divorce is ONLY allowed in the case of immorality. The *ervat dabar* must mean "evidence of sexual impropriety." If a man thinks he is marrying a virgin and he discovers evidence that his bride is not a virgin, he may divorce her. All other cases of a man "putting away" his wife causes that woman and her next husband to commit adultery.

Does Sha'ul (the apostle Paul) teach the same about divorce? Yes, he does.

To the married I give this command--not I, but Yahusha--a wife should not divorce a husband (but if she does, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband), and a husband should not divorce his wife (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

Sha'ul attributes this interpretation to Yahusha ("not I, but Yahusha"). Neither the husband or the wife is permitted to divorce the other. But if they do, they are not allowed to remarry, but may be reconciled to their spouse.

Yahusha explains that in the beginning, Elohim created them male and female. The "plan" is for the man and woman to be united with one another. But divorce is a perversion of this plan. Therefore, divorce is not allowed, except when unfaithfulness is found.

Teaching on Taking Oaths

Again, you heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to ה'יהוה.' But I say to you, do not swear (falsely) at all, neither by the heaven, because it is Elohim's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Yerushalayim, for it is the city of the great Sovereign; nor swear (falsely) by your head, because you are not able to make one hair white or black. But let your word 'Yea' be 'Yea,' and your 'No' be 'No.' And what goes beyond these is from the wicked one (Mattityahu 5:33-37)

Yahusha's teaching about taking oaths is also in perfect harmony with what the Torah teaches. And in it, he corrects the Pharisees commonly taught misinterpretations about oaths. In his first statement, he alludes to two scriptures:

You must not swear falsely in my name, so that you do not profane the name of your Elohim. I am Yahuwah (Vayiqra [Leviticus] 19:12).

When you make a vow to Yahuwah your Elohim you must not delay in fulfilling it, for otherwise he will surely hold you accountable as a sinner (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 23:21).

This teaching is also echoed in Bamidbar:

If a man makes a vow to Yahuwah or takes an oath of binding obligation on himself, he must not break his word, but must do whatever he has promised (Bamidbar [Numbers] 30:2).

Yahusha paraphrases these passages which teach about taking oaths in the name Yahuwah. The Torah teaches that ALL oaths are to be taken in the name of Yahuwah:

You must revere Yahuwah your Elohim, serve him, and take oaths using only his name (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 6:13).

And

Revere Yahuwah your Elohim, serve him, be loyal to him and take oaths only in his name (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 10:20).

Even the Prophets agree with the absolute necessity of taking ALL oaths in the name of Yahuwah:

But they must carefully learn to follow the religious practices of my people. Once they taught my people to swear their oaths using the name of the elohim Baal. But then, they must swear oaths using my name, saying, "As surely as Yahuwah lives, I swear." If they do these things, then they will be included among the people I call my own. But I will completely uproot and destroy any of those nations that will not pay heed," says Yahuwah (Yirmeyahu 12:16,17).

The Pharisees, as they did with many scriptural commands, changed the requirements for taking oaths. They wouldn't take oaths in the name of Yahuwah, because their law forbade the everyday use of invoking the name of Yahuwah. Instead, they instituted an hierarchical structure for taking oaths. One could swear by anything. And, in their way of thinking, as long as you were not swearing by Yahuwah, the vow could be broken. But the greater the value of the thing being invoked in the oath, the more reliable the oath. Thus, if I were to swear by the shirt on my back, such an oath would be taken somewhat lightly. But if I were to swear by the temple, now that would be an oath I would much more likely keep. Or if I were to swear by the gold on the alter in the temple, then this oath would be virtually certain.

Yes. That is the kind of nonsense the Pharisees put in place for taking oaths. In the very system they set up for taking oaths is implied that one can break an oath. The less the value of the thing the oath is taken on, the greater possibility that one would choose to break such a vow.

Since the Torah teaches that all oaths must be taken using the name of Yahuwah, then what is Yahusha teaching? Is he revoking the commandment to only swear by the name of Yahuwah? No, he is upholding this commandment by showing the absurdity of swearing by any other object. All things belong to or come from Yahuwah. Thus, why would someone swear by these objects. Instead, one should swear by the Elohim who made these things.

Is he revoking the necessity to take oaths? No. But when he says, "**let your word 'Yea' be 'Yea,' and your 'No' be 'No,'**" he is teaching that your word should always be true and trustworthy and shouldn't require an oath. This goes to the very core of integrity. Whatever comes out of the mouth of a disciple of Messiah should be trustworthy (faithful).

Is Messiah teaching us not to swear at all? It may seem so by the straightforward reading of the English Bible text, and this is the interpretation commonly taught in Christian circles. But if this were so, then Yahusha would be taking and interpreting Scripture out of context. The context of all the instructions about taking oaths is that they are to be done in the name of Yahuwah, and that false oaths are forbidden.

This is also what Messiah is teaching. When he is cited as saying, "**do not swear at all,**" we should understand that in context he is saying, "**do not swear *falsely* at all.**" This is simply a case of using *ellipsis*, which means "to omit a word or phrase which is necessary for a complete syntactical construction but not necessary for understanding." This is a common device for writers. The writer assumes the reader understands the context and therefore can fill in the missing word or phrase because the context demands it.

The Torah and the Prophets plainly teach that **swearing *falsely*** in the name of Yahuwah is forbidden. All of the swearing by other objects, such as the Pharisees taught, is merely an attempt to swear falsely; that is, to swear an oath that one intends to break. But Messiah is teaching us not to swear at all

under false pretenses. Our word should be faithful. Our "yes" should always mean "yes" and our "no" should always mean "no."

The reading of the Shem Tov Hebrew Matthew manuscript supports this understanding. The Hebrew reads, "**but I say to you that you should not swear by anything falsely.**" The Hebrew word utilized is *sha-ve*, which means "in vain, useless." The instruction is not to swear in vain such as the Pharisees taught was acceptable. So we see that Yahusha's teaching, as always, is supporting and affirming the Torah.

Yahusha finishes this section of teaching by noting, "**whatever goes beyond these is from the wicked one**" (Matthew 5:37). This is a clear allusion to Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:2 which forbids adding anything to the Torah or taking away anything from the Torah. To add to or subtract from the Torah would be evil - thus, "from the evil one." Again, Messiah completely affirms and supports the abiding validity of the Torah as the walk of faith for his followers.

Teaching on Retaliation

You heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' but I say to you, do not resist the wicked. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. And he who wishes to sue you and take away your inner garment, let him have your outer garment as well. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and from him who wishes to borrow from you, do not turn away (Mattityahu 5:38-41)

It is passages like this one that compels some Christians to think that Messiah is "doing away with the law." They say that the "God of the Old Testament" was harsh and unbending. But the new attitude of grace, mercy and forgiveness that "Jesus" brings signals a change in the law - yes, even the abrogation of the Old Testament law.

But Yahusha is not abrogating the Law of Mosheh in this teaching. He is citing a well-known instruction of the Torah:

If a man inflicts an injury on his fellow citizen, just as he has done thus it shall be done to him-- fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth--just as he inflicts an injury on a person thus that same injury will be inflicted on him (Vayiqra 24:19,20).

The instruction is given at full length in Shemot:

And if men fight and hit a pregnant woman and her child is born prematurely, but there is no serious injury, he will surely be punished in accordance with what the woman's husband will put on him, and he will pay what the court decides. But if there is serious injury, then you will give a life for a life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. And if a man strikes the eye of his servant, or the eye of his female servant, so that he destroys it, he will let him go free for the sake of his eye. And if

he knocks out the tooth of his servant, or the tooth of his female servant, he will let him go free for the sake of the tooth (Shemot 21:22-27).

One must understand that this instruction about "an eye for an eye" delineates the just punishment and retaliation of an offended party. If such a case were to go before the judges, this *mishpat* (ruling) would be the just sentence of the offender.

