

# **The Instructions and Commandments of Jesus Christ**

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## **Introduction**

It is recorded that Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.", John 14:21. Note, all scriptural references are from the KJV unless otherwise noted.

The question then becomes, what are the commandments of Jesus and how are we to obey them? How are the doctrines (teaching) of the Apostles to be integrated into the commandments of Jesus? Then there is the question of how are over one thousand quotations from the Old Covenant scriptures, that are found in the New Covenant writings, relate to one another and to the 21<sup>st</sup> century professing Christians?

I have listened to a great many preachers, teachers, church elders, and other spiritual leaders, plus a multitude of just good old saints trying to work out their salvation. What the vast majority of them have in common is the lack of knowledge of what are the New Covenant requirements of a disciple of Christ. It usually consists of one or more of the following: Believe in Jesus, do not judge, love everyone, go to church on Sunday, get baptized, pay tithes and offerings, and obey the pastor. Some have given better answers, but not very many! What made me sit up and take notice, however, was when I asked myself that same question! Much to my surprise and horror was that I too had little knowledge of what my savior and spiritual master actually taught, and where and how that teaching was to be implemented into my life and in relationship with Him and my fellow brethren. So, I embarked on this adventure that I am about to share with you.

## **Background**

The commandments of God were given in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament writings. However, there were additional instructions that were given, or acquired, during the years after the Hebrew nation encountered God at Mt. Sinai. This additional group of instructions was called the Oral Law (also recorded in the Talmud/Mishna/Gemara during different historical periods, along with the teachings of the Hebraic sages. For a good overview of what constituted the Oral Law, and the Hebraic understanding of the scriptures, do a web word search for Talmud, Mishna, and Gemara. While referencing these writings on occasion we will not study them in this book.

The initial purpose for the Oral Law was to provide guidance on how to observe (obey) the written instructions (law). This was because so many of the instructions given by God simply did not tell anyone how to obey the laws. The first example of an oral law is given in response to "The Law":

“Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day. Exodus 35:3. And, the oral instruction was recorded later when that law was not observed

“And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And **they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him [in the Law]**. And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.” Numbers 15:32-36 [Emphases added]

The first oral instructions concerning the Law were given by God, Himself. Plus, in what most folks would consider to be in a most unjust manner, God gave a death sentence as the penalty for breaking the Sabbath “no work rule” - after the transgression was committed! No arguments and no appeal. So, what happened after that? Men started generating a list of “fence laws” in the hope that by obeying these man-made ordinances no one would be guilty of breaking one of God's laws. An admirable idea, don't you agree? So now there are over one hundred ordinances governing just observing the Sabbath day, such things as how much weight one can lift on a Sabbath, how far one can walk, etc. To demonstrate:

“To give an instance of the kind of questions that were generally discussed: the standard measure for forbidden food was the size of an olive, just as that for carrying burdens was the weight of a fig. If a man swallowed forbidden food of the size of half an olive, rejected it, and again eaten of the size of half an olive, he would be guilty, because the palate had altogether tasted food to the size of a whole olive; but if one had deposited in another locality a burden of the weight of a half a fig, and removed it again, it involved no guilt, because the burden was altogether only of half a fig, nor even if the first half fig's burden had been burnt and then a second half fig introduced. Similarly, if an object that was intended to be worn or carried in front had slipped behind it involved no guilt, but if it had been intended to be worn or carried behind, and it slipped forward, this involved guilt, as involving labor.”

From The Law of The Sabbath From The Mishnah And The Jerusalem Talmud, Advanced Information (From Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah by Alfred Edersheim, 1886, Appendix XVII) [mb-soft.com/believe/txo/lawsabba.htm](http://mb-soft.com/believe/txo/lawsabba.htm)

Now recall God's decree for breaking the Sabbath “no work” law cited above, and one can understand how the Sabbath laws such as this these came to be developed. But, looking forward just a little, we can also find how Jesus viewed such attempts to observe the Law of God.

“Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. Matthew” 23:1-4

In an effort to become more acceptable unto God, men continued to create new and more burdensome requirements upon the people. And yes, we have the same mentality at work within the church today, where in some congregations the size of an olive or the weight of a fig has been transformed to a required measurement of a lady's skirt/dress length, a man's haircut, a list of where one can go and those places that are forbidden, even the color of clothes that are permitted and not permitted to be worn – and the list goes on. While the objects of interest may have altered somewhat over time, according to the current approved traditions of the Christian Gentiles, the Matthew 23 mentality has remained with us.

Even so, the question then begs itself: Why did God leave so many of His instructions in righteousness (Torah/Law) so “incomplete”, where man had little choice but at some undefined point - to fail, as in Numbers 15:32-36? Why was man later allowed to mess with the divine instructions and devise their own set of standards (ordinances, statutes, laws) for men to follow in the hopes of fulfilling God's Law? If we are allowed to set (modify, create, set aside, rewrite) God's requirements, why is it then impossible for mankind to fully comply with all of the requirements of the Law of God?

From this point, we will have to frequent the history of the Jewish people; attempt to understand their culture (the shared knowledge and values of their society), religion (the spiritual foundation of Christianity) and their language (manner and modes of thinking and expression, their world view).

All of the above elements of this discussion are important, because of the great disturbance Jesus created when He came on the scene and challenged the religious mindset of the day, and brought a new approach to understanding and living out the precepts of God's Law. Let us than take a fresh look at the scriptures in order to gain some insight and understanding of how the change in perception of God's Law was expressed through how Jesus modeled and later taught by His Apostles, and what that change in perception means for the church of today.

At this point in the study, everyone should have read through the thread referenced in the above posts, checked out the cited web site and reviewed the cited scriptures. It is imperative that the introductory material be read in order to understand some of the references that will be made to the foundational precepts that will be used as we progress through the study of the commandments of Christ

So that all will know that this is not a trivial matter:

Luke 46, And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Matt 21, Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

John 14:15, If ye love me, keep my commandments. John 14:21, He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

John 15:10, If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

1 John 5:2,3, By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous, but we have been told otherwise, Acts 15:7-19.

So, which statement is true? The commandments are “keepable” and “not grievous”, or are they impossible to keep”?

2 John 1:6, And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

And, are the commandments of God, and even Christ, still in effect? Jesus said:

Matthew 5:18, For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished.

Luke 16:17, But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall.

Message: If one does not keep the commandments of God and Jesus Christ, then that is evidence that they do not actually love Them. One cannot observe and keep Their commandments if one does not know and understand them – to have them internalized. To think otherwise is the height of self-deception. Therefore, some more questions for consideration:

Do you love God and hate your neighbor? Do you actually understand what this means?

Do you love your fellow disciples of Jesus, or just those you approve of? Are you clear on what qualifies a person to be a true disciple of Christ?

Are you a teacher of God's word and can't or won't teach on all of Christ's commandments according His precepts?

Are you a servant or a master over the congregation – who is the true servant – do you really know and understand what your job responsibilities are – and those of the other members of the assembly and how everyone is to work together?

Where are the resources of your congregation focused, on its people or on projects and buildings? Can your distribution of resources be justified by the teaching of Christ – and the Apostles?

As a saint and priest of God, how do you exercise your calling, gifts, responsibilities, and ministry within the assembly? Do you know and understand what they are? Or, do you leave these things to a select few? What about exercising your calling in relationship with the greater body of Christ (outside of the local assembly)?

Are you able to integrate the teaching of the Apostles with the teaching of Jesus, so that there are no conflicts or disconnects in doctrine?

If you are in “the ministry”, who ordained you? God or man? If established by men, you can show your papers. If by God, how do you establish your office – beyond dispute?

As a teacher, can you explain the differences between a commandment, law, ordinance and a statute, as used in scripture – and are you able to identify exactly what it is that was nailed to the cross of Jesus?

These are just a few of the things that being ignorant of the commandments of Jesus Christ (Son of the Lord God - HaMaschiah Yeshua ben Adonai Elohim) that can result in grave error within the body of Christ.

In this day and age, it has become critical that the Disciples of Christ [Talmidim HaMaschiah] to know specifically what it is that they have confessed to, what their covenant requirements are, and be able to stop and take stock of where they stand before God, and to identify any correction that may be required and move on into righteousness and holiness. Reference 2Cor13:5

If I should not post another word on this subject, every reader of this thread has all of the tools at hand to complete the study on their own. Willful ignorance will not be a valid defense for sin before a righteous God; neither will a self-justified heart/conscience.

### **Let's start at the beginning**

First, let's take a look at the commandments spoken by God at Mt. Sinai.

Exodus 20:1\* And God spoke all these words, saying:

2 I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

5 thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;

6 and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work;

10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the LORD thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates;  
 11 for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.  
 12 Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.  
 13 Thou shalt not murder.  
 14 (20-13\*) Thou shalt not commit adultery.  
 15 (20-13) Thou shalt not steal.  
 16 (20-13) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.  
 17 (20-14) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.  
 18 (20-15) And all the people perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the horn, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off. 19 (20-16) And they said unto Moses: 'Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.  
 20 (20-17) And Moses said unto the people: 'Fear not; for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before you, that ye sin not.'  
 21 (20-18) And the people stood afar off; but Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

\* Differences noted in the JPS verse numbering system vs. the KJV system.  
 [JPS 1917 ed.]

Now, can anyone find a single scripture anywhere in the Bible that even hints at the fact that God may have changed, altered, modified, or perhaps even eliminated any of these cited commandments? I think not, regardless of what some religious leaders, churches, groups or organizations may have decided upon, and perhaps others have simply accepted without study or question.

The conclusion is that Jesus (Yeshua), who was born, lived and died under the Law and who was without sin; one who obeyed these commandments without error as well established in Matthew 5:17-20,

Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed [the righteousness of] the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

With the vain teaching and traditions of men notwithstanding, this is a rather strong declaration coming from a man who contained (and continues to hold) within himself the fullness of God's deity. This then begs the question: Do these commandments continue to be valid for the Jews, for Christians, and/or for all of mankind? The short answer is: Yes, to all of the above. The reason is simple, for salvation is through the Jews and through one Jew in particular, Jesus Christ (John 14:6), as made known by His initial disciples – all of whom were Jews. Without the Jews and their religion (Judaism), there would be no true gospel, Christianity, or any salvation (John 4:22).

Now comes the hard part: Do any of the commandments/instructions of Jesus stand opposed to any part of the "Law of God"?

What have other men have done to the commandments of God? First, many have simply ignored them. Second, many picked out the few they are willing to obey and discarded the rest. Third, others have modified the commandments they did not feel comfortable in discarding but couldn't yet accept as given by God to be obeyed. In any case, those who have elected to observe the commandments that they decided upon, have, for the most part, done so with zeal, even to using them to make strong judgments concerning others who do not obey those commandments as they require.

**While this book concerns the instruction/commandments of Jesus, the bulk of this book focuses first on the manner of His teaching as found in Matthew chapters 5-7. This is because it is fundamental to understanding how the Master Rabi thinks, expressing His world view. Without that understanding, it is very difficult to accurately understand His instructions.**

Therefore going further in Matthew 5 and take a closer look at why it was necessary for Jesus to make His comments (Matt 5:17-20, above) in the first place, how did Jesus view the Law and how did His view differ from the general religious culture of the time?

### **Setting the stage**

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick [lunatic], and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and [from] Decapolis, and [from] Jerusalem, and [from] Judaea, and [from] beyond Jordan. (Matthew 4:23-25)

Here we have the perfect setting for an old-fashioned brush arbor revival meeting. But Yeshua used a very different style of teaching/preaching than what we are used to hearing today (Also see Luke 4:16-30, Mark 4:1, Mark 6:2). Jesus would preach and teach according to the traditional rabbinic method – lecture with examples for concept identification and application – to be followed by question-and-answer sessions. In His sermon on the mount, however, He used what I would call the "classroom lecture" method.

Matthew 5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying ...

3 Blessed [are] the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed [are] they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed [are] the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed [are] they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed [are] the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed [are] the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed [are] the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed [are] they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when [men] shall revile you, and persecute [you], and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. (falsely: Gr. Lying)

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great [is] your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

While it is not my intention to write yet another book covering these ten verses, much less a new book covering Mattheu chapters 5-7, as there are a great number of excellent books on the subject, there are a number of things that need to be pointed out as being germane to the discussion. Starting with the following:

1. Yeshua is listing the attributes of men that God finds pleasing, the acceptable demonstration of a godly life. In other words, we have another example of Torah, generally referred to as The Law, being listed out for those Jews listening to His words, but in a different context than they were used to hearing. The “sayings” may also be called The Requirements of Discipleship.
2. Does one desire to possess the kingdom of heaven? Then one must first be poor in spirit.
3. Has one been comforted by God when they have mourned [over evil and unrighteousness and the resulting loss of godliness and holiness]? How often do any of us mourn over the unrighteousness in our own environment?
4. How about looking forward to inheriting the earth, to live and rule with Christ as kings and priests? Then are you also “meek” in your relationships with both men and God?
5. Do you hope to receive mercy from the hand of God? Then how much mercy have you granted to others?
6. To look upon God and to know Him, even as we are known by Him - one must know the purity of their own hearts. Is it full of evil or goodness? How can one judge?
7. We have been given the ability to become the children of God, but in order to become so, we must also be known as peacemakers before we are recognized as a true child of God. Do you spread peace and harmony or hate and discord?



8. Have you been persecuted by men, as the scripture promised those who would call themselves by the name of God and His Messiah? If not, why not?

9. Making fun of you. Ridicule is not the same as persecution. How well do you handle being humiliated or injured for your faith? Yeshua despised the shame of the cross for us. What shame will we despise for His sake?

10. Finally, can you rejoice, and be exceeding glad when you are persecuted as the prophets who were persecuted before you? That is, even as the martyrs of today in other countries, are you willing to die for the testimony of your faith in HaMashiah Yeshua (The Messiah, The Anointed One of God, Jesus)?

11. These attributes are not listed as separate items for different individuals. Rather, they are listed as the composite elements/attributes that each saint is to strive for, and grow into in order to be identified as a true disciple of the Son of God.

As an additional thought for consideration, these eleven items present an interesting problem for all believers. That is, even though it remains very difficult to find anyone here in the West that is willing to die for their faith, it is much harder to find someone who is willing to actually live out the faith they confess to have. Jesus was not making a joke when He instructed His followers to first count the costs of discipleship before putting on His yoke (yoke: obeying His instructions, commandments, and doctrines). Luke 14:26-35

These are not the first recorded Commandments/Laws/Torah/Instructions that Yeshua gave, but they do provide us with a Hebraic mindset for the context within which to study His sayings.

While I was still working to get notes, ideas, etc. put together, I ran across a question that gave me pause to think - for it fit right in with this study. That is –

*"Did the Apostles promote the doctrine of evangelism?"*

Which brought up the question for me: What, exactly did the apostles teach? That is, what exactly is the Apostle's Doctrine that many claim to follow?