Note that the *mishpat* to give "**a life for a life, eye for eye,**" etc. marks the limit of retaliation one can exact. But the one offended is not required to take his case to the judges. This is what Messiah is alluding to. The offended party may choose to "**turn the other cheek,**" which is to say, forgive the offender. In such a case, mercy becomes the overriding factor as the wronged brother chooses to have compassion on the offender and forgive him. Furthermore, a literal slap on the cheek is not a "serious injury." Amounting to no more than an insult, the faithful should "turn the other cheek" and ignore the insult.

However, in the case of a malicious witness who attempts to frame or blame someone for an offense which the accused did not do, the *mishpat* of Scripture is **required**:

If a false witness testifies against another person and accuses him of a crime, then both parties to the controversy must stand before Yahuwah, that is, before the priests and judges who will be in office in those days. The judges will thoroughly investigate the matter, and if the witness should prove to be false and to have given false testimony against the accused, you must do to him what he had intended to do to the accused. In this way you will purge evil from among you. The rest of the people will hear and become afraid to keep doing such evil among you. You must not show pity; the principle will be a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, and a foot for a foot (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 19:16-21).

Yahusha's teaching about showing mercy and forgiveness instead of exacting punishment is in harmony and correctly expresses the meaning and intention of the Torah instructions.

As for giving to him who asks of you, the Scriptures teach this also.

Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. (Psalm 112:5)

A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:25)

Thus, one should give to whoever asks of you, and one should be willing to give his cloak also.

Teaching on Love

You heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those cursing you, do good to those hating you, and pray

for those insulting you and persecuting you, so that you become sons of your Father in the heavens. Because He makes His sun rise on the wicked and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those loving you, what reward have you? Are the tax collectors not doing the same too? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Are the tax collectors not doing so too? Therefore, be perfect, as your Father in the heavens is perfect (Mattityahu 5:43-48)

To love your neighbor is the second greatest commandment, according to Yahusha. The commandment is found in Vayiqra [Leviticus] 19:18:

You must not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the children of your people, but you must love your neighbor as yourself. I am Yahuwah.

The Hebrew word translated *neighbor* is רֵעִי (pronounced "ray-ah"). Usually translated "friend, companion, fellow," this word denotes one who stands in a reciprocal relation to the speaker, a member of the community, someone with whom you have interactions.

Believers have been mistaken who have thought that scriptural *love* means *to have warm, mushy feelings towards someone*. Scripturally commanded love for your neighbor is defined quite succinctly by the context of Vayiqra 19 in the commandments which come before the commandment to *love your neighbor as yourself*. The *love* commandment summarizes the commands which precede it. This is what Yahusha meant when he said that "**on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets**" (Mattityahu 22:40).

These instructions lay out the framework in which *love for your neighbor* is to be understood. So, love which we are to have for one another includes the following behaviors:

Each of you must respect his mother and his father (vs 3); When you gather in the harvest of your land, you must not completely harvest the corner of your field, and you must not gather up the gleanings of your harvest. You must not pick your vineyard bare, and you must not gather up the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You must leave them for the poor and the foreigner (vss 9-10); You must not steal, you must not tell lies, and you must not deal falsely with your fellow citizen (vs 11); You must not oppress your neighbor or commit robbery against him. You must not hold back the wages of the hired laborer overnight until morning. You must not curse a deaf person or put a stumbling block in front of a blind person (Vayiqra 19:13-14);

"You must not deal unjustly in judgment: you must neither show partiality to the poor nor honor the rich. You must judge your fellow citizen fairly. You must not walk about as a slanderer among your people. You must not stand idly by when your neighbor's life is at stake. I am Yahuwah. You must not hate your brother in your heart. You must surely reprove your fellow citizen so that you do not incur sin on account of him. You must not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the children of your people, but you must love your neighbor as yourself. I am Yahuwah (vss 15-18).

All of the above delineate the parameters of scriptural love for your fellow. If you are transgressing any of

these instructions, then you are not loving your neighbor as yourself.

Next, one may ask, "where does the Torah say to hate your enemy?" In the Hebrew, the word usually translated "enemy" is אֹיֵב (pronounced "o-yev" - "enemy, hostile, foe"). But the Hebrew word for "hate" שָׂנֵא (pronounced "sa-nay") in participial form and rendered "haters" is frequently used as a synonym for "enemy" and is sometimes even translated "enemy" in English Bible translations. A "hater" is an "enemy" in Hebraic thought.

These terms are used synonymously and in parallel here:

I will set my face against you. You will be struck down before your enemies, those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when there is no one pursuing you (Vayiqra [Leviticus] 26:17).

And when the ark journeyed, Mosheh would say, "Rise up, Yahuwah! May your enemies be scattered, and may those who hate you flee before you." (Bemidbar [Numbers] 10:35).

"Those who hate you" are identified as "your enemies."

Though there is no explicit command in the Torah to "hate your enemies," it could easily be implied. The enemies of Yisrael were frequently characterized as "haters." And there is a "judgment" theme woven throughout the discussions of the "haters" and enemies of Yah. For this reason, the Scriptures have been interpreted as suggesting that Yisrael should "hate its enemy."

But Yahusha corrects this misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Scripture by giving us the true understanding of the Law of love: "Love your enemies." Yahuwah never said to "hate your enemies," but it was so assumed. It is Yahuwah's prerogative to judge the wicked, not ours. We do not have the authority to condemn anyone. Therefore, we should not hate anyone.

The Bible teaches us to love our enemies:

If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and Yehovah will reward you. (Proverbs 25:21-22)

This love we show our enemies by giving them food and water will likely result in their transformation and repentance when they see our light and the love of our Father shining on them.

Furthermore, Yahusha infers, since Yahuwah sends his rain on the just and on the unjust, and makes the sun to rise on the just and on the unjust, we too should treat all men with righteous dignity as defined and inferred by the commandment to love your fellow as yourself. As such, you should greet the "tax collector" as you greet your friend and brother. If you only greet your brother and friend, but not the tax collector, you are no better than the pagan tax collector.

The instruction to love and not to hate is summarized by "be perfect." Taken from the concept of the Hebrew word תָּמִים (pronounced *tammim*), to be perfect means to be complete without blemish. The word is used of the animal without defect that is required for the Pesach sacrifice. This word suggests no

fault, blemish or scar when used of animals. And it means *without sin* when used of people.

The commandment to *be set-apart* as found in Vayiqra 19:2 may be in the mind of the Messiah:

Speak to the whole congregation of the sons of Yisrael and tell them, 'You must be set-apart because I, Yahuwah your Elohim, am set-apart.'

This commandment to be set-apart sets the stage for the instructions about how to treat your fellow, which gets summed up with *love your fellow as yourself*. Messiah probably is interpreting the instruction to *be set-apart* when he tells his disciples to *be perfect*.

Teaching on Giving to the Poor

Beware of doing your righteous acts before men, in order to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in the heavens. Thus, when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do, in the congregations and in the streets, to be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a kind deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your kind deed shall be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret shall Himself reward you openly (Mattityahu 6:1-4)

The Greek word translated in our rendition *righteous acts* is δικαιοσύνη (pronounced *dikai-o-sun-ei*) literally means *righteousnesses* and refers to the religious duties of righteous people. The parallel Hebrew term is צְדָקוֹת (tsidkot). Yahusha speaks about three righteous acts: giving to the poor, praying and fasting. He does so by first suggesting how not to do these deeds, in a not-so-subtle rebuke of the Pharisees who did these righteous acts to be seen of men. Then he instructs the proper way to perform these righteous acts.

The first is *giving to the poor*. The Greek word in the ancient manuscripts is ἐλεημοσύνη (*ele-ei-mo-sunei*) and refers to acts of mercy, pity or compassion specifically with reference to giving alms to the poor. The Torah teaches that giving to the poor and needy is a duty of righteous people:

If a fellow Yisraeli from one of your villages in the land that Yahuwah your Elohim is giving you should be poor, you must not harden your heart or be insensitive to his impoverished condition. Instead, you must be sure to open your hand to him and generously lend him whatever he needs. Be careful lest you entertain the wicked thought that the seventh year, the year of cancellation of debts, has almost arrived, and your attitude be wrong toward your impoverished fellow Yisraeli and you do not lend him anything; he will cry out to Yahuwah against you and it will be regarded as a sin. You must by all means lend to him and not be upset by doing it, for because of this Yahuwah your Elohim will bless you in all your work and in everything you attempt. There will never cease to be some poor people in the land; therefore, I am instructing you to make sure you open your hand to your fellow sons of Yisrael who are needy and poor in your land (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 15:7-11).