Here is my edited response to that question:

“The problem is the mindset that everything that the Apostles taught is contained in the few letters written to the churches and individuals, and are included in what we like to call the New Testament. The position that everything Jesus taught is in the New Testament, and if anything is not recorded there, we have no need or obligation to go beyond that, except where one of the N.T. writers added something. When it comes to the Apostles, we have a limited idea of a few things Peter, Jude, and James taught, and what Luke recorded – and also what Paul had to say in his limited responses to problems within the churches he established, but what did he teach when he was spending days, weeks, or even year with them – and what did the rest of the apostles teach?

## **What Was the Apostle's Doctrine?**

Well, if they were true apostles, each and every one of them taught in full compliance to the following instruction of Jesus:

And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach [or make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost Teaching [in the same broad application as "to learn"] them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway [even] unto the end of the world. Amen.  
Matthew 28:17-20

There are only two conclusions: (1) All of the disciples (including the Apostles) of Jesus who received these words either obeyed them, or (2) some disciples obeyed and some did not obey. However, as there is no recorded deviation by the disciples from what Jesus taught, it might be "assumed" that at least the Apostles obeyed and taught what Jesus taught them - nothing less and nothing more.

The definitive summation of the Apostles Doctrine is the doctrines concerning the kingdoms of God and of heaven, as taught by Jesus Christ, and the requirement that all future disciples of Jesus were to observe. Of course, there remain some teachings of Jesus that are not directly conveyed to the entire body of Christ, at least not in the written word. Some of these doctrines included an explanation of what Jesus revealed to the disciples concerning the O.T. scriptures that spoke of Him, and the vision of Paul, that he could not share (Remember that Daniel had the same restriction in "closing up" a book.)

Rule of thumb: The apostles taught all the teachings of Christ, plus they taught that all were to observe every commandment given by Jesus. This would be the minimum requirement for every true disciple of the Lord, as was the custom in Israel between all religious masters and their disciples.

If one does not know, understand and put into practice the teachings of Jesus, then that one cannot be a "true disciple" of Jesus (or even a disciple of His appointed apostles/disciples). Anyone who teaches otherwise is, by definition, a false teacher. Now, that can get a bit weighty on the self-justified.

### **A Look at Matthew 5**

As important as the beatitudes are, I am going to hit only some of the highlights. As mentioned earlier, there are a number of wonderful publications that teach on the meaning and application of these opening words of the most famous sermon ever preached, and I will not attempt to improve on the works of others.

In verses 1 and 2 we have Jesus preparing Himself for a protracted teaching engagement. He is setting out to establish the public foundation of His earthly ministry as well as the requirements

for anyone desiring to accept Him as their Rabbi (teacher, master) and all that that submission implies and requires, the very topic of this discussion.

In verses 3 through 11 we are introduced to the nine blessings that God considers to be the defining personal attributes for a righteous (right standing) in His presence. These are not individual attributes for a person to select one or two to practice, rather they are all, each and every one, to be identified, accepted, and integrated into one's life and practiced (lived out). Therein lies the rub, and why this section of Matthew is seldom taught, or when taught, skimmed over, playing on words rather than focusing on the personal application of these requirements into a Christian's life.

At this point we do need to reconsider the word "blessed" as used in these verses.

blessed - G3107 μακάριος (makarioj) a prolonged form of the poetical maker (meaning the same); supremely blest; by extension, fortunate, well off:-- blessed, happy(X -ier as used in the Hebrew: H835 אֵשֶׁר ('eshher)

1) happiness, blessedness

1a) often used as interjection

1b) blessed are

See 1 Kings 10:8, 2 Chronicles 9:7, Ps 32:1, 84:4, 106:3, 119:2, 128:1, Isa 30:18, 32:20

While one might agree with Jesus on a number of His examples, such as a person might be happy or to consider themselves well off, or even fortunate for being a peacemaker, or being comforted in a period of mourning, it remains difficult to see how one might consider it a blessing (to be happy?) at being reviled for the sake of being righteous, or being persecuted simply for the sharing the good news of Christ's open arm invitation to reconciliation with God.

The burning question then is this: How could anyone in their right mind be happy at being persecuted, being spoken evil of, falsely accused, etc.? Question: How was it that it was reliably recorded that many martyrs went to their deaths, by beheading, slow fire, drowning, stoning, etc. while asking God to forgive their murders and sometimes even with the singing of hymns? [See Fox's Book of Martyrs] Even then, were they 'happy'? Personally, I doubt they experienced happiness as most of us would define that term. However, not having gone through those kinds of trials, I cannot say with any certainty what those martyrs may or may not have experienced in their final hour.

So, what is there to be so happy (blessed) about in these beatitudes? The answer is contained in the second half of the sentences, they get to obtain mercy, see God, inherit the earth, receive the kingdom of heaven, etc. In short, Jesus is outlining the judgment day experience for those who will follow after Him and His message of reconciliation. The message is simply this, take unto yourself these attributes of righteous living, and the eternal rewards offered to you today shall be yours – the glory that is set before you.

As an aside: Please note that all of these attributes that Jesus listed, must have "love" as their foundation, as both the motivator and sustainer of one's attitude. Also note that there was no hint that these things could only be realized by, with, or through the help of the Holy Ghost. These are

requirements directing each individual to fill “on their own”! The truth? One cannot live the life of a disciple of the Master without the indwelling Spirit of God.

“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely on account of me. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.  
(Matt 5:11-12, NET)

Now here we have an insight into what must be going on within the hearts and minds of obedient martyrs. Jesus never said be “happy in your trial”! What He was clear about in the instruction was to be happy “because” of your trial, and even to give thanks while in your trial. Mixed emotions anyone?

This is the point where most people fail to follow through on these kinds of hard teachings. Non-believers take one look at these teachings and accuse a disciple of Christ of being crazy. “Hey, I am really happy that you are cutting off my fingers, one by one, until I renounce my faith in Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, I am so happy that you are doing this; I have four fingers and a thumb left on my other hand, want to cut all of them off too! Don’t forget, I still have some toes you can cut off!” Now that is that how many non-believers think of us (and sometimes quick to oblige us in that fantasy), and that same attitude even persists today within a few parts of the body of Christ. Now, that is truly insane!

No! What Jesus is teaching is the same thing He taught throughout His ministry, “count the costs of discipleship”, because accepting Him as your personal Rabbi (teacher, master) is going to result in a rough and tough life. The spiritually weak will not survive the trials, or even accept them. That is why we see the advent of so many weak faith churches all around us – and growing in numbers – those who proclaim Jesus in His name only, yet no longer actually following after Him and His teaching. God promised that the trials of true disciples of Christ are to be held to at the same level of commitment that the prophets of God did who preceded us (vs. 12).

Here in the West, since the 1700’s, the majority of believers have not had to endure the level of persecution for their faith as those in the rest of the world. But, as the Western church has become weak and ineffective in its obligation to influence the society and its culture (being the light and salt of the world — see verses 13-16), as it has been foretold in scripture, the time of the great fall of the Church is at hand. The apostasy and the falling away are upon us, and the remaining church are quickly falling under the influence and domination of the evil one. While there yet remains a “true church” (Body of Christ) in the world, the final episode will be when the remnant of the body is finally overcome by the beast (2 Thessalonians 2, Revelation 13:7).

Meanwhile, as the final hours play themselves out, take stock of your faith and in whom you place your trust – and again, count the costs.

Matthew 5 (Cont.) Here are two renderings of a passage:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish these things but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth pass away not the

smallest letter or stroke of a letter will pass from the law until everything takes place. So anyone who breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever obeys them and teaches others to do so will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness goes beyond that of the experts in the law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 5:17-20, NET)

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach [them], the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)

Here is an appropriate place to pause and to take a look at a couple of words in the Greek language that is used in the above passages.

The first one is G2647 καταλύω, kataluon, destroy

1. to loosen down (disintegrate)
2. (by implication) to demolish
3. (specially) to halt for the night

{literally or figuratively}

[from G2596 and G3089]

KJV: destroy, dissolve, be guest, lodge, come to naught, overthrow, throw down

Root(s): G2596, G3089

Compare: G2646

Accepted usage and meaning of καταλύω in this passage, according to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament is: down, of institutions, forms of government, laws, etc., to deprive of force, annul, abrogate, discard.

The next word is

G4137 πληρόω pleroon, fulfil

1. to fully, completely fill
2. (literally) to cram (a net), level up (a hollow)
3. (figuratively) to fully supply, satisfy, execute (an office), finish (a period or task), verify (or coincide with a prediction), etc.

G4134

KJV: accomplish, X after, (be) complete, end, expire, fill (up), fulfil, (be, make) full (come), fully preach, perfect, supply

Root(s):G4134

From Thayer's: fill, to be filled up; complete; lacking nothing, perfect

An expanded (or amplified) English version of this sentence then could be rendered as follows:

Think not that I am come to deprive of the force, to annul, to abrogate, or to discard the law, or the [words of the] prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill, that is, to complete the requirements of the Father so that neither the words of the law or the prophets lack anything in order to be made complete and perfect.

No matter which word or words one might choose to render this sentence in English, the message remains clear. The instructions for a Godly life, given by God to mankind through the Torah and the Prophets, were to continue and to remain in effect.

The question then is, for how long is all of that Old Testament stuff to continue?

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Two more words:

Jot - G2503 ἰωταϊotan (figuratively) for a very small part of anything---

Tittle - G2762 κεραία keraian (figuratively) the least particle, accent or punctuation mark

Note: The Greek definitions used in this section (above) are from the Mickelson's Enhanced Strong's Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries

Which begs the next question: Until all of what is fulfilled? The earthly ministry of Christ, the “second coming”, all biblical prophecies, or when Jesus uttered the statement, “It is finished.”, what?

I suggest for your consideration that what is referred to here is everything written in the scriptures, to include every jot and tittle (the least part of scripture, including every letter and stroke of the pen.) of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. To me, personally, this means that even every word of the Old Testament retains its original meaning, application, and authority (2Timothy 3:16), even in the lives of the saints of God today – because not everything in scriptures has been “fulfilled”.

Hold it, stop, wait a moment.

Before anyone goes off and attempts to gain their salvation by observing everything in the old covenant instructions (The Law), hold on, halt and take a break. While this is what most Christians would believe that Jesus said or meant, and I agreed with (have advocated), they would still be in a great error. We must continue on and place all of the above within its proper context.

So, next we will pick up with verse 19 and examine who will be called what, and why. But first we need to take another side trip off into the land of the Old Covenant world.

## Side Trip to The Old Covenant Law

What does the word Law mean?

[dictionary.reference.com/browse/law](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/law)

In listing of all the meanings, applications of the term, law. One included example of the term is in reference to the Law of Moses. “The Pentateuch, containing the Mosaic dispensations, or system of rules and ordinances, and forming the first of the three Jewish divisions of the Old Testament”

Our Western contemporary view of the “Law” no longer matches up with the biblical view of the “Law” that was given at Mt. Sinai. What was given at Mt. Sinai was a three-part package concerning the Instructions in Righteousness (the covenant requirements established by God between Himself and the nation of Israel).

**Part one** the Law of God is the Ten Commandments. However, it must be pointed out once again that the English rendering of the Hebrew language frequently does violence to the full expression of what the original language meant to convey, and therefore altering the perception of what was originally intended. For example: Ps. 68:19 – Ps 68:19 [Hebrew, WLC]

לְשׁוֹן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים: מִתְּנוֹת בְּאָדָם וְאֶף סוּרְרִים לְמָרוֹם | שְׁבִיתָ שְׂבִי לְקַחָהּ עָלֶיךָ

Blessed [be] the Lord, [who] daily loadeth us [with benefits, even] the God of our salvation. Selah. [KJV]

A better rendering the same verse is – “Blessed be the Lord, day by day He bears [or helps us to bear] our burden, even the God who is our salvation. Selah.”

Note: Concerning the term Selah, there is only one point where there is agreement, namely, that "Selah" has no grammatical connection with the text. It is either a liturgical-musical mark or a sign of another character with a bearing on the reading or the verbal form of the text. As thirty-one of the thirty-nine psalms with the caption "To the choir-master [לַמְנַצֵּחַ]" present "Selah," the musical value of the mark has been regarded as well assured.

SELAH - JewishEncyclopedia.com. Retrieved from [www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13398-selah](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13398-selah)

The mistranslation comes from confusion over the meaning of the term, H6006 עָמַשׁ עָמַשׁ `amac (aw-mas') (or mamas {aw-mas'}) v.

1. to load, , impose a burden (or figuratively, infliction) KJV: be borne, (heavy) burden (self), lade, load, put.

Included in the term is the picture of God helping to bear the burdens of His people (Ps 68:19, 20); as well as carry those loads (burdens) Himself (Isa 46:3).

Also, the KJV phrase, “God of our salvation”, which implies that there is God and that there is a salvation, which is better rendered as “the God who is our salvation.” where God contains within Himself our salvation as being integral to both Himself and His nature, rather than our salvation being something separate from Him and requiring His control or intervention.

This thought is extended into verse 20, (Ps 68:20 [JPS]) “God is unto us a God of deliverances; and unto God the Lord belong the issues of death.

The Hebrew term, H4194 מָוֶת *maveth* (maw'-veth) n-m. carries the picture of one escaping from a city through its gates. That is, the issues are those things pertaining to one's escape from death (or the dangers of death) through the avenues provided by God.

The important thing to observe and to keep in mind is that the ten sayings, or words, of God contain only instructions (requirements)! There are no judgments provided nor are there any directives (commands or even advice) concerning how to follow (observe, obey) these God ordained Laws.

**Part two** contains of the covenant ordinances and statutes. These elements of God's Instructions in Righteousness contain the judgments and penalties for “missing the mark”, or the expected results for one failing to observe “all that God commanded them to observe.”

**The third part** is the Oral Law. The Oral Law was instituted by God Himself. (See Numbers 15:32-36). Here we have an “ordinance” given by God that was undefined, and the penalty for noncompliance was not identified within the code of social or religious conduct. By Western standards of fairness, what transpired was anything but fair, right, or just. That is: Some folks caught a man picking up a few (?) sticks to build a fire on the Sabbath. These people determined that what the man was doing constituted work, a forbidden activity on the Sabbath. They took him to Moses and Aaron for judgment. Guess what, neither Moses or Aaron had a clue as to whether or not what the man did could be classified as “work”, and if he was guilty of work of the Sabbath, what was to be done with him? The long and the short of it was that Moses had to ask God, “What do we do with this guy?” God said, “Stone him to death.”, and that is exactly what they did!

It is at this point that the Oral Law (Oral Instructions on how to observe and keep the Instructions of God) came into their own development and reached their zenith with the Pharisees of the Second Temple era. In many churches today we would refer to these religious based oral laws as “fence laws”, “holiness standards”, etc. The object being, if we can set up some rules of conduct for the church that will keep people from approaching too close to the point of breaking one of God's commandments, then we have done a good thing. We have saved a person from committing an actual God defined sin.

We know now that picking up sticks on the Sabbath is a capital offense so we will add a few (a hundred?) additional rules and regulations in order to cover all of the bases and will not have to worry about breaking God's law.

The problem being that once man started improving on the word of God, they could not stop



themselves. See Matthew 23 for how Jesus viewed this approach to “improving” on God’s Instructions in Righteousness (Instructions governing holy or godly living).

There was a reason why God did not include all of the instructions on how to observe the commandments (the required observance conditions of the Mt. Sinai covenant). He desired that man would seek to discover the nature of God and the relationship He desired to have with mankind. A relationship based not only through the observances of a code of conduct, but on the fundamental motivation for God creating man in the first place. A relationship-based love actively expressed in the full trust and confidence one has in God and His integrity (the love of man for his God, expressed in and through one’s faith in action). See Habakkuk 2:1-4

The Mt. Sinai Covenant did not fail because of any fault or deficiency with the Covenant Instructions (Torah, Law), rather the responsibility for failure rested entirely on man’s rejection of his oath to obey those instructions – as God declared them.

The natural result of man’s fallen nature, his unwillingness and inability to keep his covenant promise (being both morally weak and a liar by nature), required the advent of God’s foreordained plan, to salvage His prized creation, mankind. To place before man a living example of what it truly means to be in a loving, covenant relationship with God (N.T. reference, the Father), and to open up and expose the heart of God and His foundational nature, love.

In addition to presenting the world with a living example of what it means to be in a covenant relationship with God in the life of Yeshua Natzeret (Jesus of Nazareth), He also provided a detailed instruction of how to interpret, understand and apply all of the commands that God gave to any man, or even to all of mankind – even since the days of creation!

A closing comment: How many folks remember that the written law, both on stone and in books, was God’s plan “B”? What was Plan “A”? God came down and gave His Instructions in person – orally. When that was not acceptable to the people, He sent for Moses.

### **On to Matthew 5:19**

So, anyone who breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever obeys them and teaches others to do so will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matt 5:19 [NET Bible]

At this point is important to take a quick review of what Jesus has been teaching.

First, He outlined the nine blessings that will accrue to those who choose to take up the “mind of Christ”, the mind of Adam prior to the fall. Actually, what Jesus was doing was instructing the crowd in the attributes of a true child of Abraham. These beatitudes are the characteristics of individuals who were to grow into, and become examples of what it was to live out the Mt. Sinai covenant. Jesus was not instructing these people in doing something that they could not accomplish on their own. However, people get tired of “living right” according to God’s covenant instructions, so they fall from the covenant. Many do so today, even with the indwelling of God’s Spirit (Also see Hebrews 6:4-8).

That was the failure of the Mt. Sinai covenant – the people. The failure was not in the covenant itself nor in its requirements. (See Hebrews 8:6-13) So, what was the new and better covenant? It was the greater promises of God's empowering Spirit to assist the people in keeping the commandments of God, and finding relief before the throne of judgment when one stumbles and finds themselves resisting living the godly life. That is, to be able to plead the already shed blood of the Lamb of God as their atonement sacrifice for their sin (transgression of the Law, 1John 3:4), instead of going through another ritual of the slaying of a bullocks, goats, sheep, doves, etc.

In verse 19 we have Jesus coming back again to the Instructions in righteous living, the Law of God. As stated in the lead in verses:

As long as this same old earth remains, populated as it is by unregenerate men, all has not been fulfilled. Therefore, the words of the Law (Instructions, Torah) shall remain in effect. Now the enigma, verse 19:

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach [them], the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

What is critical to understanding this verse is not what Jesus said, but what He did not say!

Today we have a great many pastors, preachers, and teachers that instruct the children of God that they do not have to obey the O.T. commandments of God, unless it is found in the New Testament. That today we live under grace and no longer under the Law, as the Law (including the Ten Commandments) has been annulled, done away with by the advent of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. The proof text is usually Rom 6:14, or one of the other nine verses that address grace and the Law. So, what is the problem? Taking the references "against the Law" (1) out of context, and (2) the Hebrew way of instructing and teaching. I would recommend a careful restudy of Rom 2:12,3:19, 4:16; 1 Cor 9:20,21; Gal 3:23, 4:4,5, 21, and 5:18. I would suggest studying the entire chapters for proper context. If you encounter difficulty with this, go back and read Gen 26: 1-6 and Rev 14:12 then integrate these passages with what you have just read. Abraham was "saved" by his faith through his obedience to God. What is so shameful is these same teachers are so willfully ignorant of the Word of God, and yet presume to teach — with great authority that same ignorance to others.

Bible study fundamentals:

How did any of the following impact the original scriptural teaching and your interpretation?

1. Who was writing (teaching) the scripture you are studying?
2. Why did the author write his message?
3. What did the author intend to achieve by his message, and what were the results of the author's efforts, where given?
4. What did this author say elsewhere concerning the same subject, if he did?
5. What did other authors say about this same subject, if any did?
6. What was is the passage context?

7. What was the religion and how was it practiced at that time?
8. What was the history at the time the passage was written?
9. What was the culture and social structure at that time?
10. What was the language and the worldview of the author and the people?

Fortunately, Jesus gives these (supposedly) well-meaning teachers a ray of hope, in that He has not judged them unfit for the kingdom of heaven, rather that those who do make it in shall be called the “least in the kingdom”, but not identified as being “great” in the kingdom, as many of these teachers seem to believe they shall be known. Perhaps this verse needs further study?

Now, we must also note yet another common misconception.

When one teaches something (anything) that stands in direct opposition to the expressed word and judgment of Jesus, would anyone claim that such a teaching should not to be called “false” and rejected? That is, if anyone who does not follow the commandments of God and teaches others to do likewise should they be called great in the kingdom of heaven? Wouldn’t these same teachers then be guilty of teaching a false doctrine and yet be admitted into the kingdom? We need to consider the implications of such a premise in both our personal and corporate theologies and the impact of those doctrines. Question: Who shall be called great in the kingdom heaven, according to the Master?

Yet, there is more in verse 20:

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed [the righteousness] of the scribes [implied: experts of the Law] and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. [KJV, other translations generally agree.] Matthew 5:20

Here we have Jesus instructing His listeners that their right standing before God has to exceed that of the members of these two major religious groups. That is on the same level of someone today declaring that the average member of a church congregation will not make into the kingdom of heaven unless his/her right standing (righteousness) before God exceeds that of their pastor. You will not find many pastors willing to preach that message, nor would I. Now, one will have to ask themselves two questions: How does one gain a higher “right standing” before God than the Pharisees, and why their own pastor or Sunday school teacher has perhaps not taught on this verse?

Interjected note: Each of these verses in Matthew 5-7 are simply chocked full of meanings, applications, and they are based on and tie together such a great number of passages throughout the Bible. To take each verse and do an exhaustive study on each one will take several volumes. So, by necessity, I am restricting my comments and reference those scriptures that I hope will provide the starting points for further personal study.

Okay, so let’s pick up with verses 21 and 22.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother

without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

As a friend of mine pointed out:

“In essence, Matthew 5–7 contain instructions from Jesus for them, and for us today, to go further than the strictly physical application of the law—to God's true intent in it, or as we say, from the letter to the spirit of the law. In His teaching, Jesus states a physical law, often quoting directly from the Old Testament. This base standard is to be met by all those who have made a covenant with God.

Then, He proceeds to amplify the particular law's meaning, frequently beginning His amplification with words similar to, "I say to you - -" Such words should be a flag to us that Jesus is expanding the scope of the law to include, not just physical actions, but the condition, attitudes, and inclinations of a person's heart. In essence, He is teaching the [spiritual] standards required of all His people to attain the Kingdom of God.”

This is an excellent summation of Jesus' sermon on the mountainside. Here the principles of understanding all of the commandments, laws, ordinances and statutes given throughout the ‘Old Testament’, starting with the Garden of Eden, are laid bare. The original Laws of God, revealed throughout the scriptures are the specifics of what God expects in human behavior. From these specifics, a merit system was developed in which one was rewarded for doing good and punished for their failure to do well (blessings and curses). As such, we have the letter of the Law that performs all of the functions of our schoolmaster. (Gal 3:24,25) That is, the Law trains us up in the ways of God. However, that effort will fail in that purpose if the students refuse to study on his/her own and obey what they have read/studied. To walk in the spiritual light they have, and strive to gain more.

As in any school, the purpose of education is to teach us how to think. As one progress through different courses, one learns how to think according to the precepts and requirements of that particular subject, but the general principles always remain the same for all subjects (e.g., the Law). Here, in Matthew 5 we see clearly the purpose of the Law and its application to one's life. We can observe the transition from rote memorization of facts, tables and lists provided in a classroom setting, to the second nature utilization of those academic basics to complex research issues and tasks (our lives) – without conscience thought or effort (the Spirit working with the Law).

Therefore, the Law in all of its requirements and system of rewards and punishments, pull us through the various classes of life and living into a level of maturity that not only allows for individual (independent) thinking, but even demands that we take up a greater degree of personal responsibility for our relationship with God. Parents and teacher can only lead, push, pull and encourage a child only so far and so fast. At some point, the child must grow up and take responsibility for their future growth and education. There is a need to leave parents and teachers behind and to seek out qualified mentors, and then progressing even further, to move on and acquire an association with competent colleagues.

(2 Tim 3:16; Phil 2:12)

We move from the letter law, which contains temporal blessings and curses, and move to acquire the Spirit of the Law, which holds spiritual life and freedom. We leave behind the schoolmaster (scriptures) and attach ourselves to our mentor, the Holy Spirit of God. Even so, as any practicing professional will quickly inform you, no matter high up in a profession anyone may go, they will always have to remember, and rely upon, the basics of their profession in order to maintain their position. As one learns to both live and to walk in the Spirit, the scriptures can never be far from one's heart. Anyone who cuts themselves off from the basics (when scriptures have accomplished their goal) they are adrift and without a sure compass, and as such provide poor spiritual navigators in which to put your confidence.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill [murder]; and whosoever shall kill [murder] shall be in danger of the judgment ...”

In this instance Jesus is most likely referring to the Oral Law. Remember, the written Law of the O.T. has many requirements, but few instructions on how one was to observe and meet those requirements. Therefore, men were left to their own devices in many cases to identify, interpret and apply God's laws to their life. Also remember that the first oral law was given was by God Himself, at Mt. Sinai, and again in Numbers, concerning the man found collecting sticks on the Sabbath in order to make a fire. Everyone knew the law, but not even Moses or Aaron had a clue as how to accurately identify or handle the Sabbath commandment transgression. Actually, no one was sure of just what constituted a Sabbath transgression. Therefore, the problem was taken directly to God – and His judgment was to put the man to death. This was a Law without a defined set of ordinances or statutes, so after that event what God did not define, men did! What was left, was for men to determine what constituted a murder vs. an accident and then render a legal (binding) judgment on all parties. To expand the letter of the Law into exercising the spirit of the Law. An effort in which they ultimately failed. So, enter Yeshua as the ordained teacher to show the correct way.

### **Back to Mathew 5.**

The law says, “You shall not commit murder” [φονεύω phoneuo (fon-yoo'-o) v. 1. to be a murderer (of)], the unlawful act of taking another's life.

To intentionally kill another person is to suffer the death penalty in return. Simple and straight forward, established and firmly set in the ordinances of the law, and to be executed upon the guilty party. It is not by accident that this is the first example Jesus uses in His teaching. It is perhaps one of the most graphic and telling of it harkens all the way back to the Garden of Eden. But He goes on to say –

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:

Now we can see where Jesus exposes the root cause of murder, it is in the very heart of man and finds its expression every time we become angry with another – without having a just cause.

To be in danger of "the judgment" is to face the Sanhedrin (the courts), the Jewish high court. [No,

this is not a reference to the Judgment Seat of God.] That is, when one is angry with another without a just cause, which should require them to take the dispute before the Sanhedrin, they are more likely to take matters into their own hands. However, in executing their personal judgment they may well find themselves standing before the Sanhedrin themselves, rather than the one with whom they had the dispute.

The second item, "... without cause." Did an individual hurt your feelings, did he/she do or say something that you did not like? Did they get a promotion that you were expecting? Brother Cane, what are you jealous about? When your expectations in life are not met you get angry, it is simple as that. Your expectations were not met. Then you look for someone to blame for your unfulfilled expectations, and you have a scapegoat to take your anger out on. Anger without a just cause is a sin.

On the other hand, if someone has lied about you, stolen from you, injured you physically, etc. you have a biblically based justification for being angry and taking someone before the judge.

"When it is without any good end aimed at, but merely to show our authority, to gratify a brutish passion, to let people know our resentments, and excite ourselves to revenge, then it is in vain. It is to do hurt; whereas if we are at any time angry, it should be to awaken the offender to repentance, and prevent his doing so again; to clear ourselves (2 Cor. vii. 11), and to give warning to others. That is, a godly anger which is to "be angry and sin not". From Mathew Henry's commentary on Matthew 5:20-21

But this is not the end of it!

22b ... and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council [local courts]: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Raca is an interesting term. G4469 ῥακά rhaka (rhak-ah'). 1. O empty one, thou worthless (as a term of utter vilification) [of Chaldee origin]

My position was always that the calling another, Raca, should be the greater sin than simply calling someone a fool. After all, people are called a fool (or foolish) a number of times in scripture and how many times do you find the word, Raca in scripture? Once? But, here again, English words and cultural mindsets often get in the way of understanding scripture.

[G4469, raka (Raca)] is an Aramaic word akin to the Heb. req, empty," the first "a" being due to a Galilean change. In the KJV of 1611 it was spelled racha; in the edition of 1638, raca. It was a word of utter contempt, signifying "empty," intellectually rather than morally "empty-headed," like Abimelech's hirelings, Judge 9:4, and the "vain" man of Jas 2:20. As condemned by Christ, Matt 5:22, it was worse than being angry, inasmuch as an outrageous utterance is worse than a feeling unexpressed or somewhat controlled in expression; it does not indicate such a loss of self-control as the word rendered "fool," a godless, moral reprobate.