Money lent to these poor is not to be demanded back. If they are unable to repay, the debt is to be forgiven in the year of cancellation. Additionally, the gleanings from the field are to be left for the poor:

When you gather in the harvest of your land, you must not completely harvest the corner of your field, and you must not gather up the gleanings of your harvest. You must not pick your vineyard bare, and you must not gather up the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You must leave them for the poor and the foreigner (Vayiqra 19:9-10).

And finally, a portion of the tithe is to be shared with the orphan and the widow:

You must celebrate the Festival of Succot for seven days, at the time of the grain and grape harvest. You are to rejoice in your festival, you, your son, your daughter, your male and female slaves, the Levi, the resident foreigners, the orphans, and the widows who are in your villages (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 16:13-14). Every one of you must give as you are able, according to the blessing of Yahuwah your Elohim that he has given you (vs. 17).

Ya'acov (James, the brother of the Master) puts giving to the widow and orphan at the top of his list of genuine righteous acts of followers of Messiah:

Pure and undefiled religion before Elohim the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their misfortune and to keep oneself unstained by the world (1:27)

Giving and sharing and lending to the poor, the widow and the orphan was an integral part of the righteous lifestyle Israel is called to live.

The Pharisees taught that this giving to the poor was to be done discreetly, so as to not call attention to the giver.

"Don't do good deeds to be noticed" (*Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 17b*).

"He who gives alms in secret is greater than Moses" (*Babylonian Talmud, Bava Batra 9b*)

"The greatest form of charity is when you give and do not know to whom you give, and the recipient takes and does not know from whom he takes" (*Babylonian Talmud, Bava Batra 10b*).

But, the Pharisees frequently ignored their own teachings. They made a show of their giving by "sounding the trumpet" so that others could see them giving and be in awe over their display of "righteousness." Yahusha, however, rebuked them for this self-serving braggadocio. In order to receive a proper reward from Elohim, this giving to the poor is to be done privately, silently.

The figure of *not letting your left hand know what your right hand is doing* is roughly understood to mean that *your giving should be in secret*. But the origin of that figure of speech has not been satisfactorily discovered - until now! Likely Yahusha was alluding to a proverb which contrasts the mind of the wise man with the mind of the foolish man. The Hebrew text reads as follows:

לֵב חָכָם לְיָמֵינוּ וְלֵב כֶּסֶל לְשִׂמְאֵלוֹ (Ecclesiastes 10:2)

Literally rendered, it says: "The mind (heart) of the wise man is towards his right, but the mind (heart) of the fool is towards his left." This saying has been interpreted and translated as follows:

NIV: The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left.

KJV and the Scriptures: A wise man's heart *is* at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.

NAS: A wise man's heart *directs him* toward the right, but the foolish man's heart *directs him* toward the left.

Other translations render the verse similarly. None deviates much from this.

In the proverb, there is an implied association between the wise and his right hand and between the fool and his left. Here, the *right side* or *right hand* refers to the person who is cognizant of and compliant with the Torah of Yahuwah, while the one on the *left* is in rebellion against the Almighty's Instructions. Anyone who has taken *Hermeneutics 101* or has considered the form of Hebrew poetry knows that, particularly in the Psalms and Proverbs, a common textual device is to make a proposition and then emphasize the point by restating the proposition using synonyms or parallel thoughts. For example,

**Then you would understand the fear of Yahuwah
And find the knowledge of Elohim.
For Yahuwah gives wisdom
Out of his mouth come knowledge and understanding (Mishle 2:5-6).**

Emphasizing contrasting ideas is done in a similar manner: a proposition is cited and then the opposite or contrasting statement follows immediately using antonyms or opposite thoughts. An example of this is

**The fear of Yahuwah is the beginning of knowledge;
Fools despise wisdom and discipline (Mishle 1:7).**

The use of the "right hand" and "left hand" is another such tool of the communicator to provide contrasting thoughts. Even in English we communicate divergent ideas by saying, "*on the one hand...*" but "*on the other hand....*" This is precisely the literary tool Yahusha is employing. He associates the right hand with the wise person and the left hand with the foolish person. To paraphrase, Yahusha is saying, "**Do not let the foolish one know what the wise one is doing.**"

In other words, the wise man who gives to the poor in compliance with the righteous commandment should not display this act before the fool. It is in the same vein as the saying of Yahusha, "**Don't cast your pearls before the swine.**" The foolish man (the one on the left) has no appreciation for the compassionate giving of the righteous man (the right one). Therefore one should give him no occasion to mock or ridicule such giving. Yahusha makes this contrast to teach his disciples that their giving should be discreet and not to make a public display of giving for the sake of drawing attention to oneself. At the end of it all, Yahusha is clearly calling for secrecy and privacy in our giving to the poor.

Teaching on Prayer

And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the congregations and on the corners of the streets, to be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place. And your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly. And when praying, do not keep on babbling like the gentiles. For they think that they shall be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. This, then, is the way you should pray: "Our Father who is in the heavens, let Your Name be set-apart, let Your reign come, let Your desire be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into trial, but deliver us from the wicked one – because Yours is the reign and the power and the esteem, forever. Amen." For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father shall also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither shall your Father forgive your trespasses (Mattityahu 6:5-15)

The next act of righteousness which Yahusha explains is that of praying. He exhorts his followers to not be like the hypocrites (a reference to the showy Pharisees). The Greek word ὑποκριτὰι (*hu-po-kri-tie*) can mean 1. *one who answers, an interpreter* (Plato, Lucian); 2. *an actor, stage-player* (Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, Aelian, Herodian); 3. *in biblical Greek, a dissembler, pretender, hypocrite*: Matt. 6:2,5,16; 7:5; 15:7; 16:3; Mark 7:6; Luke 6:42; 11:44; Luke 12:56; 13:15 (Job 34:30; 36:13, profane, impious). Yahusha was attacking the sincerity of the Pharisees as he called them "pretenders" or "actors." This is clearly because they did not do as they taught.

The shows which they paraded about while in the market places and on street corners was much like the railings of the prophets of Ba'al in the well known story of Eliyahu and his confrontation of the prophets of Ba'al. But the Tanach teaches that prayer should be done in private. Like the righteous act of giving to the poor, prayer should be done, not to be seen by men as one praying, but sincerely and in private. Elisha' did not loudly announce his prayer on behalf of the dead child so as to be seen by men. He prayed privately:

When Elisha" arrived at the house, there was the child lying dead on his bed. He went in by himself and closed the door. Then he prayed to Yahuwah (2 Melachim [Kings] 4:32-33).

This is what Yahusha is teaching - humility of spirit when one prays.

Furthermore, Yahusha also instructed his followers not to babble with vain repetitions when they pray, as though this would get the attention of Elohim. Such mindless babbling is offensive in the ears of Yahuwah and he is not swayed by such prattle. This babbling is a pagan worship practice, not something Yahuwah has endorsed. The prophet Hosea mentions this kind of babbling in connection with the worship of Baal:

When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died. (Hosea 13:1, KJV)

The Hebrew root word here, used only once in the Tanach is *rtt*. This word means *vain repetitions*,

stammering, quaking, trembling, raving in an ecstatic fervor.

This calls to mind the confrontation of Eliyahu (Elijah) and the prophets of Baal. When it was their turn to call upon their god to answer them, the record indicates that they slashed themselves and called upon Baal while stammering and trembling in an ecstatic rage, using vain repetitions. Yet Baal never answered. Yahuwah's prophet did no such thing. He built his altar unto Yahuwah and called upon him to answer. The Almighty answered immediately to show his power and glory.