[Adjective,G3474, moros (fool)] primarily denotes "dull, sluggish" (from a root muh---,

"to be silly"); hence, "stupid, foolish;" it is used (a) of persons, Matt 5:22, "Thou fool;" here the word means morally worthless, a scoundrel, a more serious reproach than "Raca;" the latter scorns a man's mind and calls him stupid; moros scorns his heart and character; hence the Lord's more severe condemnation; in Matt 7:26, "a foolish man;" Matt 23:17, Matt 23:19, "fools;" Matt 25:2,3; 25:8, "foolish;" in 1Cor 3:18, "a fool;" the Apostle Paul uses it of himself and his fellow-workers, in 1Cor 4:10, "fools" (, in the eyes of opponents); (b) of things, 2Tim 2:23, "foolish and ignorant questionings;" so Titus 3:9 and in 1Cor 1:25, "the foolishness of God," not moria, "foolishness" as a personal quality, but adjectivally, that which is considered by the ignorant as a "foolish" policy or mode of dealing, lit., "the foolish (thing);" so in 1Cor 1:27, "the foolish (things) of the world."

Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words.

Here we can see why calling one a fool places the accuser a step closer to hell than one who utters the word, Raca.

Back to Mathew Henry for another comment:

"He tells them, that given opprobrious [expressing offensive reproach, deserving or bringing disgrace or shame] language to our brother is a tongue-murder, calling him, Raca, and, Thou fool. When this is done with mildness and for a good end, to convince others of their vanity and folly, it is not sinful. Thus James says, O vain man; and Paul, Thou fool; and Christ himself, O fools, and slow of heart. But when it proceeds from anger and malice within, it is the smoke of that fire which is kindled from hell, and falls under the same character. (1.) Raca is a scornful word, and comes from pride, "Thou empty fellow;" it is the language of that which Solomon calls proud wrath (Prov. xxi. 24), which tramples upon our brother-disdains to set him even with the dogs of our flock. This people who knoweth not the law, is cursed, is such language, John vii. 49. (2.) Thou fool, is a spiteful word, and comes from hatred; looking upon him, not only as mean and not to be honoured, but as vile and not to be loved; "Thou wicked man, thou reprobate." The former speaks a man without sense, this (in scripture language) speaks a man without grace; the more the reproach touches his spiritual condition, the worse it is; the former is a haughty taunting of our brother, this is a malicious censuring and condemning of him, as abandoned of God. Now this is a breach of the sixth commandment; malicious slanders and censures are poison under the tongue, that kills secretly and slowly; bitter words are as arrows that would suddenly (Ps. lxiv. 3), or as a sword in the bones. The good name of our neighbour, which is better than life, is thereby stabbed and murdered; and it is an evidence of such an ill-will to our neighbour as would strike at his life, if it were in our power."

The conclusion of this matter is this: That out of the heart are first emotions, then thoughts, then words, and then actions. Murder begins in the heart (a personal spiritual condition). The heart is evil by its very nature (Genesis 6:5, Psalms 141:4, Ecclesiastes 9:3, etc.) and requires the continued monitoring and control of our thoughts.

Thoughts have been generally considered un-acted upon temptation or desire, and therefore since no law of God has been actually (physically) broken, there is no need of actual repentance. But our master takes us further into the mind of God to understand that the letters of law (ordinances

and statutes that contain the curse of the law, its judgments) are only the natural results of not learning and applying the principles and precepts upon which the laws were formed to our hearts (soul, mind, by the renewing of the word). Why so much attention to all of this? 2Cor 10:3-7. The ultimate thought monitoring policeman is watching, and judging. Are we?

The nasty result is: Performance based religions produce performance-based results, play acting, a game. It is faking a relationship with God. In short, it is a feeble attempt to fool ourselves (and others), and to lie to God about a relational condition that does not, in fact, exist.

So, what must we do? Continue the study of God's word and put it into practice, to make it our new lifestyle.

A note in passing: One of the reasons for including Vines dictionary in this series is because all too often we read the English translations of scripture and simply miss out on the depth of the spiritual content of the scripture's communication. We lose context.

These kinds of studies also illustrate the necessity of studying the word in its original languages. And no, no one must become a Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic linguist before they are qualified to study the word of God. However, one should learn the basics of how to discern the intent and application of the key words used in any passage being studied, as in the above comments on verses 20-21.

However, for many folks, such a commitment of time to work a word-by-word study and then combine all of the material into a simple statement of understanding is simply more than they have available, or because they simply don't wish to invest these valuable resources in such a demanding effort. Even so, that does not release us from our obligation to study the word for ourselves. Do what you can with the resources available to you.

Which brings us to the next example that Yeshua used to illustrate how we are to approach God's Law, how we are to move beyond the formal student and schoolmaster relationship and into a personal, intimate relationship with God, the author of the Law. Verses 27-28:

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:  
But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

But Lord, I have not done this thing with any woman! How can you then hold me accountable? The man who was condemned to death by stoning for picking up sticks on a Sabbath most likely did not think his judgment was fair either! It would be like you going before a judge for speeding, going 4 miles over the speed limit. Your defense, "Judge, I know that I might have been going a little fast, but there was no posted speed limit on that road. There was only one sign, and it said, "Drive carefully." Then being told by the judge, "That's one year in jail for every mile you went over the speed limit that I think was appropriate for the road conditions. Your sentence is therefore is four years." Not fair? Not what you might have expected? What went wrong?

Let's step back once again from God's written words and examine the Spirit. What was Jesus



teaching His disciples and the people on the hillside that day? How can anyone be held guilty for "not doing" anything wrong? Or being harshly judged for a wrongful act when the penalty was not known prior to the act being committed?

I received the following email from a friend of mine, Pastor/Rabbi Robert Allon, Ph.D., founder of the Restoration Fellowship World Wide ministry.

Dr. Allon was my mentor in biblical languages, including Greek and Hebrew history, culture, religion, and Bible translation and interpretation. In turn, he has directed me to the spiritual instructions of several other well qualified individuals who were willing share their knowledge, insight, and wisdom concerning our "Christian" religion as few others can.

I have asked for and received permission to republish this email for two reasons. First, it fits in with the study we are currently engaged in, and secondly, because it contains lessons we can all benefit from:

All,

I used to have a terrible problem with anger. It took virtually nothing to set me off in a violent raging cussing fit. Just a few years ago I declared to my wife that I had absolutely no control over my anger. It didn't matter if I was in a church, a funeral, a wedding or a formal meeting with world dignitaries, I was going to fly off in a cussing fit if something set me off, and it took almost nothing to set me off. I was absolutely convinced that there was nothing I could do about it and to make things worse, I had already spent more than ten years in collage and seminary only to become convinced that there was no power in the knowledge of God, at least not for me.

I grew up with a stepfather who beat me without provocation. When I was a young man I heard that children of abusive parents become abusive parents and because of my extreme fear that I would beat my children, I never spanked them. I went from one extreme to another. I was quite proud of the fact that my children could never accuse me of abusing them and believed myself to be a far greater man than my stepfather. At least until the day that I finally realized that I had been abusing my wife and my children for years with my fits of uncontrolled rage. It was a hard pill to swallow when I realized that everything I hated about my stepfather was everything I had become. I was a bully and worse yet, I enjoyed being one. I forgot what it was like to be the victim and had become the person who victimized without even knowing it.

Even though my wife and children knew that I wasn't mad at them, they were still victimized by the bullying behavior. People can only take the raging of another for so long until they either break or become filled with anger themselves. I suppose becoming an abusive person, even if it is only through words, is a self defense mechanism. But the days comes when we all see ourselves in the mirror and are terrified at what we've become. At least for those of us who've become that which we hate.

Christians are conditioned to reject the Law of God, they are taught that the Law is legalism

and bondage and that it passed away and were replaced with grace. They are given Scriptures to quote to bolster this position and made to feel that they are standing on solid theological ground. Anyone who would teach that we should live according to the Law of God is either considered a heretic or unenlightened. I was taught to live by grace, I was taught that God's blood was so pure that it would cover any and every sin we would ever commit. I was taught that we simply had no grasp on the extent of God's grace and were all beating ourselves up over nothing. But if we are all beating ourselves up over nothing, why are Christians the worst example of Christianity to be found? Why are Christians among the most hateful, rude, arrogant, lying, cheating, thieving people in the world today? Why do over eighty percent of the people in America call themselves Christians and less than ten percent of them attend church regularly when the English Bible tells them not to forsake the assembling together of the saints? If they all have found the truth and are all standing on a solid foundation, why is there a church on every corner and two in between? If grace is all we need, then why are the vast majority of Christians so unhappy and so unfulfilled in life?

The secret to a happy, anger-free life is so simple that it is virtually impossible to comprehend but here I go again with yet another attempt at explaining it . . .

Mankind fell from relationship with God when Adam and his wife Eve ate from the tree. Why? Because doing the opposite of what God says is rebellion/sin against His absolute authority in this universe and it comes with consequences. However, God entered into a covenant with Abraham and this covenant was designed to reconcile mankind to God. All man had to do was follow a simple set of does and don'ts and if he/she stumbled, , if we do something we are not supposed to do, or if we don't do something that we are supposed to do, we simply get back on the path of righteousness which is doing that which we are supposed to do and not doing that which we are not supposed to do, and all is well between us and God.

Is there any doubt that the devil would go to any extreme to put God's people on a path that leads in the opposite direction? Can there be any doubt that the devil would influence translators to add things and to take away things from the Hebrew and Greek text to move people away from the truth? Of course there is, but one denomination declared that the King James Version of the Bible was the inspired, inerrant and infallible word of God. False doctrines have always been the fastest growing segment of Christianity, and this false teaching caught on like wildfire, so much so that Christians have come to believe that this translation has been around since the apostles! After all, if the devil can raise a translation filled with error and so tampered with that little of the gospel taught by the apostles remain, to a level of perfection, then he (the devil) would have something with which to lead away the masses. By the way, it worked.

Note: I am NOT saying one should throw away their copies of the KJV of the bible. What I am saying is that the KJV has about the same number of translation problems as all of the other English translations. Yet, almost every translation of the original language texts are sufficient to obtain both your salvation and instruct you in how to live a life pleasing to God. Every translation has some translation problems!

To all who are plagued with anger, sadness, depression and anxiety. To those who can't seem to stop lying, cheating and stealing. To those who know that they can't just say an eight second prayer and go to heaven no matter what they do for the rest of their lives . . .

Can I paraphrase Dr. Phil of TV fame and say, "How's grace working for ya?"

We all know that "grace alone" isn't working for us. But we have heard stories about how it worked for someone else and we hold out hope that somehow, someday, someday, God will make it work for us. It's not going to happen, there is no magic prayer, no magic level of faith that we can obtain, and there is no amount of tithe or offering we can give that will give us the one thing we are all looking for: Peace with God.

In the end, it all comes down to the very same thing that happened in the garden. As long as we are in rebellion against what God said, we will suffer the consequences and those consequences will rob us of the peace that we all so desperately desire. Why are so many scientists willing to accept anything other than the Bible? Probably for the same reason Christians are willing to accept anything but God's Law . . . it's the truth and it's too simple, we want something hard, something deep, something unsearchable, and we want it right .

I've said it before and I'll say it again, first John, chapter three, verse four says, "Everyone who commits sin also rebels against the Torah (Law), because sin is rebellion of the Torah." What is it going to take to get people to accept that God wants us all to live a sin-free life? What is it going to take to get people to accept that a sin-free life is a life of obedience to the Torah? Until Christianity embraces the Torah and places doctors of the Law in their pulpits, their congregants are on their own in this search for peace. In addition, until the Messianic believers reject "all things Jewish" and replace it with "all things Biblical," their congregants will be on their own in this search for peace as well.

I was a bully, an out of control, raging, lunatic until I truly began my study of the Torah and now my rage is gone. What will it take to get others to try it? What spin can I put on the truth to get people to embrace it?

How about, I triple-dog dare you to try living by the Torah for just one year. What have you got to lose? To help you do this, we have a live web-cast via [www.dimdim.com](http://www.dimdim.com) Click on, join a meeting, type in, drallon and your name and you'll be there. I guess I should tell you that we begin around 10:00 a.m. on Saturday morning and go for about two hours. We also have some of my teachings on the Law at: [www.rfww.org](http://www.rfww.org) Don't worry, I'm not trying to sell anything, its all free.

Much luv and shalom,

RA

Robert Allon [[robert@allon.org](mailto:robert@allon.org)]

Now, one very important distinction must be made for those who are still traveling in the Western church mindset: Nowhere in any of Dr. Allon's teaching will you find that "following/observing Torah" is equated to, or is a substitute for the redemptive act of Christ on the cross. This application of Torah (God's instruction in Righteousness) is not an attempt to gain salvation by any works of human effort, but rather a demonstration (evidence) of one's faith in God by the works (faith in action) it produces, "If you love me, obey me." A lesson from Abraham's faith in action (Genesis 26:1-6).

If one is to be truly Apostolic, one must observe what the apostles taught, which was what Yeshua commanded them to teach, which was what He Himself taught, what was, you guessed it, the Torah and the underlying principles upon which all of God's instructions rest.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:  
But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell. Matthew 5:25-29

Okay, here we go –

A man looks at a woman and his mind go's "click", and he thinks an impure thought. What is it he is to do?

As a teacher, it is not my responsibility to either reinvent the wheel, as it were, or to develop new and original material, nor is it my job to copy and just paste the works of others, so as to alleviate any effort from me or the reader's responsibility to participate in the educational process. Even so, Mathew Henry has done a very credible job in his Bible Commentary in discussing these verses, in which he brings to light most everything I would have to say concerning these same passages. Much of what I share in these posts is not completely original on my part. Most of this information has been around for a very long time – just ignored by many preachers and Bible teachers. Therefore, I would recommend either purchasing Henry's commentary or locating a copy on line. One of the several free downloadable Bible resources would be a wonderful place to start. However, please do not shun commentaries by other Bible scholars. It is always beneficial to get additional thoughts on your scriptural studies.

The point I would focus on at this juncture is this:

Unless a sinful act is the result of a pure accident, like an unforeseen mechanical failure that results in another person being unintentionally injured (not meaning to hurt, maim or kill or to cause emotional distress or financial loss), there is no sin implied or involved. However, there may yet remain a personal responsibility that must be accounted for in such cases. Now, what if the possibility of a mechanical failure was foreseen, or perhaps even expected, and another individual was "allowed" to place them self in harm's way? Here the sin in one's heart becomes manifested through their actions – even by taking no action. What would be God's judgment concerning such a failure to act to properly protect (or to at least warn) another person about a known, pending or

suspected danger? Good examples of sin originating from the heart are found in Psalms 10:3, Proverbs 6:18 & Jeremiah 17:9)

Now to the provocative question: If you look upon anything that leads you to entertain a sinful thought, what are you to do? Pluck out the offending eye, or both eyes if the object was seen through both eyes? Alternatively, should one simply blow out their brains because that is where the evil thought took place? How should one take these very explicate instructions of Jesus? Can one explain them away, or must one be willing to do just as Jesus commanded? Pluck out your eye and/or cut off your hand(s)? What about saying something you should not have – should you then cut out your tongue? Or, perhaps you listen to something you should not listen to – should you pop your ear drums? If you went somewhere, you should not have – cut off your legs? How do you think Jesus would respond to such questions? Or, is there something more to these kinds of instructions that we often miss in the cultural, religious, and/or language translations?

What are we missing from this picture?

After discussing the issues of the language used in these two verses with a number of men who have made it their personal labor to understand the Hebrew worldview of New Covenant scriptures, I am comfortable with the explanations given in the preceding citations. With this additional comment:

The Greek language passage, expressing a Hebrew worldview and as used here, is a metaphor for one taking personal responsibility to quickly and decisively remove both the sin and the potential for sin from one's life. Doing whatever is necessary to accomplish that goal. As an English idiom, we might refer to this as "nipping sin in the bud".

In addition to the strong illusion for the need to take drastic action, we also have the added emphases of the Hebrew writing style of repeating the instruction a second time, using different degrees of focus in order to enforce the importance of the instruction (there is no exclamation point in Hebrew/Greek grammar). What is being illustrated in this case is that one can survive with the loss of one eye. That is, one can continue to work at most trades and farming/ranching. However, the loss of a person's foot in an agrarian society would be very debilitating and make working in such an environment very difficult. So, here we have the importance of "nipping a problem in the bud", with two examples of increasing levels of disastrous consequences for failing to take action. The longer one puts off taking corrective action, most likely the worse the results will become.

Another issue to consider: What was the charge of God, and the commandments, statutes, and laws that Abraham kept, as noted in Genesis 26:1-5? Does such a list exist in scripture? No. Supposition: It was not necessary to list these laws, commandments, etc., because they were all to be superseded (incorporated, modified to some degree) and transitioned into the Mt. Sinai covenant. Remember, all of the books of Moses were written after the Mt. Sinai experience. It was not necessary to keep repeating all of the commandments over and over again.

Next, in the New Covenant, we have the same thing again. Jesus was clear that nothing of the Law was abolished (Also see Revelation 12:17, 14:12 & 22:14). All of the Mt. Sinai commandments, laws, ordinances, and statutes were not listed in the NT writings. Rather, Jesus presented them in

a new way of approaching and observing them, and then adding some instructions for His disciples (students) that required them to rethink their approach in the way they had been observing the Mt. Sinai Laws of God.

Reference: "(John 21:25); And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," This causes me to conclude that the contents of the Bible represent a synopsis, a brief summary or general survey of that which God has done, or shall ever do. ... It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of everything He taught or did. My supposition is that this also includes His teachings that the scriptures allude to.

On one forum there flared up again an issue concerning the sin of drinking wine and Acts 2:13, as a reason for not indulging in the drinking of alcohol. Then there was the usual discussion concerning the difference between drinking new wine and fermented wine.

One of the things to come to light was that Peter never challenged the charge that he or the rest of the 120 disciples indulged in drinking wine, but that he referenced the time of day as not being appropriate for drinking wine, even on a feast day, or that if they had even been drinking wine at all, it was not late enough in the morning for them all to have gotten drunk. Thus, Peter debunked the charge of drunkenness on both social and physical constraints, not on religious ones.

The results are that this passage does little to support the contention of some doctrines which hold that Jesus and His disciples never drank any fermented grape juice.

Of course, the Genesis 26:1-6 I reference (above) is also a good example. There is no notation that the charge, commandments, laws, and statutes God gave to Abraham actually originated at this point in time. Or that Abraham's seed would have no other instructions from God to follow, that is, that his seed would ever have any additional instructions until the Mt. Sinai covenant.

Nor is there any indication that the covenant requirements between God and Noah were completely listed or that they were dissolved after his death, or that they would not migrate forward to Abraham.

At any rate, this is the underlying idea that is being reflected in "what is not written in the Bible is sometimes as important as what is included." So, when reading what is written in the word, we should also stop and consider what is not being said as well. I plan on going through some additional NT examples later in this presentation.

I think I left off with a question concerning Matthew 5, The Beatitudes. According to the expressions used in the Hebrew language expressing their shared worldview, the following list of attributes is something that may be applied to a single person, or is it a list of attributes than might be distributed among a group of individuals? Or, is this is a list of attributes that all members of a specific group are to acquire and manifest in their individual lives? To refresh our memories:

Matthew 5:1-12 (NET)

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:  
2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,  
3 Blessed [are] the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
4 Blessed [are] they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.  
5 Blessed [are] the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.  
6 Blessed [are] they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.  
7 Blessed [are] the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.  
8 Blessed [are] the pure in heart: for they shall see God.  
9 Blessed [are] the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.  
10 Blessed [are] they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
11 Blessed are ye, when [men] shall revile you, and persecute [you], and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely [lying], for my sake.  
12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great [is] your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

We should all be aware by now that in the Hebrew manner of expressing spiritual precepts in the scriptures, that is, a particular attribute, lesson, concept, etc. is often stated several times, with each successive statement expanding on the subject matter, to include a wider (progressive) application, or refining its focus to a narrower application.

Personally, many years ago I started out thinking that it would be wonderful if a person could acquire one or two of these Christ listed attributes. Or, that an individual could pick and choose one of these attributes and be blessed. Then after a while I thought it would be a blessing if one could acquire all of these attributes – but verse 12 did not give me much reason to be “exceeding glad”. /sigh/ Persecution just doesn’t seem like something most of us would invite into our lives. Something like “count the costs”?

Now, I think I have a little better understanding of what Jesus was teaching, in the classic rabbinical style.

First, the language: Two key words, blessed and poor.

Μακάριος; blessed or happy. To be supremely blest, or (by extension) fortunate, well off.

πτωχός - ptochos, a beggar (as cringing), a pauper, (figuratively) distressed, (literally, as a noun) strictly denoting absolute or public dependency on charity. In this verse, the poor in spirit phrase is used to denote the “pious poor” for whom God especially cares. That is, a person who continually acknowledges God as the ultimate authority and creative source of all that there is, including the individual himself, and who is content to remain in (and even enjoy) that submissive state.

This is the collective thrust of all the beatitudes: To acquire and manifest a particular kind of

personality acceptable unto God. Further, the presentation follows one of the classic rabbinic teaching methods, the use of positive and negative (reversal) comparisons. What is not so obvious to our Western view of the world is what the subject of the comparisons is! Answer: It is the comparison of the “perfect” pre-fall man (Adam), and by extension, the second Adam (Jesus Christ), with the “first sinner” (Satan), and by further extension, the general state of all fallen men in the world today.

So that there is a context within which to view these sayings. First considering the kingdom of God. This kingdom consists of God Himself and everything that He created, from the heavens to the earth, to the things under the earth. In short, everything. God being the authority and the *source* of all this ever was, is, and will be to come. [Did you know that God also took responsibility for the creation of wicked men? (Prov 16:4)] The gospel concerning the kingdom of God is therefore the good news that all God has created is, and shall be, under His direct control. The kingdom of heaven, is another matter. The gospel of the kingdom of heaven is that heaven is that created place where the perfect will and purpose of God is carried out, without exception. It was tried once and failed! The kingdom of earth is still yet another matter. This was to be a place where the will and purpose of God was to be accomplished voluntarily, not by edict. The earthly kingdom was placed under the dominion of Adam, who in time gave it away to Satan by following after Satan’s way of rebellion against God.

This now brings us back to the beatitudes. The first beatitude is the key attribute to understanding the rest.

The reference is to having a part in the kingdom of heaven: Here we have a person who is promised a part of that great and perfect kingdom, provided that they maintain their complete dependence upon God and His mercy (love/charity). That is, a person will be allowed to partake of all of the blessings, rights and privileges that are inherent within heaven itself for all those granted permission to be there. When Satan allowed his heart (spirit) to become proud and arrogant, he no longer was content to remain a servant of God, his creator. Satan looked toward elevating himself “to be like God”, and as a result, he lost his place in heaven. God’s perfect will and purpose was challenged and angelic beings were being subverted, and that would not be allowed to continue.

The rest of the beatitudes continue with listing each of the (implied) negative attributes of Satan and of fallen mankind, and replacing those negatives with the proper attitude/attributes that God demands of His creation. When one approaches God with reverence and awe, with an attitude of submission and brokenness, our Father is faithful to heal, comfort, elevate and reward. The message is that God cares for His creation and for those who are willing to place themselves under His rule and function within the limits of His authority and care. God will exalt them within His kingdom and the kingdom of heaven.

Next, we will take a quick look at the rest of the beatitudes and see how this teaching of Jesus expands on the precept of kingdom rewards based upon correct attitudes in order for the hearers to gain a deeper understanding and application of the laws of God in their lives.



A quick summation: *The beatitudes are a listing of the attributes and attitudes, the personally of Jesus Christ – and what He expects us to mature into.* This is what it means to become “Christ-like”.

To start off this segment, let’s review a portion of Satan’s place in the scheme of things.

Isaiah 14:9-17 (KJV) Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet [thee] at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, [even] all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, [and] the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [how] art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, [and] consider thee, [saying, Is] this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdom; [That] made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; [that] opened not the house of his prisoners?

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Proverbs 16:18 (KJV). Therein we find the key to Matthew 5 1-12.

The lesson being taught throughout the Bible is this: For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name [is] Holy; I dwell in the high and holy [place], with him also [that is] of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Isaiah 57:15

Looking at all of the Beatitudes, we can see the original sin (even in heaven) was pride – and identify its many manifestations, which are the exact opposite of the attributes listed in Matthew 5:1-12. For example, “poor in spirit” is not a prideful spirit, one who mourns is not one who is cold of heart or who rejoices over the fallen, even of their enemies, etc.

Reviewing each of the beatitudes, it is easy to identify those things which are the opposite of what God is looking for in mankind. It is those prideful attributes that stand in opposition to God. Also notice: The more pride one exhibits in their life, the less love they can express toward others. It is also what give rise to even the root of all evil, the love of money.

So, what is being expressed in these twelve verses is this:

Seek out pride in your life and remove it from you, for the sin of pride will disqualify you from the kingdom of God. Ask Satan. How does one accomplish this task? Examine yourself according to the listed attributes God is looking for in His chosen ones. Verse 3 identifies the goal, verses 4-9 provides us with the standards of evaluation, verses 10 & 11 is the evidence of you meeting your

goal, and verse 12 is the assurance of your reward. Also note the verse 3 and 10 are the start and ending points of the list of attributes – and when the sin of pride has been repented of, and the desired attributes have been cultivated, according to God’s will and purpose in the lives of His children, what is the single shining attribute that is exposed and demonstrated before man and the heavenly hosts? Love (1 Corinthians 13), and remember, “God is love.”

As we can see, while neither pride nor love was specifically stated, both are never-the-less the expressed subject(s) of this passage. This passage also gives us some insight into the rabbinical method of teaching, which differs somewhat from our Western approach.

### **Picking up with Matthew 5:31**

The next few verses concerning the application of The Law (God's Instructions in Righteousness, Torah) will most likely take many by surprise - and even challenge our traditional Western religious view of the gospels.

To start off with, consider verse 31:

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

The passage contextually reads:

Matt 5:31-32 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Question: Is that what the written Law actually says? Answer: No, it is not.

Response: As might be suspected here, and throughout the writings of Matthew, Yeshua is presented as not always quoting just the written word; rather, like here, He is also quoting from the Oral Law. Later (circa 300-375 CE) the Oral law will be collectively codified in one or more of four works, the two Talmud (Babylonian and Jerusalem), the Mishna and/or the Midrash.

The written Law concerning divorce states:

When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it cometh to pass, if she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he writeth her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house, and she departeth out of his house, and goeth and becometh another man's wife, and the latter husband hateth her, and writeth her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took her to be his wife; her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD; and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. Deut 24:1-4 [JPS, 1917]

Because of the manner in which this scripture is written, it has been interpreted that a man had the right to divorce his wife over anything he found displeasing (to himself) - not unlike the Islam religion of today. However, that is not the view point of God. [See Mark 10:2-9.] Notice also, at this point a wife that is "sent away" (divorced), was free to remarry, and no sin was ascribed to either her, her former husband, or to her new husband! The only provision was that she could not remarry her original husband, should her current husband divorce her or die. Compare Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Mark 10:2-9 and Matthew 19:3-12.

Now we can see a picture starting to emerge that is consistent with the teaching in Matthew 5, and what has preceded this "new" doctrine presented by Yeshua. In chapter five we see where the Living Word (Jesus/Yeshua) is taking both the written and oral word of God and bring to light their spiritual foundation. It is not just a rehash of the ordinances and statutes listing the dos and don'ts that are recorded in the Mt. Sinai (covenant) Law, it the peeling back of the religious masking of those words, so that the reason (purpose) for their original recording can be seen, understood and applied to one's life. This is why it is important to the Christian believer, a disciple of Christ, to take up the study of the Old Testament (Torah). PLEASE! Not to gain salvation, or to maintain their salvation, nor even to gain God's favor and receive blessings. That mindset misses the entire purpose of both the Law and of grace.

This exercise should motivate everyone to actually refer back to Old Testament quotes and references found in the N.T., to check if the references are actually part of the written law or not.

Remember, "... you have heard it said ... but I say unto you ..."

**Follow-up note:** In addition to the oral law, there is another equally possibly for the inclusion of several statements made in the New Testament that refer to the Law, but are not found in the Old Testament writings. There are nine books identified in scripture but not included in the canon. They are: Jasher (Josh 10:13, 2 Sam 1:18), The Acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41), Nathan (2 Chr 9:29), Gad (1Chr 29:29), Shemaiah (2 Chr 12:15), Iddo (2 Chr 12:15), Jehu (2 Chr 20:34), Enoch (Jude 1:14 - 4 books total) and Ezra, the scribe (4<sup>th</sup> book).

An interjection:

Note that the beatitudes listed in verses 1-12 is the descriptive image of Jesus Christ that we are to be conformed to (Romans 8:29). These collective attributes are the expression of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-26 & Ephesians 5:9-10), and is what Mathew chapters 5-7 are all about.

It is **not** about what we do or what blessings we can get! It is about who we are and what we will voluntarily allow God to accomplish in and through our lives, it is not what we can get out of God. Our rewards should be the byproduct, not the prime product of our relationship with God. This is why, at the end of his life, Paul could confess that he had not fully obtained the goal, , "... I have not already been perfected ...", rather, he did manage to "... finish the race ... kept the faith!" (2 Timothy 4:7). It is that we too are on a lifelong adventure, a journey into the unknown - to discover what it truly means to be "Christ like" - and the cost that is required of each of us to accomplish

that task. Are there rewards? Yes, of course! But, as we can see in these chapters, if one follows after the Christ for what one can get out of Him, then we follow Him in vain.

This is the message of the sermon the Messiah presented on the mountain side.