The Master then provides to his disciples an example of prayer. The so-called "Lord's prayer" is not a formula that has magical power in reciting it. Many Christians recite this prayer, verbatim, as though the mere pronouncing of the words of this prayer provides the worshipper with a special hearing in the presence of the Almighty. Often, this prayer is recited so often that it is done so without giving any thought to the words the prayer is speaking.

The prayer Yahusha recited is a *sample prayer*. It was intended to show his followers what a proper petition to be brought before Elohim should sound like. It provides a guideline for the kind of thoughts and requests we should be bringing to him. Thus, mindless, repetitious reciting of "the Lord's prayer" is counterproductive and useless, because Yahuwah does not want to hear that kind of blather - he already knows what you need!

This model prayer can be broken down into its primary elements: **Our Father in heaven**. The use of the familial designation, *Abba*, usually rendering an intimate paternal relationship, is best translated *Dad*. But reverence for Yahuwah constrains us to use the more formal *Father*. The modifier *in heaven* is best understood as a rabbinical and early church substitution for the name *Yahuwah*. Particularly in Mattityahu's account of the life and ministry of Yahusha, *in heaven* is frequently used where we would expect the name *Yahuwah*. Thus, the original prayer probably opens with *Our Father Yahuwah*.

This is immediately followed by *hallowed be thy name*, or, to bring it into the common vernacular, **set-apart be your name**. The name which followers are to call upon, *Yahuwah*, is always to be used with respect. This is what it means that his name is *set-apart* (the term which is more familiar is *holy*). The Third Word (3rd commandment) is *to not lift up the name of Yahuwah unto uselessness*. Yahusha is upholding the Torah instruction as found in Vayiqra [Leviticus] 22:31-32:

You must be sure to do my commandments. I am Yahuwah. You must not profane my set-apart name and I will be set-apart in the midst of the sons of Yisrael. I am Yahuwah who sets you apart.

The name of Yahuwah is always to be honored and praised and respected. So the one who is praying should be calling upon the name Yahuwah with dignity and reverence for his name.

The prophet Ezekiel describes how the exile was caused by the profaning of the name of Yahuwah:

I scattered them among the nations; they were dispersed throughout foreign countries. In accordance with their behavior and their deeds I judged them. But when they arrived in the nations where they went, they profaned my set-apart name. It was said of them, 'These are the people of Yahuwah, yet they have departed from his land.' I was concerned for my set-apart reputation which the house of Yisrael profaned among the nations where they went. Therefore say to the house of Yisrael, 'This is what Adonai Yahuwah says: It is not for your sake

that I am about to act, house of Yisrael, but for the sake of my set-apart reputation which you profaned among the nations where you went (Yechezqel [Ezekiel] 36:19-22).

Thus, Yahusha is clearly implying that the correct way to call upon Yahuwah is with respect and reverence, unlike our forefathers who were booted from the land because of their profaning of his name. Anyone who claims to be attached to the Almighty through Messiah Yahusha must call upon his name, rather than disrespecting his name and reputation by substituting his set-apart name *Yahuwah* by some other substitute designation. Christians and Jews alike are guilty of doing this.

It is very popular in Christian circles to call upon "the LORD" instead of calling upon his actual name *Yahuwah*. And it is demanded in Jewish circles to call upon "HaShem" or "Adonai" instead of by his real name *Yahuwah*. That foolishness must be brought to an end. After all, didn't Yahusha say to the Pharisees, "**You shall not see me again until you cry out, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name Yahuwah'**"? Those who claim relationship with Elohim must repent of their disrespecting of his name and learn to call upon him by his set-apart name *Yahuwah*, in compliance with the third commandment.

Your kingdom come is reminiscent of the proclamations of the prophets that the kingdom of Yahuwah is coming. This is not a new prayer. All of the righteous ones who preceded Messiah had been praying and calling upon Yahuwah to usher in the Messianic age.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven is another common plea to the Almighty. This petition has in mind the promises of the prophets that Yahuwah will cleanse the earth of unrighteousness while judging those who transgress his Torah. His will is going to be done when Israel repents and turns away from its rebellion and begins to obey all the Instructions and Commandments of Scripture, and when Elohim destroys the rebellious. This prayer is tantamount to asking for the judgment and restoration of the world to take place.

Psalm 40:8 equates the will of Elohim with the doing of the Torah of Elohim:

I delight to do your will, my Elohim; yes, your Torah is within my heart.

Not only does the New Covenant feature the Torah as the will of Elohim to be placed in the believer's heart...

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares Yahuwah. "I will put my Law in their minds and write it on their hearts" (Yirmyahu 31:32).

...but also, the Messiah will be teaching this Torah to the nations during his reign upon the earth:

In the future the mountain of Yahuwah's temple will endure as the most important of mountains, and will be the most prominent of hills. All the nations will stream to it, many peoples will come and say, "Come, let's go up to Yahuwah's mountain, to the temple of the Elohim of Ya'acov, so he can teach us his requirements, and we can follow his standards." For Zion will be the center for Torah; Yahuwah will issue edicts from Yerushalayim (Yeshayahu 2:2-3).

Consequently, we understand that Yahusha's sample prayer teaches us to be praying for all the nations to

be obeying the Torah, because this is the will of Elohim. (But if some in the Christian church won't agree with the importance of obeying the Law of Elohim, how can they be praying for all the nations to do so?)

Give us today our daily bread. One of the core essentials which Yahuwah provides for his people while acting as their Elohim is the daily provision of food. The wilderness wanderings were an ideal setting for Yahuwah to demonstrate to Israel that he keeps his promise to be an Elohim to them. Yahuwah provided manna every morning for the people throughout the forty years of their wandering in the wilderness. He wanted them to understand that "**man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of Elohim.**" Nevertheless, he feed them faithfully, every day that they walked in the desert. This request for just one's daily food recalls the prayer of Shelomo:

Two matter I have asked of you - deny them not to me before I die. Remove falsehood and a lying word far from me. Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me my portion of bread, lest I become satisfied and deny you, and say, "Who is Yahuwah?" And lest I be poor and steal and seize the name of my Elohim (Mishlei [Proverbs] 30:7-9).

We now come to the main point of "the Lord's prayer." This example prayer was designed to underscore the importance of forgiving your brother. **Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.** Yahusha follows up the prayer by insisting that **if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father shall also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither shall your Father forgive your trespasses** (Mattityahu 6:15).

The Tanach teaches with no ambiguity that Elohim Yahuwah does not hear our prayers when there is un-confessed, unsettled transgression in our lives:

...even his prayers are an abomination.... (Mishlei [Proverbs] 28:9)

Therefore, no prayer is going to reach the ears of Elohim if we come before him dirtied by sin. More to the point, our very fellowship with Him and acceptance by Him is contingent upon our settling of our personal grievances with others. We could lose that relationship with Elohim through Messiah if we stubbornly cling to a selfish unforgiving spirit.

The prayer to **Lead us not into temptation** uses a Hebrew idiom in which an active verb is used to express permission to do a thing. It could be rendered, "Let us not come into temptation." The thought is not that Elohim might lead us into temptation and, so, we are praying that he not do this. Elohim cannot tempt with or be tempted by sin. Rather, we understand this to mean *let us not come into temptation*, or, *protect us from falling into temptation*. The weakness of human flesh may cause us to fall into temptation, but with Elohim's help, we can find the strength and direction to steer clear of temptation's way.

Deliver us from evil is the alternative to falling into temptation. Elohim is the protector of Israel, and as such, he will deliver his obedient ones from the midst of sin's temptation. This is a request for that deliverance. As the apostle Sha'ul points out:

No temptation has come upon you except that which is common to man. But Elohim will, with the temptation, also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Some Greek manuscripts record a final piece at the end of the prayer: **For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.** This doxology is reminiscent of David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10-13.