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Matt 5:33-37

Here is yet another example of the 'old law' being restated in spiritual (New Covenant) terms. From verse 33, we have, "...Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." Compare with Lev 19:12, "And ye shall not swear by my Name falsely neither shalt thou prophane the Name of thy God:..." Or, to swear to a falsehood so as to profane the name of God.

First, we have the written law restated from the perspective of the oral tradition and then Yeshua expands upon that law in order to demonstrate its spiritual foundation and its practical application. That is, He continues with "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; ...", and provides several reasons why one should refrain from taking oaths/swearing.

In reading through the N.T. what becomes apparent, now that we are aware of it, is that Jesus never swore by His father or His name, neither by heaven, by the Spirit or by any other name, person, or thing, either on earth or in heaven. He did, however, call upon The Father as a witness to His pronouncements (John 8:17-19).

The conclusion of the matter is to be honest within your own heart and before God, and thereby stand in your integrity before both man and God (In context and as examples: Genesis 20:6, 1 Kings 9:4, Job 2:3, Psalms 7:8). In making a promise to God, however, is another matter altogether (Deuteronomy 23:21-23). In such a case, we are required to fulfill the vow (a promise). If you attempt to bargain with God, such as, "God, if you do this, I'll do that." you have placed yourself in a very tight and dangerous spot.

Another thing, this passage does not prevent one from making an oath to accomplish a task or service. See Acts 18:5-7, 21:3, but as an admonishment against making vain oaths. Consider the Talmud, "Let your 'no' and 'yes' both be righteous." Bava Metzia 49a. In the old west, the saying was, "His word is his bond." Or, "His word is as good as gold." The bottom line is simply this, "Say what you mean and mean what you say – and stand firm to accomplish what you have promised."

While Jesus does not go through the entire Mt. Sinai law, item by item, line by line, we can begin to see how He desires us to approach the written law, even the oral law, according to the illumination provided by the Holy Spirit. Even more so today, now that the Spirit has been *made available* (poured out) to all of mankind. Further, what Jesus presented on the mountain side is the path we

are expected to take in order to free oneself from the bondage to the letter of the law and its included curses, while fulfilling all of the requirements of the Law.

No one can fulfill all of God's Law *consistently* on their own, even though God said that it is possible to do so. Because of our fallen nature (a human failing, not God's), it takes some outside help to obey/observe all of God's laws. Even so, that help (assistance) has already been provided for every individual who desires it - free of charge. It is generally Referred to as the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost.

It has become painfully clear to me that this study of Matthew chapters five through seven may well become a lifelong study for me. I say this because as much as I attempt to dismiss everything from my schedule in order to devote myself to this study, questions and issues are continually thrust in my path for immediate consideration, study, and sharing with others. I have a serious dislike for that kind of approach to studying the Bible. I want to go from point A to point B without a lot of side trips, dead ends, U-turns, detours, or other such forced interruptions in my journey. But, alas, my personal desires, wants and other preferences don't seem to matter very much to our God. This life style is even reflected in this missive! Yet, God has His agenda and I have mine and God still gets the final vote!

Throughout my web site I have frequently stressed what I deem to be primary biblical requirements for any teacher of God's word. One such principle is that every teacher will be no better at teaching than he/she is as a continuing (ongoing, persistent) student.

While this missive (subject) is a personal study that I have opted to share as I go along in attempting to understand just what it is that Jesus considers the gospel of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are, and the attitude and roles of mankind that He requires each of us to cultivate and to fulfill. There remains the practical issues that need to be address even as I travel along my own study path.

Let's examine these final verses of this chapter:

Matthew 5:38-39, You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' (A quotation from Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20.). But I say to you, do not resist the evil-doer. But whoever strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him as well. Also note carefully Matthew 5: 40-48.

At first, this approach to conflict resolution seems somewhat self-defeating, until we consider the accomplishments of such men as Jesus Christ, the Apostles, the Christian martyrs throughout history, and of course including the likes of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King as two contemporary examples. While it seems to be an open invitation for disaster, it is in perfect harmony with the introductory verses of this chapter. Somewhere it is written, "... count the costs" before following after Yeshua. While the cost in dollars for a place in the ranks of discipleship to Jesus is "free", it will ultimately cost you everything you own, and in one way or another, even your life.

Yet, did Jesus actually mean that one was to be a literal sheep being led to the slaughter, and to just stand there and allow someone to kill you? I think not. See Luke 22:36 and buy yourself a

weapon. So, what is going on here? Is there some sort of balance between being “meek” and taking strong actions in self-defense? Answer: Yes!

But first, let us examine the scriptures:

v. 38 An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth

This is a twofold instruction and is rendered from Exodus 21:24, Deut 19:21 and Lev 24:20. On the one hand it is a demand for retribution for an injury inflicted upon another. On the other hand, it imposes a limit on the degree of vengeance that can be extracted. If a man kills your horse, you are not allowed to burn down his house; rather, he must replace the horse with one of like value. Later, in the Mishna (Jewish Oral Law), money was allowed as a substituted for the extraction of a physical penalty, e.g. it is okay to take the money (an equivalent value) than receive another horse. The principle of retribution for injury is codified in all human cultures and the physical ‘pound of flesh’ retribution laws are still in effect throughout many of the Middle Eastern cultures.

Taking another look at the principle of retribution from an historical point of view:

When writing down the ordinances and statutes of the Law, Moses added the concept of a “safe haven” for those who accidentally kill another person. While there is much to study and understand concerning the Cities of Refuge, what is important to this discussion is to note that the victim’s family members were allowed to take the life of the person who accidentally killed one of their relatives (without purpose or anger), unless the killer could make it to a City of Refuge and convince the elders that the death was accidental. If the death was ruled to be accidental, then the killer was allowed to stay in the city unmolested, and was free to leave the city only after the current Temple High Priest died. If anyone took the life of the killer while he was in the City of Refuge or after he left the city (after the death of the High Priest), then that person would be guilty of murder and sentenced to death by public execution.

From the permitted killing of another, Jesus moved through a paradox, like following Alice down a rabbit hole or stepping through a mirror.

In verse 39, Jesus instructs the people to, “... resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (KJV)

First, we know that Jesus resisted evil wherever He encountered it, such as in Matthew 23 or in the casting out of demons. Second, this passage should have been better translated as, “... resist not the evildoer”, or “the evil one”. See πονηρός (ponhros) in Matthew 13:49 or, more often, “the evil one” as in 5:37; 6:13; 13:19, 38. So, where does this leave us? The primary message is that the model of a City of Refuge, like so much of what Jesus has been teaching, is being expanded beyond its traditional boundaries and exposing the spiritual foundation of the laws governing personal retribution (the taking of personal vengeance upon another). Examples of this principle in action is Jesus asking the Father to forgive [all] those responsible for Him being on the cross\*, and Stephen asking for the forgiveness for those stoning him (which also included at the time Saul of Tarsus, aka Rabbi Sha’ul, the Apostle Paul).

\*In the total scheme of things, Jesus went to the cross because of me, and He stayed there for me.

Next, Matthew 5:40, And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have [thy] cloke also.

The NET translation puts it like this: And if someone wants to sue you and to take your tunic, give him your coat also.

A NET translation note:

Thy coat ... thy cloke also (τον χιτώνα σου κα το ιμάτιον). The "coat" is really a sort of shirt or undergarment and would be demanded at law. A robber would seize first the outer garment or cloke (one's coat). If one loses the undergarment at law, the outer one goes also (the more valuable one).

Thayer notes:

- Original: χιτών

- Transliteration: Chiton

- Definition:

1. a tunic, an undergarment, usually worn next to the skin, a garment, a vestment

- Original: ἱμάτιον

- Transliteration: Himation

- Definition:

1. a garment (of any sort)

- a. garments, the cloak or mantle and the tunic

2. the upper garment, the cloak or mantle

- Origin: from a presumed derivative of ennumi (to put on)

This verse then becomes rather easy to understand, especially in the vernacular of the first century church.

Message: If you are "at fault", take full responsibility for your transgression(s) against another. Or, in other words, if he wants to take your jacket, give him the shirt off your back to.

We find this same attitude being demonstrated in the actions of Zacchaeus (see Luke 19:1-9).

Verse 41 is a prime example of needing some sense of history to fully appreciate scripture.

Matt 5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

καὶ ὅστις σε ἀγγαρεύσει μίλιον ἔν ᾧπαγε μετ' αὐτοῦ δύο

Question: Who would or could "compel" you to accompany him for a mile down the road, and why?

NET Translation note: Shall compel thee (αγγαρευσε). The Vulgate has angariaverit. The word is of Persian origin and means public couriers or mounted messengers (αγγαρο) who were stationed by the King of Persia at fixed localities, with horses ready for use, to send royal messages from one to another. Therefore, if a man is passing such a post-station, an official may come out and compel him to go back to another station to do an errand for the king. This was called impressments into service. This very thing was done to Simon of Cyrene who was thus compelled to carry the cross of Christ (Mt 27:32, ηγγαρευσαν).

My note: While Simon had to go only “the mile”, as he went with the Romans and Jesus. He was pressed into service. Failure to comply was not an option. Another way to see this verse is that if one is compelled to serve for one mile, give a double portion and offer to go two. The same approach would be extended to any required form of service.

Verse 42: Give to him that asketh thee (This may include to begging; giving alms was viewed highly in biblical times (See: Matt 6:1-4; Deut 15:7-11 & Acts 3:1-10)., and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away (turn away from or reject).

NET translation notes: Turn not thou away (μη αποστραφης). "This is one of the clearest instances of the necessity of accepting the spirit and not the letter of the Lord's commands (see Matt 5:32, 34, 38). Indiscriminate almsgiving does little but injury to society, but the words must embrace far more than almsgiving" (McNeil). Recall again that Jesus is a popular teacher and expects some men to understand his paradoxes. In the organized charities [especially those managed by government agencies] of modern life we are in danger of letting the milk of human kindness dry up.

I have attempted to illustrate the “Sermon on the Mount” related in Matthew chapter five as the initial change in world view that Jesus was presenting to the general population. In Jewish history, continuing even today, a spiritual man is an obedient man (1Sam 15:22, And Samuel said, Hath the LORD [has great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken [to the voice of God is better] than the fat of rams.

Yet, throughout the New Covenant writings we are admonished time and again to be obedient. To be obedient to the entire word of God, to spiritual and secular authority, and even to be in submission to one another.

## **Love Your Enemies**

Matt 5:43-48, Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do



ye more [than others]? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. [To become Christ-like, spiritually mature]

Perfect (τέλειος) (tel'-ei-os) adj. complete, completeness; in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.” Is taken from both the Law of Moses and from the Midrash (oral law, Old Covenant commentary on how to interpret and apply the Law in order to please God). We must also continue to remember that Jesus frequently referenced the Oral Law throughout His teaching, but especially as noted in Matthew’s gospel.

The notion of being perfect has a thought mirrored the Old Covenant, "be ye holy as I am holy". See Lev 19:2 or Deut 18:13 and the other reference in 1 Peter 1:16.

### **Matthew Chapter Six**

In these chapters we get our introduction in what it means to “look behind the veil” and get a glimpse as to how we are to view the world, ourselves, and our God. We are introduced to the nature of God that the Law was given to reveal to us through our obedience to it. Here we have Jesus opening up our understanding of the godly nature that we are to bring forth from our very being.

While Jesus never approved what His enemies did, He never-the-less loved them, and that love extended through time to include us. Until the day we became a living disciple of Jesus Christ, were His enemies!

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is interesting because the entire chapter is devoted to the single most important thing to mankind, wealth and the power it represents, and the most important thing to God, prayer (personal time and relationship with God).

Not long ago I heard a preacher say the measure of one’s spirituality within the body of Christ, the church, is about giving money. I don’t think he fully understood the full meaning of what he confessed.

Other preachers have pronounced judgments concerning prayer. If one is not in the Prayer Room and also at the front of the church answering an alter call, “praying through” or performing some other religious ritual, that person failing to meet the preacher’s expectation of an acceptable religious performance, they were not being very “spiritual”. The giving of money and prayer are both to be performed before the assembled congregation so those who gave the most money (and/or time and talents) and prayed the longest and loudest would receive the highest public recognition from the preacher and the congregation. The ones who gave the most, including paying a tithe of all their resources to the pastor were the first in line for congregational ministry positions. To

ensure a favored position with the pastor, one also had to be the most obvious and vocal in their public prayer.

With all of that said, in chapter six we will next encounter God's point of view concerning some of these basic attitudes.

The chapter opens with an admonishment not to be "public" with your charitable giving (alms). Verses 1-4 seem to be self-evident and clear in their meaning, if you take pride in your giving or accept the acclamation of men for your generosity, then enjoy your fame because God rejects your prideful heart. These four verses represent a wonderful example of how doing (performing) a religious act and going through all of the prescribed rituals count as nothing in God's eyes. For example, the use of holding public pledges for contributions to a cause or a need draws on both an individual's pride (recognition) of their giving and the associated public shame (guilt) of not being counted as one of the greater sacrificial givers within the congregation. This public display of giving is really nothing more than feeding a carnal attitude of the giver, or the exercise of religious extortion. Those who fall in between, the ones who give what they can or purposed in their hearts to give, are generally ignored – and either have their pride unsatisfied due to the lack of recognition or left fighting with the feelings of self-condemnation for not "giving enough". The ones who give out of their ability and/or their heart are satisfied in their spirit.

However, in verse three we see a clear picture of what Jesus is getting at, "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee [openly]." Therefore, do not seek the glory of men, but rather seek the approval of God.

In today's Western society we leave the taking care of the poor primarily to governmental organizations, where in biblical times it was not the case. Rather it was a general obligation upon all members of society. See Deuteronomy 15:7- 11 as well as a Temple ministry (to provide food for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger – the non-Jew who is in need, or in our case, the non-Christian).

It is frequently taught that the greater the personal sacrificial giving, the greater will be your reward from God. This doctrine is most often applied to personal financial sacrifices. "You can't out give God." A doctrine generally based on Luke 6:38, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." This verse, in context, refers to a mode of living within a general :6cultural/social environment.

Yet this verse is most often used to induce people to give into the offering plate in support of the church building fund and its operating expenses or some special project. This is in addition to the frequently taught doctrine of tithing to the local pastor. Even 2Corinthians 9 has been used to extract money from the saints of God for such things as a building fund, property acquisition, new carpets, furniture, to pay for utilities, service babysitting fees, landscaping, church bus/van expenses, etc., etc. No, then this brings us to the focus of this particular chapter, which is giving to help, assist, support the saints of the church of Jesus Christ who are in need. Even so –

All of these kinds of extra expenses can be justified and met if the members of the assembly freely choose to support such activities. That is, if the expenses are presented to them as projects and activities worthy of their support and a responsibility that they would personally like to bear – not intimidated or otherwise manipulated into underwriting. Second, a simple reading of this chapter in 2Corinthians 9 reveals that many of the “giving” sermons that lift verses out of this chapter do so with only by doing violence to the word of God. No verse in this chapter can be construed to mean that one is morally obligated to support a church building or even religious activities or programs. People are free to engage in and support these things if they choose, but are not under obligation to do so! To make a “show of giving” in a church service places those who publicly give in a higher spiritual recognition status within the assembly than those who do not give, or who do not give as liberally. This brings us back to Matthew 6:1-4:

Take heed that ye do not your alms [or, righteousness] before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of [or, with] your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest [thine] alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. See Deut 15:7-11.

Here we must also remember that the giving of alms is doing “righteousness” as defined in the Law of God. If your decision is to give nothing or to give 100%, or to give something in between, there is no “law” that requires either, it is between you and God.

Next, we encounter prayer – talking with God.

The one critical thing we must keep in mind is the kingdom of heaven, as it touches the earth, is all about a relationship that is based on attitude (spiritual fruit), covenant (obedience) and communication (prayer). In the next few verses, we discover what God expects of us in our relational communications.

#### Private Prayer

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites [are]: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Matt 6:5-6

Here we have a most interesting problem in prayer technique and a textual problem. In verse 5 we have public prayer, of which Jesus didn’t think too highly. That is, when public prayers are used to further one’s spiritual (in this case, social and/or religious) standing among men. This seems to hold true for both public prayers (on street corners) and group prayers in the synagogues (this

would include modern day churches) where how loud, long, and/or animated one's prayers are, the more those kinds of prayers are esteemed of men. Jesus said, in effect, that He was not impressed. Then He goes on and gives us some specific instructions on what He thinks how prayers should be conducted.

In verse 6, we encounter a textual translation and interpretation problem.

συ δε οταν προσευχη εισελθε εις το ταμειον σου και κλεισας την θυραν σου προσευξαι τω πατρι σου τω εν τω κρυπτω και ο πατηρ σου ο βλεπων εν τω κρυπτω αποδωσει σοι εν τω φανερω [Byz]

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret;...

When you enter [εισέρχομαι (eis-er'-khom-ai) v. to enter] into your closet [ταμειον (tam-ei'-on) n. 1. a dispensary or magazine, , a chamber on the ground-floor or interior of an Oriental house – frequently without windows, secret room (generally used for storage or privacy, a spot for retirement) KJV: secret chamber, closet, storehouse] and when thou hast shut [κλείω (klei'-o) v. 1. to close {literally or figuratively} KJV: shut (up)] thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; [κρυπτός (kroop-tos') adj. 1. concealed, private].

The mental picture we raise up, using the pictures provided in the English translation of the Greek text, is a small, literal closet, such as might be found in a bedroom or under a stair case. However, in the Hebrew we have something quite different. That is, a prayer closet consists of a Tallit, a prayer shawl worn by Jewish men, traditionally white with blue or black stripes. This prayer shawl is worn during Shabbat (Sabbath) services and during the daily prayer times. It is not worn at night or evening (after dark) except by the one(s) conducting a service of some kind. Shabbat services are held during the daylight hours. For additional background see Numbers 15:37-41. Also, for good write-up on the how and why of a prayer shawl see Tallit.com

When a man goes into his prayer closet, he lifts the Tallit over his head, meditates for a moment on God and then adjusts it on his shoulders, as a shawl. When reciting prayers, it is lifted off the shoulders and over one's head, creating a 'room'; pulling it close together at the face (but not covering) while praying is 'closing the door'. It is as experiencing being in a Synagogue, hearing men praying quite loudly, each in their own "room" and oblivious to everyone else around them. This practice stands in stark contrast to Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 11:4. Or does it?

There are two head coverings employed by Jewish men, one is the skullcap (kippah or yarmulke). There is no scriptural base for wearing this article of clothing. The practice started somewhere around the 12th century and became a common practice during the 16th century. The kippah, or yarmulke, was worn to remind the wearer that there was always someone (God) above them and to whom they are held answerable to. The second head covering is the Tallit, noted above.

Rabbi Sha'ul (the Apostle Paul) in his letter to the church at Corinth is addressing public prayer, as might be engaged in during a public service where standard prayers are recited as a

congregation, or if the individual in the act or process of prophesying. At other times during the service, or outside of the services, the Tallit is often used to create a closet, a place of intimacy between himself and God. The covering becomes a private prayer closet. It is these kinds of scriptural insights that we so often miss – even to our misunderstanding and misapplying of the very scriptural practices that we would impose on ourselves and others.

Now, with all of that said, there is nothing wrong with finding a quiet place, even a closet in a bedroom or under a staircase, or even in a shed or out under a tree somewhere, anywhere one can find a private place and time to be with their God – even as Jesus so often did.

No, repeat, no. I do not think all of the guys need to run out and buy a prayer shawl or a skull cap!

As to congregational prayer, or individual verbal prayer in a congregation. Go for it, just don't try to be the star of the act.

Next: The Lord's Prayer, which I will only touch upon. There are a great many outstanding teachings on these verses, and my comments would be redundant.

If you have access to the Jewish New Testament Commentary by David H. Stern, I would highly recommend using it as a handy reference to gaining an understanding of the Jewish (Hebrew) world view as expressed by the New Covenant writers. Even so –

Here we are at the famous Lord's Prayer. Matthew 6:9-13. Much has been written, taught and preached concerning this passage, as well as its mirror recording in Luke 11:2-4. So, I will leave that to the reader. However, I would add that I have found that for me, personally, this outline given by Jesus serves me best as an outline to follow and upon which I am to add my own thoughts. In this manner the prayer does not become just yet another religious ritual for me, but a conversation. [Don't forget to listen for His response!]

In verses 16 through 18 Jesus instructs his listeners on the how to fast. Each individual fasts according to what he purposes in his heart to accomplish. How long, and to withhold what from themselves. That should be between the individual and God. Yet, there have been times when corporate, even national fasting was sometimes called for (2 Chronicles 20:1-4. While we sometimes hear a call for a National Day of Prayer, we seldom hear of a national day (or week or month) of fasting accompanied by prayer. Sometimes a church will be called to a fast for some corporate need or desire. There is no scriptural teaching against such practices. The thing to remember is that your fasting, even when it a corporate fast, it is still a personal activity between you and your God.

Next, we enter into storing up one's treasures for future use.

Verses 19-21, Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Another way of translating the passage might be like this:

To not amass and store up wealth for yourself and deposit it here in this world (lit. in the ground), where a moth can eat holes in your expensive cloth and clothes, where corrosion eats up your prize metal objects, and thieves break into your treasury and steal your silver, gold and precious jewels. But, rather amass spiritual treasures (e.g., Matthew 25:35-40) that are acceptable to God, those treasures that can only be stored in heaven, where these kinds of losses cannot take place.

Lesson: While one yet lives, loss can, and most likely will occur. Even so, when one dies, all is lost, everything, save one thing only – those treasures (that spiritual wealth) that one has accumulated in their service to God. If one's heart set on accumulating physical wealth here on earth for their earthly enjoyment rather than that which is pleasing to God, then that individual will have nothing to nothing to look forward to in the world to come. There will be no crowns, no rewards, and quite possibility there will be no future relationship with Jesus either! Even so, there is no law against being wealthy! Just use it according to biblical principles. Don't fall in love with the making of money!

The final analysis is what you spend your time, effort, energy, thinking/planning, working toward (labor), and investing in – that is the true expression of where your heart is. If your heart is focused on the things of this earth, then that is your reward. If your heart is focused on the Messiah – then He will be your reward for all eternity. The choice is very personal.

Next we are confronted with another Hebrew idiom, “The eye is the lamp of the body.” Verses 22 & 23 yield, “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness!”

An alternative translation reads, “The eye is the lamp of the body. If then your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is diseased, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” [NET]

Compare these verses to 1John 2:15-17.

Here we find that what one desires to look after, or upon, is also what drives his soul's desire. If what attracts one's eye is wholesome and good, then the entire body will be full of light and wholesome. But if what attract the eye is evil, then the entire body will become diseased with that evil. At this point we can see that what we allow to remain in our eyesight will bring into our very being whatever it is we continue to allow. An old Hebrew saying is, “We cannot help what we see, but we have full control over what we say.”

Today we are bombarded with unwholesome images from every side. We are enticed to consider things from luxury cars, houses, boats, planes, clothes, jewelry, etc. all of which are designed to bring up a desire to own such wonderful things. The images are designed to grab our attention and to influence our buying habits, even to spend money we don't have for things we can't afford, as

we are genially pulled further into debt. Instant gratification. Things become more important to us than our relationship with Jesus. Idolatry.

Then there is sexualized view of both men and women. When the packaging of people (dress or the lack thereof) is designed to make the opposite sex aware of one's own sexuality it is often the false advertisement of availability for an individual to engage in fornication and/or adultery. It is to create an unfulfilled desire in another person (another expression of exercising an influence over another), unless, of course one is a male or female streetwalker (prostitute) then the advertisement reflects reality.

I am sure that everyone can think of additional examples of where one's eye can get them into a world of trouble. Even so, look at where we are today in America. What we subscribe to, as a society, would have made our pre 1960 parents blush with shame. What we condone today would have broken a marriage of fifty years ago. Why? Because the institution of marriage is already broken. It is the norm today for people to have casual sex with anyone who is willing, even while married. It is also common place to have people living together and having babies without the commitment of a marriage. If the child is not wanted or needed for government benefits (payments) that are available to the mother, then the unborn child is simply disposed of, to the tune of 1.37 million per year (1996 figures).

“Between April 2008 and May 2009 [actual dates not given], we collected information from U.S. abortion patients using a four-page, self-administered survey available in English and Spanish. In all, 12,866 abortions were performed at the 95 participating facilities; ...” (1)

(1) Rachel K. Jones, Lawrence B. Finer and Susheela Singh (2011) US-Abortion-Patients.pdf (application/pdf Object. Retrieved August 27, 2011, from [www.guttmacher.org/pubs/US-Abortion-Patients.pdf](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/US-Abortion-Patients.pdf)

Is there any question as to the influence that the lust of the eye can bring to us? Remember, this problem did not originate with the 19th or 20th centuries, it has been with us for a very long time – ask King David about its influence. Ask those who may have attended the display presented at Sodom and Gomorrah, or for those who missed the only ark leaving the area when the rain started.

It should not be a wonder to us because Jesus was able to convey so much in such few words to those who were in attendance on the mountain side that day. Remember He spoke to Jews in a Hebrew/Aramaic dialect, a language that is verb based and very concrete. That is, He gave his teaching and instructions in words that told a story in a language that painted a picture for the hearers, which included such things movement and sound, or which could involve all of the five senses into just one or two words.

Conclusion: Yeshua is teaching us to not allow our gaze to linger on, to examine closely over a period of time, those things that are opposed to the requirements and principles of scripture defining a life style that is acceptable to God.

Matt 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

In this one short verse we have a wealth (no pun intended) of Hebrew thinking. A language analysis:

First, a man will be enslaved to something or someone – and sometimes it is not a matter of choice. Yet, even in bondage, one has some control over who he will serve, God or man. In this passage we have the idea that there does not exist any man that is capable of serving [Gr. δουλεύω, to be a slave to, or subservient to; used in the Septuagint for the Hebrew word עֲבָד abad, meaning to be in bondage, a slave or bond servant.] more than one master (being under the control of): for he will either hate [to hate or to love less, a rhetorical point, that if a choice has to be made between two objects, the choice will be for the one with the closest attachment] and love [in this verse, the sense is one of an attachment or affectionate reverence of, giving prompt obedience to, or the grateful recognition of benefits received] the other; or else he will hold [ἀντέχομαι, to hold before or against, hold back, withstand, endure; to keep one's self directly opposite to any one, hold to him firmly, cleave to, paying heed to him] to the one, and despise [καταφρονέω, to condemn, despise, disdain, think little or nothing of] the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [Aramaic for wealth and possessions, the love (as a slave to) wealth/money being the root of all evil, where such an attachment will eventually produce evil in one's life and in the lives of others].

In our western mode of thinking of “all things in moderation” is justifying our personal preferences, choices and actions, while in the biblical Hebrew mindset some things are simply black and white. While money is not considered evil or the source of evil in the Hebrew worldview, the lure of wealth is a danger that can become all consuming (the rich young man of Matthew 19). We are either to become as Paul, a bond servant (indentured slave) to Christ, or we will continue to be in bondage to the world and the things of the world – which is enmity toward God (Rom 8:7). Notice, Jesus, while condemning the money changers in the Temple, He never condemned the money, only the love (avarice) of it. Or, the love of this world and the things of it, that provides us with a greater satisfaction than pleasing God, will keep us from the kingdom of God.

Therein is the difference between the Western and the Hebrew mindsets. The western approach is set on “what can I get out of God”, while the Hebrew mindset is, “how can I please God”. Christians, by in large, desire wealth and want God to provide it for them. The justification being that they desire wealth in order to give it into (support) a ministry. If the ministry was really what one desired to support, their prayer would have been for God to provide the necessary support directly to that ministry – not to them – but by and through some means. No, the refrain of “bless me so that I might be a blessing to others”, is most often made in order that they might first siphon off what they need or desire for their own use. What one chooses first to support or to acquire (chooses over all other options) is a better indication of where their loyalties truly lie, rather in what they may profess (actions speak louder than words). Oh yes – the Lord just might choose you to be that vehicle by which He blesses another! Accept that graciously.



Now, take the list of commandments that Jesus Christ instructed His disciples to follow. In light of everything presented here, consider what Jesus had in mind when instructing His disciples to know, understand, obey, and to teach others to do likewise.

Self-examination: How well do you measure up to Jesus' requirements? 2 Cor 13:5

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### **A List of Instructions given by Jesus**

I would like to add something I pray will edify the leaders of the Body of Christ, something to consider for possible self-examination. Perhaps even to make some adjustments in one's own thinking and/or for spiritual correction.

The first topic follows this brief recap of the general introduction material in the forgoing dissertation. If you have not read it, please read through this material, it's important.

If one does not know, understand, put into practice (obey), and teach others the teachings of Jesus Christ, how then can one be a "true disciple" of Jesus, or even a student of one of His appointed apostles?

So the question is: How many instructions in righteousness (commandments, aka Torah) of Jesus are recorded in the N.T? How many do you know and understand, and which ones do you teach?

Remember, instructions coming from the mouth of Jesus were not suggestions – they were orders for all of His disciples to obey.

Most preachers and teachers do rather well with listing maybe 10 - 15 from the Pauline and book of Acts doctrinal statements, but after that they generally dry up and start substituting instructions of men on how to look, talk and act holy, according to someone's personal convictions, ideas, or thinking, and that that will somehow make them acceptable unto God. Well kids, I personally think Jesus thought that is a wasted effort.