Then David blessed Yahuwah in the presence of the whole assembly, praying in these words: "Blessed may you be, Yahuwah, Elohim of Israel our father, from eternity to eternity. Yours, Yahuwah, are grandeur and power, majesty, splendor, and glory. For all in heaven and on earth is yours; yours, Yahuwah, is the sovereignty; you are exalted as head over all. Riches and honor are from you, and you have dominion over all. In your hand are power and might; it is yours to give grandeur and strength to all. Therefore, our Elohim, we give you thanks and we praise the majesty of your name."

This is a fitting and appropriate praising of the Elohim of Israel. Whether the doxology is in the "original" text or not makes little difference. Prayer should include praise befitting a glorious and kind Elohim.

Instruction about Fasting

And when you fast, do not be sad-faced like the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces so that they appear to be fasting to men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place. And your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly (Mattityahu 6:16-18)

The third righteous act which Yahusha refers to is that of fasting. He says, **when you fast**. The assumption is made, not a commandment given, that you will fast. Again, fasting, like the other "acts of righteousness," is not to be done for a show - to demonstrate to all who are watching of just how righteous you are. The Pharisees liked to do this. They disfigured their faces by wearing a sad or gloomy expression and proudly displayed their fasting. In the Greek, there is a word play with *aphanizo* which is translated "to make invisible, to disfigure." The Pharisees did this to *phanizo* ("to be made visible, to be seen") before men.

Yahusha commanded his disciples not to disfigure their faces. They were to wash their faces and conceal their fasting so that their reward would be seen only by Elohim, who would reward them openly. Anointing is a symbol of joy. Thus, the followers of Messiah were to have joyful expressions when they fast, indicating a positive influence on others.

The fasting that pleases Yahuwah, as described in Yeshayahu 58, does not proclaim gloom and despair. True fasting is to be accompanied by acts of kindness, displays of righteousness (giving, forgiving) and mercy:

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own (vs. 6-7).

The true fast is one in which the worshipper pleads for his request by repenting and showing his sincerity through the doing of the commandments and the performing of the righteous acts of caring for others.

Instruction about Treasure

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart shall be also (Mattityahu 6:19-21)

With this instruction about treasure, Yahusha is transitioning from the reward which the Pharisees seek ("to be seen of men") to that which Yahuwah offers. The reward which the Pharisees seek is based upon what they can get now. The reward which Yahuwah offers is that which you will receive later. The reward of material possessions and wealth and popularity will dissipate - the rust and moth destroy, while the eternal reward for doing righteousness for the right reasons reaches far into the future and is long-lasting.

It goes without saying that people seek after those things which they believe will make them happy and successful. Usually, those things which people think will make them happy are materialistic and temporal. But Yahusha is suggesting that true joy and happiness is found in those things which Yahuwah treasures - righteousness and justice, etc. If you love the materialistic reward, your heart will seek after material things. But if you love Yahuwah and righteousness, you will seek after those things which he loves.

The Evil Eye

The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, all your body shall be enlightened. But if your eye is evil, all your body shall be darkened. If, then, the light that is within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! (Mattityahu 6:22,23)

In this saying, Yahusha is combining two well known metaphors: light and the eye. *Light* represents what is good and righteous. The *eye* represents what we "set our sights on." The *good eye* is a Hebrew idiom which means "to be generous." This is seen in the parallelism in Mishlei [Proverbs] 22:9:

**He who has a good eye is blessed,
For he gives of his bread to the poor.**

The good eye represents the man who is compliant with Torah by providing food for the poor, the widow and the orphan.

If the *good eye* indicates a generous person, then the *evil eye* is an idiom which means "to be stingy." The stingy one, who refuses to share with the poor, is in adversarial relationship to Yahuwah who calls us

to love our neighbor and share with the poor. This is in agreement with Mishlei (Proverbs) 23:6: "**Do not eat the bread of one having an evil eye.**" Other interpretations of this Hebrew phrase, literally rendered, "evil eye," include, "stingy person" or "selfish man." Yahusha is saying that if your outlook is to be generous (a good eye) then your body (your life) will be full of light. But if you are stingy (evil eye) then you will be full of darkness.

This verse is one of a myriad of examples offering evidence that the book of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew as whoever translated it into the Greek, was not aware of what the term "evil eye" meant. They simply translated the phrase word for word, which loses its meaning in the Greek and English.

On Worrying

No one is able to serve two masters, for either he shall hate the one and love the other, or else he shall cleave to the one and despise the other. You are not able to serve Elohim and mammon. Because of this I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you shall eat or drink, or about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than the food and the body more than the clothing? Look at the birds of the heaven, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into storehouses, yet your heavenly Father does feed them. Are you not worth more than they? And which of you by worrying is able to add one cubit to his life's span? So why do you worry about clothing? Note well the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin, and I say to you that even Shelomoh in all his esteem was not dressed like one of these. But if Elohim so clothes the grass of the field, which exists today, and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more you, O you of little belief? Do not worry then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For all these the gentiles seek for. And your heavenly Father knows that you need all these. But seek first the reign of Elohim, and His righteousness, and all these matters shall be added to you. Do not, then, worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow shall have its own worries. Each day has enough evil of itself (Mattityahu 6:24-34)

Here, Yahusha continues the theme he began with the teaching about the good eye and the evil eye; that is, where do we place our priority - on accumulating wealth stingily or on sharing with those in need? You cannot do both. To serve money is to act selfishly in accumulating wealth. To serve Elohim is to share with those in need. If you withhold from the needy you are not serving Elohim.

The first commandment compels us to have no other elohim before Yahuwah. Thus, we cannot serve two masters. If we cling to our mammon at the expense of serving Elohim, then we are serving it and not Him. Tithing, as an expression of loving Elohim and only Elohim, is a demonstration that we have no elohim before him, that we are not serving another master. Tithing was first introduced to us through Abraham who tithed a tenth of his increase to Melchitsedek. And Yaacov promised to tithe to Yahuwah since He would watch over him in his way. Thus, tithing is still an act of worship today, even though the Levitical priesthood is not currently in operation. When we tithe, we are worshipping Elohim as our only Master rather than mammon.

From there, Yahusha transitions into a monologue about life. What is life, anyway? It does not consist in the money we have or the clothing we wear or the food we eat. Life is best enjoyed by focusing

on personal relationships and taking an interest in others. This is what the Torah is about, also. It's about living our lives for relationships. The Torah commandments can be broken into two categories: that of loving Elohim and that of loving your neighbor. Thus, one's mindset as to what he worries about tells much about the man.

The term *duplicitous* means to be marked by deliberate deceptiveness especially by pretending one set of feelings and acting under the influence of another. One cannot truly love Elohim and be selfish toward his neighbor. Such pretentiousness is duplicitous.

Nothing is accomplished by worrying. In fact, it is a indication that we are still trying to worship two different entities. Worrying is a telltale sign that we still value money more than we trust Elohim. We cannot change anything or make anything better by worrying. More to the point, when we place our entire trust implicitly in the Master, we won't worry. When we are confident that he is in control of the circumstances of our lives, we can rest more easily when we are lacking in the essential things, because we know that he will be an Elohim to us, as he promised, and provide us with everything we need. Yahusha was likely alluding to the sentiment of the Psalmist who puts worrying into perspective:

Look, you make my days short-lived, and my life span is nothing from your perspective. Surely all people, even those who seem secure, are nothing but vapor (39:5).

Ya'acov references this thought also where he asks the question,

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into this or that town and spend a year there and do business and make a profit." You do not know about tomorrow. What is your life like? For you are a puff of smoke that appears for a short time and then vanishes. You ought to say instead, "If Yahuwah is willing, then we will live and do this or that." (4:13-15).

So, it is not within our hands to grow a cubit or add a day to our lives. All of that is in Yahuwah's hands, and life is best enjoyed when we understand that and put things into perspective.

With that in mind, and with nothing else to hinder our thoughts and expectations, the only thing left to drive our lives is the kingdom of Elohim and his righteousness. Laying aside all other worries and cares, we truly can place all our energy in seeking to walk righteously in the commandments of Elohim and thus move in the direction of his kingdom. Isn't this what the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings teach? that we should love Him with all our being and steadfastly cling to him?

Commit your future to Yahuwah! Trust in him, and he will act on your behalf. He will vindicate you in broad daylight, and publicly defend your just cause. Wait patiently for Yahuwah! Wait confidently for him! Do not fret over the apparent success of a sinner, a man who carries out wicked schemes! Do not be angry and frustrated! Do not fret! That only leads to trouble! Wicked men will be wiped out, but those who rely on Yahuwah are the ones who will possess the land (Psalm 37:5-9).

When we completely trust in his ability to provide our every need, we don't have to worry about where the next meal is coming from. Like he did as he brought his people through the wilderness, he provides bread and water everyday for his own - even their sandals did not wear out in the desert!

Judging

Do not judge, lest you be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged. And with the same measure you use, it shall be measured to you. And why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not notice the plank in your own eye? Or how is it that you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the splinter out of your eye,' and see, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to remove the splinter out of your brother's eye (Mattityahu 7:1-5)

This saying of Yahusha is so often misinterpreted and misapplied, it boggles the mind! The usual application of this saying is to suggest that good Christians will not judge or confront someone's misdeed because "Jesus" taught them not to. Whenever someone wants to commit sin and not be confronted with it, they quote this saying: "Didn't Jesus say not to judge lest you be judged"? But nothing could be further from the truth.

The first and most obvious proof that this is not what Yahusha is teaching is that he goes on to describe under what circumstances you can and should confront your brother's sin. He teaches us to "remove the plank from your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to remove the splinter out of your brother's eye." Clearly, you should confront and help remove the "splinter" - that is, the sin - out of your brother's life. But you must make sure that you have taken care of your own sin problem first.

The Torah teaches us very plainly that we are to confront and rebuke sin. At the very heart of the holiness code in Vayiqra, where Yah teaches us what it means to be set-apart just as he is set-apart, is the instruction compelling us to rebuke our erring brother:

Reprove your neighbour, for certain, and bear no sin because of him (Vayiqra 19:17).

The meaning of this instruction is that if you witness someone committing transgression, you must confront that brother. If not, you too bear the responsibility and guilt for that sin.

Ya'acov (James) alludes to the same instruction where he writes:

Brothers, if anyone among you goes astray from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the straying of his way shall save a life from death and cover a great number of sins (5:19-20).

It is the responsibility and moral obligation of everyone who sees his brother sin to confront the problem to give the brother an opportunity to repent, and also to keep sin out of the camp of Israel. When a transgression is thus halted, it puts an end to any further sins that would have resulted from the first sin.

The Torah explicitly commands Israel to execute judgment when a case between two parties needs to be settled. This is so fundamental to the health and well-being of the nation, its embarrassing to have to explain:

You must not deal unjustly in judgment: you must neither show partiality to the poor nor honor the rich. You must judge your fellow citizen fairly (Vayiqra 19:15).

Thus, Yahusha certainly could not be teaching his disciples not to "judge" anyone; that is, confront sin. Just the opposite, the Torah which Yahusha supported requires you to confront sin that you are a witness to, and that you are to execute judgment justly when two parties bring their disagreement to be settled.

So what is Yahusha saying? The clue is in the Greek word employed. The Greek word κρινω (pronounced *krinow*) means "to pass judgment on (midd. and pass. often stand trial, go to law); condemn; decide, determine." A better translation is: "Condemn not, and you will not be condemned." It is the individual's responsibility to confront and rebuke sin where he sees it. But no single person has the right to judge a person and sentence (condemn) a person for any matter. Instead, the Torah instructs us that "**on the testimony of two or three witnesses shall a matter be settled.**"

Yahusha elsewhere describes how to confront an erring brother: if your brother does not heed your rebuke, take a witness or two with you and confront him in his transgression. If he refuses to listen still, he is to be brought before the congregation of elders where he may either repent or be shunned by the community. Yahusha is once again validating and upholding the Torah as the correct way to conduct life's business in the body of Messiah.

Dogs and Pigs

Do not give what is set-apart to the dogs, nor throw your pearls before the pigs, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces (Mattityahu 7:6)

Yahusha had already spoken to the issue of how one should give. It is clear that righteous giving is done with an eye toward helping the poor, not for heaping praise upon oneself. Thus, giving is done discreetly and secretly. Now he addresses the question of who should be the recipient of our acts of righteous giving. And he does so in the negative. It is not difficult to discern his teaching about who NOT to give to - those who would make a mockery of your generosity.

But the question that needs unfolding is that of identifying what he meant by "dogs" and "pigs." Some commentators are pleased to suggest that Messiah was name calling - that he is referring to Gentile unbelievers as "dogs" and "pigs." But I find this quite unlikely. On the contrary, Yahusha's work of reconciliation was aimed at "tearing down the wall of hostility" and breaking down the barriers that precluded those outside of Covenant relationship from joining the people of Elohim. I think it is distasteful and derogatory toward "the Prophet" to suggest he would continue to promote the divisive stereotypes made popular by the Pharisees and religious leaders of the day.

It seems to me that Yahusha is calling to mind a well-known saying of the wise from the book of Proverbs:

**Like a ring of gold in a pig's snout,
Is a lovely woman who lacks good sense (Mishlei 11:22).**

The proverb underscores the uselessness of placing something valuable on an ugly, dirty animal which couldn't appreciate its value. Likewise, it would be senseless and pointless to inundate haters of Yahuwah with extravagant gifts and the finer blessings of the faith, because they couldn't properly receive it and respond to it. Thus, we should use discernment and discretion in our giving. The acts of kindness are intended to care for the poor and needy among the household of faith.

Ask, Seek, Knock

Ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Or is there a man among you who, if his son asks for bread, shall give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, shall he give him a snake? If you then, being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in the heavens give what is good to those who ask Him! (Mattityahu 7:7-11)

We can discern that the "ask, seek, knock" prelude to the Golden Rule teaching alludes to the command to love Elohim. The understood context of "ask, seek, knock" is that the requester is a "son" to the "Father." In other words, the one asking is in a proper relationship with the one who answers prayer. On the condition that you "**love Yahuwah your Elohim with all your mind, all your soul and all your strength,**" Elohim will respond to your prayer. After all, an earthly father will respond to the needs and requests of his son. How much more will the heavenly Father respond to those who belong to him.

But, the requestor must love Yah with **all** his mind, soul and strength. Half-hearted commitment to Elohim does not guarantee that one's request will be heard or answered. The prophet Jeremiah records the promise that Elohim will answer the prayer of the faithful one who seeks (in prayer) with **all** his mind and soul.

For I know what I have planned for you,' says Yahuwah. '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 Yahuwah. 'Then I will reverse your fortunes and will regather you from all the nations and all the places where I have exiled you,' says Yahuwah. 'I will bring you back to the place from which I exiled you.' (Yirmyahu 29:11-14).

Many who have "claimed" the promise of "ask, seek, knock" are disappointed because their prayers are not heard. But it is not Elohim who has dropped the ball. The condition of getting these prayers answered is that we love him and seek him with all our mind, soul and strength!

The Golden Rule

Therefore, whatever you wish men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Torah and the Prophets (Mattityahu 7:12)

Hillel, the grandfather of Gamliel, said in *the Babylonian Talmud, Shabat 31a* – “What is hateful to you, do it not unto others -- this is the entire Torah, and the rest is commentary.” Not bad, huh? But Yahusha's teaching is even better. He says, **"whatever you wish men to do to you, do also to them."** And this, he says, **"is the Torah and the Prophets."**

The so-called "Golden Rule" says: **"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"** Popular Christian thought teaches that the Golden Rule replaces the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament. Most churches hold this as one of their fundamental premises. But nothing could be further from the truth. Yahusha does not teach that the Golden Rule replaces the Torah and the Prophets. He teaches that the Golden Rule is a summary of the Torah and the Prophets. The Golden Rule is Torah and the Prophets.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of this distinction. The manner of the walk of faith changes dramatically when we understand this saying of Yahusha in its proper context.. Thus, Messiah isn't establishing a New Law for his people, but rather, he is re-establishing and upholding the former Law as the proper walk of faith for his disciples.

This saying is similar to what he said as recorded later in Mattityahu where he taught about the commandment to love:

And one of them, an expert in Torah, asked him a question to test him: "Teacher, which commandment in the Torah is the greatest?" Yahusha said to him, "'Love Yahuwah your Elohim with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Torah and the prophets depend on (literally, "hang off of") these two commandments." (Mattityahu 22:35-40).

The commandments to love Yah and to love your fellow are the greatest. Yahusha teaches that all the rest of the Torah and the Prophets extend from these two commandments. Every commandment of the Law points back to the commandment to love. So it is that the Golden Rule is a summary of the commandment to love your fellow. The Golden Rule does not replace the Torah. The Golden Rule summarizes the Torah and the Prophets.

Entering Into Life

Enter in through the narrow gate! Because the gate is wide – and the way is broad – that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter in through it. Because the gate is narrow and the way is hard pressed which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Mattityahu 7:13,14)

The final section of the Sermon on the Mount focuses primarily on describing the difficulties and pitfalls of the proper walk of faith and its subsequent result of landing in the kingdom of heaven. It is not easy. Yahusha never said it would be easy. In fact, earlier in this sermon, he describes the persecutions all his followers will face. Entering into the kingdom of heaven is like squeezing through a narrow gate!

The easy path to follow leads to death and destruction. The gate through which to enter death is wide and the path to follow is spacious - enough room for the many who choose that path. But the way to life is "narrow and pressed-together" - the Greek word here literally means, "tribulated" or "troubled."

This choice consisting of two options which Yahusha offers to all people is clearly reminiscent of the two choices Yahuwah offered to Israel in the desert. Then, the offer was to enter the promised land, or not. Here, the offer is to enter the promised land (!) which is the kingdom of heaven, or not. Yahusha is making the same offer he made to Israel centuries earlier:

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the Yahuwah your Elohim, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Yahuwah your Elohim may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other elohim and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Yahuwah your Elohim, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Yahuwah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them" (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 30:15-20).

Do you see the beauty of the consistency of Scripture? Elohim doesn't change. Neither does the offer of the blessing of the inheritance. The promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of an inheritance of land was later offered to the nation of Israel on the condition of their fidelity and obedience to his Covenant Law. And here, Yahusha offers that same promise of the inheritance of land, which he here calls *the kingdom of heaven*, to those who will enter through the narrow gate.

The narrow gate is metaphor for the Torah compliant and Torah teaching Yahusha. Those who join him in the faithful life walk of Torah compliance, which is "narrow" and "full of trouble" will enter into the inheritance with him.

The False Prophets

But beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are savage wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Are grapes gathered from

thornbushes or figs from thistles? So every good tree yields good fruit, but a rotten tree yields wicked fruit. A good tree is unable to yield wicked fruit, and a rotten tree to yield good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, by their fruits you shall know them (Mattityahu 7:15-20).



The picture on the right is a humorous illustration of a wolf in sheep's clothing. Ironically, many of the popular pastors and teachers in the Christian churches wear their "Sunday best" - a finely tailored wool suit (sheep's clothing) - when they stand before their flocks to inflict their false teachings upon them. They are among those of whom Yahusha is warning his disciples to beware.

How can we identify a false prophet? Why - we turn to the instruction of Scripture, of course!

Suppose a prophet or one who foretells by dreams should appear among you and show you a sign or wonder, and the sign or wonder should come to pass concerning what he said to you, namely, "Let us follow other elohim"--elohim whom you have not previously known--"and let us serve them." You must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer, for Yahuwah your Elohim will be testing you to see if you love him with all your mind and being. You must follow Yahuwah your Elohim and revere only him; and you must observe his commandments, obey him, serve him, and remain loyal to him. As for that prophet or dreamer, he must be executed because he encouraged rebellion against Yahuwah your Elohim who brought you from the land of Egypt, redeeming you from the place of slavery, and because he has tried to entice you from the way Yahuwah your Elohim has commanded you to go. In this way you must purge out evil from within. (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 13:1-5).

The false prophets are those who transgress the Torah of Elohim and teach others to do the same. They lead people to follow after other elohim. The one and only true Elohim has commanded his own to faithfully obey all his laws and judgments. This is what it means to be loyal to him. But the false gods offer "another way" - a different law to follow.

The true prophets say the same thing. Ezekiel describes what is wrong with the false prophets, leaders and priests of Israel:

There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her. Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths,

and I am profaned among them. Her princes within her are like wolves tearing the prey, by shedding blood and destroying lives in order to get dishonest gain. Her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says Yahuwah Elohim,' when Yahuwah has not spoken. The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and they have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice (Yechezqel 22:25-29).

Zephaniah also describes the false prophets and rulers in Israel:

Her princes within her are roaring lions, Her judges are wolves at evening; They leave nothing for the morning. Her prophets are reckless, treacherous men; Her priests have profaned the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law (Zephaniah 3:3-4).

Messiah Yahusha said that you can identify a false prophet by his works. That should be pretty easy to spot. If the messenger is in the habit of breaking the commandments of the Law, then his works identify him as a false prophet. The false prophets of the Christian churches, sometimes called "pastors" or "ministers," have been teaching the one great lie that the Law has been done away with. This is by definition what a false prophet is. The false prophet's teachings promote activity that results in sin. The false prophet pastors and teachers tell their congregations that you should not guard the Sabbath day to set it apart. And those who do keep Sabbath they label "judaizers" or "legalists." No matter how sincere and well-meaning these people are, if they teach that the Law is to be shunned and not followed, then that teacher is a false teacher and is teaching lies in the name of their god.

The true prophet walks in righteousness and teaches righteousness. The true prophet, teacher and leader will obey even the least of the commandments of the Torah and will teach others to obey them, also.

The Judgment of Those Who Reject the Torah

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Master, Master,' shall enter into the reign of the heavens, but he who is doing the desire of My Father in the heavens. Many shall say to Me in that day, 'Master, Master, have we not prophesied in Your Name, and cast out demons in Your Name, and done many mighty works in Your Name?' And then I shall declare to them, 'I never knew you, depart from Me, you who work lawlessness!'

The transition from a discussion of the false prophets to that of the judgment of "workers of lawlessness" is seamless. The link is obvious. The false prophets are those who practice and teach lawlessness - the rejection of the Law of Elohim. Therefore, all the false prophets and all who follow the teachings of the false prophets are going to be rejected in the judgment.

But, Yahusha says, those who do the will of the Father will enter the reign of the heavens. What is the will of Elohim? From the context of this saying alone, it is simple to understand what the "will of My Father" is. Yahusha contrasts those who do the desire of the Father with those who are "workers of lawlessness." Evidently the will of the Father is to obey the Instructions of Scripture, while those who are rejected are the ones who are breaking the Law.

The Psalmist attributes keeping the Law with loyalty to Elohim, while showing that Elohim will reject lawless men in the judgment:

I am determined to obey your rules at all times to the very end. I hate people with divided loyalties, but I love your law. You are my hiding place and my shield. I find hope in your assuring word. Turn back from me, you evil men, so that I might observe the commands of my Elohim. Sustain me as you promised, so that I might live. Do not disappoint me! Support me, so that I might be delivered. Then I will focus on your rules continually. You despise all who stray from your rules, for they are deceptive and unreliable. You remove all the wicked of the earth like slag. Therefore I love your rules (Psalm 119:112-119).

Yahusha was alluding to this Scripture where he concluded, "Depart from me you workers of iniquity." Those who transgress the Torah are tossed out in the judgment, while those loving him and obeying his commandments are received.

The will of the Father is expressed in the commandments which form the Torah. The heart of the Law is the "holiness code" found in Vayiqra [Leviticus] 15-20. This section of the Torah elaborates and explains the concept of holiness, which means "set-apart-ness." The Holiness Code delineates set-apartness in sexual conduct, set-apartness in eating (defining the difference between clean and unclean), and other miscellaneous laws which define "holiness." The Holiness Code was given by divine authority - it consists of the very "words that proceed from the mouth of Elohim." Interspersed throughout this teaching section is the refrain, "**Be holy because I, Yahuwah your Elohim, am holy.**"

The apostle Sha'ul defines the will of Elohim the same way as the Levitical Holiness Code:

For you know what commands we gave you through the Master Yahusha. For this is Elohim's will: that you become set-apart, that you keep away from sexual immorality, that each of you know how to possess his own body in holiness and honor, not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know Elohim. In this matter no one should violate the rights of his brother or take advantage of him, because Yahuwah is the avenger in all these cases, as we also told you earlier and warned you solemnly. For Elohim did not call us to impurity but in holiness. Consequently the one who rejects this is not rejecting human authority but Elohim, who gives his Set-apart Spirit to you (1 Thessalonians 4:2-8)

Sha'ul is obviously alluding to the sexual conduct portion of the Levitical Holiness Code. Being set-apart to Elohim includes conducting oneself within the confines of proper sexual behavior - which is to say, that one does NOT transgress by performing that which is restricted in Vayiqra 18.

Ultimately, the will of Elohim is performed by those who walk within the boundaries of the Law of commandments given through Mosheh to the sons of Israel. And therefore, transgression of that same Law constitutes sin. This is precisely how Yochanan defines sin in the first epistle that bears his name:

Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; indeed, sin is lawlessness (1 Yochanan 3:4)

We can conclude by noting that Yahusha is addressing people who continue to transgress the Torah where

he orders those standing before him to "depart from me."

So, just who are these people whom Yahusha Messiah will reject in the judgment? Certainly the vile and wicked will be rejected, as well as the atheist and worshippers of others gods. But Yahusha is not talking about those people in this Sermon on the Mount. He is talking about a people who claim to be his people! These are people who think they belong to him. They first of all acknowledge that Yahusha is "Master." And they describe themselves as "prophesying in Your name" and "casting out demons in Your Name," and having "done many mighty works in Your Name." Yet these same people reject Yah's Law and Father's commandments. Yahusha therefore calls them "workers of lawlessness."

Who are these people? Jews don't do these things in Yahusha's name. Muslims don't do these things in Yahusha's name. Atheists don't do these things in Yahusha's name. So just who are these people that Messiah is referring to? The antinomian Christian religion is the only group that fits the description of these people. The Law-rejecting Christian world claims relationship to Elohim through "Jesus." Christians are the only people in the world who prophesy in his name and cast out demons in his name and "do many mighty works" in that name.

In the judgment, Yahusha is going to reject Christians who have rejected the Law and transgress the Law and teach others to transgress the Law also. The Christians who teach that "Jesus did away with the Law" are those who transgress the Law and teach others to do so also. If we really believe the words of Yahusha, then we must understand that those Christians who reject the Torah, along with the Sabbath and set-apart days, the laws of clean and unclean and all the rest of the body of commandments will be rejected in the judgment, because they have stubbornly refused the will of Elohim for their lives and have accepted and believed a false hope and a false concept of Messiah preached in a false gospel.

The Importance of Foundation

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does them, shall be like a wise man who built his house on the rock, and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not do them, shall be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand, and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat on that house, and it fell, and great was its fall" (Mattityahu 7:21-27)

What are "**these words of mine**"? What words carry the authority of Elohim? Is Yahusha merely referring to his teachings in the Sermon on the Mount or is he talking about all of the Torah? It should not be difficult to guess that the answer is "both." He is teaching with the authority of Elohim and his teaching here in this sermon consists of the insightful interpretation of the Torah of Mosheh. So, "**these words of mine**" include all of the Torah properly interpreted.

By the use of the word *hears* where he speaks of "hearing these words of mine," Yahusha is calling to mind all that the Hebrew word *shema'* envelopes. *Shema'* in the Hebrew mind and culture does not merely refer to the sound waves that enter the ears. It speaks of one's proper response to the commandments of Elohim. *Shema'* means "obey, do, perform." *Shema'* is an action of compliance and

loyalty. Thus, to hear the voice of Elohim is to obey the command of Elohim. Those who are "**hearing these words of mine**" are those who put into practice all that Yahusha is teaching.

Who is the wise man? Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:6 says that the wise nation is that people who put into practice the commandments of Elohim:

So be sure to do them, because this will testify of your wise understanding to the people who will learn of all these rules and say, "Indeed, this great nation is a very wise people."

The wise one is he who obeys Yahuwah and performs his precepts:

To obey Yahuwah is the fundamental principle for wise living; all who carry out his precepts acquire good moral insight. He will receive praise forever (Psalm 111:10).

The book of Proverbs also speaks volumes about who the wise man is. There are dozens of references to the behaviour and attitude of the wise one. Here are a few:

The wise person accepts Instructions, but the one who speaks foolishness will come to ruin (10:8).

The fear of Yahuwah provides wise instruction, and before honor comes humility (15:33).

Fearing Yahuwah is the beginning of moral knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction (1:7).

Clearly, the wise man is the one who loves and fears Elohim and obeys his Instructions

Yahusha compares the wise man who obeys his teachings to a man who built a house on a solid foundation. And he compares those who practice lawlessness to a man who builds his house on a collapsing foundation - that of sand. The solid foundation is the Torah, upon which the wise man builds his house. The wise man can weather the storm, because he is grounded on Yahuwah's Torah.

The foolish man, however, who is also called "the false prophet" above, cannot withstand the onslaught of the storm, because the storm is the judgment Yahuwah brings. Compare this story to that found in YirmeYahu, who describes the judgment of the false prophets:

Therefore, this is what Adonai Yahuwah says: Because you have spoken false words and seen lying visions, I am against you, declares Adonai Yahuwah. My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and announce lying omens. They will not be included in the council of my people, nor be written in the registry of the house of Yisrael, nor enter the land of Yisrael. Then you will know that I am Adonai Yahuwah. This is because they have led my people astray saying, "Peace," when there is no peace. When anyone builds a wall they coat it with whitewash. Tell the ones who coat it with whitewash that it will fall. There will be a deluge of rain, hailstones will fall, and a violent wind will break out.

When the wall has collapsed, people will ask you, "Where is the whitewash you coated it with?" Therefore this is what Adonai Yahuwah says: In my rage I will make a violent wind break out. In my anger there will be a deluge of rain, and hailstones in destructive fury. I will break down the wall you coated with whitewash, and level it to the ground so that its foundation is exposed. When it falls you will be destroyed beneath it, and you will know that I am Yahuwah. I will vent my rage against the wall, and against those who coated it with whitewash. Then I will say to you, "The wall is no more and those who whitewashed it are no more-- those prophets of Yisrael who prophesied about Yerushalayim and saw visions of peace for it, when there was no peace," declares Adonai Yahuwah.' (Yechezqel 13:8-16).

This concluding story to the Sermon on the Mount is actually prognosticating the judgment of the false prophets and all who follow them. But those who remain loyal to Elohim and obey the teachings of Yahusha will be safe because they have built their walk before Elohim upon the commandments of Scripture. They have remained loyal to Elohim and have demonstrated this loyalty by remaining true to his Law.

Conclusion

And it came to be, when Yahusha had ended these words, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He was teaching them as one possessing authority, and not as the scribes (Mattityahu 7:28,29)

It was very evident to everyone in his listening audience that Yahusha was not like the scribes and Pharisees. His teaching was as one who is an authority. His Torah knowledge far surpassed the understanding of the most learned men of his (or any other) time. The scribes were the "biblical scholars" of the day. They weren't even in the same league with Yahusha on his grasp of the concepts and content of the Torah.

Mattityahu notes that the people were "astonished." The Greek word employed here (ἐκπλήσσω) properly means "to strike out, expel by a blow, drive out or away; to cast off by a blow, to drive out." In our slang, we might say that the people were "blown away" by the teaching of Yahusha. And rightly so. He was teaching and explaining the Torah and its deeper meaning unlike anyone else before him had. He was teaching with great understanding, insight and clarity. He was teaching the Truth.

END