Keep this in mind, "IF A MAN LOVE ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORDS." John 14:23. Not your words, not the words of your teacher, and not the word penned by men in some how-to book. Not good ideas, not religious rules and regulations created by men for men, nor by any plans, programs or activities. Not pious words or statements of faith/belief. None of these things are of any value unless and until one actually does what Jesus commanded them to do. To do - not think about, not to give mental assent to (to agree with the idea), or even to confess with one's mouth, but to do, to perform, to accomplish, to obey. (Isaiah 29:13, Matthew 15:8) Just to make sure everyone got the message, Jesus said it again in John 14:15, 14:21 & 15:10. Stated a little differently each time, but the message remains is very emphatic. If you really love me, then please act like it!

As a reality check, Jesus gave 140 specific instructions to His disciples by which to live their lives. Without looking in your Bible, can you list twenty of these instructions?

Now granted, some of Jesus' instructions were given only to the disciples that accompanied Him during His earthy ministry and do not apply to everyone today. So, we will not be addressing those commands/instructions.

So, don't you think it is past time that we moved on from preaching and teaching the "... doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."? Want to be more like Jesus? Then one must live like Jesus did, to live our lives according to His precepts, instructions, plans and purpose. Don't you agree that might just be a novel concept worth trying? But I can tell you right now that if one should start actually living according to the commands of Jesus, they will pay a heavy price for that decision. So, *count the costs* before taking up this cross.

Even so, why not stop playing church or doing church, or just going through the motions of holding church; let's start being the church, the Ekklesia The called-out ones, the assembly. Those who anywhere, in a city, village, or country side that constitute such a company, and are united into one body, the whole body of Christ scattered throughout the earth.

To assist us in our studies let's take a look at one biblical principle at a time that Jesus presented to His disciples (students, Talmidim). As we complete each principle, I will add one more "principle" of the 21 principles that Jesus covered with His universal requirements, and that He fully expected disciples to incorporate into their lives. Question: Do those principles apply to us today? If so, in what way?

Let's start off with a quick review of the basics. Remembering it is not what you know or even what you say concerning Jesus that will secure your salvation. It is a question of do you know Him and obey Him? If you do, then count yourself blessed, if not, then let's start to make some correction. Me? Well, I stand at the head of the line requiring my own list of corrections! Oh yes, I am far from being an acceptable disciple of Christ, much to my shame. Yes, I openly confess that I stand in need of implementing all of these principles in my own life.

By the way, this *not* salvation by works, it is salvation by faith, grace, and a demonstration of one's faith and love of God by their obedience to Him, just as Abraham's faith was demonstrated by his obedience (Gen 26:1-6).

While I have listed several verses under each principal heading, each verse must be studied in its own context. Who is He speaking to? What do the individual words in these verses mean? How and when are they to be applied? How does each reference verse support the "principal" heading? Each commandment (instruction in righteousness) is a Bible study (teaching/sermon) in its own right. I hope each of us will undertake such a task – and teach what Jesus taught, the way He taught it, and pass that teaching on to others. And, don't forget, a good teacher will always remain teachable and frequently will learn more from their students than out of a book.

One more question to keep in the back of our minds: How many times must God say something before it can be considered valid and binding? The simple answer is only one time, not two, three, ten..... no second or third statement of God is required to make any one of His statements valid and binding. So, may all of our studies be fruitful.

**NOTE: Biblical context consist of the following, as much and as close as we can get it: (1) How does the verse fit with the rest of the accompanying text that both precedes and follows after the verse in question? (2) Other statements by the same author on the same subject, (3) What other authors said concerning the same subject, (4) The historical setting, (5) The cultural and social considerations of that time, (6) the religion and its practices at the time of the writing, (7) What did the original author intend to communicate, (8) How did the original hearers (or readers) understand and respond to the original words, and (9) The impact of the language through which the author expressed their common world view.**

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*Additional Note:*

*The categorizing of the following twenty-one topics was taken from the outline created by Evangelist. J. S. McConnell in 1925 Now in public domain.*

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If I truly wish to be a disciple of Christ – what does “be a disciple” mean – from God's perspective?

As we start off, I would like to remind everyone of the seriousness of this undertaking. In effect, 2 John 9-11, which states,

“Everyone who goes on ahead and does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God. The one who remains in this teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house and do not give him any greeting, because the person who gives him a greeting shares in his evil deeds.” [NET]

Or,

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine [teaching] of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into [your] house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. [KJV]

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## I REPENTANCE

1. "Repent" Matt. 4:17; Rev. 2:5
2. "Come unto Me" Matt. 11:28
3. "Seek first God and His righteousness" Matt. 6:33
4. "Forgive if ye have ought against any" Mark 11:25
5. "Deny Yourself" Matt. 16:24
6. "Ask, seek, knock" Matt. 7:7
7. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" Luke 13:24

What is repentance and what does that mean? What does it require? How do you do it? What are the expected results from obeying these instruction(s)?

When Jesus says, “Come unto Me”, what does that mean?

In number three we are to seek first God – and also His righteousness. How does one go about seeking God and where is His righteousness to be found?

What are the requirements for forgiving another? Why is that important? What does that have to do with repentance?

Now, here is a hard one: What does it mean to deny one’s self? How do you do it?

The well-known instruction of ask, seek and knock” What do each of these three instructions mean to a disciple of Christ, and what are the intended results each – and how do they work together?

Then in number seven we have “strive” to enter, not the command to enter? What is the difference between striving and the actual doing? When does your effort become acceptable in God’s eyes?

## II BELIEF

1. "Believe the Gospel" Mark. 1:15
2. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me" John 14:1
3. "Believe on Him who He (God) hath sent" John 6:28-29
4. "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" John 14:11
5. "While ye have light believe in the light" John 12:36
6. "Believe that ye receive" Mark 11:24

Please keep in mind what the authors meant when they used the Greek word, *pisteuo* (believe, G4100) in these verses. To believe, as in giving one's mental assent to the truth of something is *not* what how they were using the term. Rather, to credit, have confidence, conviction in the truth of a thing, etc. In Mark 1:15 it is even more pointed, with the addition of the Greek word 'en', the emphases becomes even more pronounced, as to make the verse even more emphatic. The question then becomes, just what Gospel was Jesus referring to?

An aside question: Just how many "acceptable gospels" are there noted in the New Testament? Do you think that there is only one acceptable gospel? The biblical answer just might surprise you. Covered later.

Now, some things you might want to do as you go through these verses (in context of course) is to take a look at some the key words such as believe, and make sure you understand what the author meant when he pinned them – and it would be to one's advantage to also check out what the translators did with those original words in order to create our English translations. Using the Amplified Bible is also a good help for general reading.

Taking "believe", there are about 1 and ½ pages of Greek lexicon translation notes to describe how the term is used 114 times in the New Testament of KJV of the Bible. *Pisteuo* is also used in the LXX (Greek translation of the Old Testament) for the Hebrew root word אָמַן ('aman, H539)

For this exercise I would recommend checking out just the Greek language usage. That should be a task enough for now.

Another problem is what Jesus continually pointed out, and that is unbelief (*Apistia*, G570). In attempting to understand these Greek terms and their usage in these verses I highly recommend the use of a good Greek/English Lexicon for all of your New Testament word studies, and not rely only on a dictionary.

## III THE NEW BIRTH

1. "Ye must be born again" John 3:7
2. "Cleanse first that which is within" Matt. 23:26
3. "Make the tree good, and his fruit good" Matt. 12:33
4. "Abide in Me and I in you" John 15:4

5. "Have salt in yourselves" Mark 9:50
6. "Labor, for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" John 6:27
7. "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" Luke 10:20

Generally when we refer to the “new birth” we mean being baptized in/with the Holy Ghost. However, we might also consider that there might be something we have to contribute to the process. As with all verses lifted from scripture, context is still everything!

Take for example, numbers 5 and 6 above, what do these verses actually mean? How does one accomplish their intent and purpose? Looking for a foundational verse for a sermon or Bible study? Try one of those. Number seven should give everyone pause for doctrinal consideration. When, where and how does a person get their names written in heaven, or even get it “blotted out” of the book?

Another aside question: When is one’s name written in heaven? You will need book, chapter and verse to verify this event, and it might not be what you think.

#### IV FOLLOWING JESUS

1. "Follow Me" John 12:26
2. "Be baptized" Matt. 3:13-15; Matt. 28:19
3. "Take this (communion) in remembrance of Me" Luke 22:17-19
4. "Ye also ought to wash one another’s feet" John 13:14-15
5. "If any man will come after Me let him take up his cross daily" Luke 9:23
6. "Learn of Me" Matt. 11:29
7. "Continue ye in My love" John 15:9

What does “follow Me” entail, that is, what does it actually mean? What does it require of us?

To be baptized. How many of us know how Jesus and the Apostles viewed or conducted this ceremony? We can generally quote verses that define what a baptism should result in – but how many of us actually understand what all of those words mean in a practical sense? For example, to take on Jesus Christ”, or “to join with Him in His death, burial and resurrection”? How did the church during the first three centuries view it?

What is the “communion”? Where did it come from and why is it we do [or not do] it as the disciples did during the first three centuries of the ‘church age’?

What is the significance of “washing feet”? What does (did) it mean and what did it signify when Jesus performed the act? Why did He instruct His disciples to follow His example [lesson learned]?

What is the cross we are each to “pick up”? How do we do it and what are the expected results?

Then there is the command to “Learn of Me”. What is it He desires us to learn? Once “learned”, what do we do with that information?

Number seven is a nice short requirement, yet verse 10 continues the thought with, “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.” This should give everyone of us pause to ponder. Are we not in the process of identifying those commandments? As we learn what is required/expected of us, then what?

## V PRAYER

1. "Pray always" Luke 21:36
2. "Pray that ye enter not into temptation" Luke 22:40, 46
3. "Pray the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers [laborers], " Luke 10:2
4. "Pray for them which despitefully use you" Luke 6:28
5. "Pray to the Father in my name" Matt.6:6; John16:24,26
6. “And I will do whatever you ask [pray] in my name so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. John 14:13-14
7. “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that remains, so that whatever you ask [pray] the Father in my name he will give you. John 16:16
8. "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven ..." Matt. 6:9-13
9. "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions" Matt. 6:7-8
10. "Ask with importunity" John 16:24; Luke11:5-13

The first instruction is an interesting one. What does it mean to ‘pray always? How do you accomplish that requirement?

Now, we know God is not a [the] tempter of mankind into sin – so why pray that we be not enter into temptation?

Why pray for others to be labourers [laborers], what about ourselves? We also know that it is not the will of God for any to be lost – so what gives with this instruction?

Now items 5-7 should give us some pause for reflection. What do these different instructions mean and how are they related? It may not be as simple of a task as it might first seem.

Are these the actual words that we are to use – or are they an outline of subject matter to be included in our prayers? Are all prayers to include these words or thoughts or outline?

Item number nine: None of us are guilty of that, are we?

To ask with ‘importunity’, what does that actually entail?

## VI FAITH

1. "Have faith in God" Mark 11:22
2. "Be not faithless" John 20:27

3. "Neither be ye of doubtful mind" Luke 12:29
4. "Take no thought for your life" Matt. 6:25-34
5. "Let not your heart be troubled" John 14:1,27
6. "Be of good cheer" Matt. 14:27
7. "Be not afraid" Mark 5:36: Luke 12:4-7

Here is a great subject! Faith, just what does it mean when Jesus says it? Even being "faithful", I have heard being faithful preached from everything from paying tithes, taking on another building program, to dedicated loyalty to the local pastor. Even so, I have heard precious little on what God expects from the faithful. Or, how to live and act in/or on one's faith. We often quote Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is ....", and what we get are some reasonable explanations, which is okay, but what does one "do" with that information?

So, the real question is, "How does one rest in their faith in God and His promises? This also begs another question, "What is the difference between "stepping out in faith", and "stepping out in presumption"?

## VII SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

1. "Search the scriptures" John 5:39
2. "Remember the word that I said" John 15:20
3. "Let these sayings sink down into your ears" Luke 9:44
4. "Take heed therefore how ye hear" Luke 8:18
5. "Take heed what ye hear" Mark 4:24
6. "Beware of the leaven (doctrine) of the Pharisees" Matt.16:6, 12
7. "Beware of false prophets" Matt. 7:15-17

These are very interesting verses. First, items 3 through 7 do not instruct us to "search the scriptures". In number one, the verse acknowledges that some folks do search the scriptures, but they cannot "rightly divide the word of truth". Number 2, instructs us to remember His words, He being the living word of God. So, it is implied that one would 'search the scriptures to see if what He says is true. In numbers 5 & 6 it is again implied that one would search the scriptures to see (test) the spirits of those who are responsible for the spiritual instruction of others. If one does not 'know' the scriptures, how can they test what they hear? Remember the folks of Berea?

Bible studies should be for discerning the truth of God's character, and our God ordained instruction for living a life pleasing unto Him - not for the picking out of selected verses that appear to support some church dogma or our personal preferences. We are all too often wrapped up into 'proving' what it is we think we already know, rather than discovering more of the heart of God.

We all can quote some 'foundational truths', but so much of what we recite is done so with little understanding, and frequently without wisdom.

It is time for us all to 'hit the books' once again. This time setting aside all of our accumulated knowledge, and approach the word openly, honestly, sincerely, and even innocently (as a child).



Again, in considering all of the verses listed in this thread – context is everything! Verses simply lifted out of the Bible have no value at all if they are not tied to, and understood within the context of their usage. Want to know where so much false doctrine originates? It is from the mixing and matching of verses that seem (in our English translations) to support one another, when in actually they may not!

## VIII LETTING YOUR LIGHT SHINE

1. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works" Matt. 5:16
2. "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness" Luke 11:35
3. "Go and bring forth fruit, and bear much fruit" John 15:16, 8
4. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father" Luke 6:36
5. "Tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee" Mark 5:19
6. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields" John 4:35 [There is work to do.]
7. "Walk while you have the light" John 12:35

The first item is an interesting one. Aren't we to do our "good deeds" in private so we get our recognition from God and not man? So, what does mean to let our light shine? How does letting that light shine enable others to see our "good works"? What good works?

In item two, how can light also be darkness? Doesn't light chase darkness away?

Next numbers 3 through 6 are strange inclusions in this list. Talking about fruit, things that the Lord has done, and look at a field, what does that have to do with "light"?

Finally, what light is Jesus speaking about here? Himself? The Holy Spirit? Your light? What light? Where is one to be walking to? For what purpose?

A passing question that I have posted a couple of times on the internet: How many "gospels" are there identified in the N.T.? What are they? How do they differ from one another? How do they relate to Jesus Christ? Hint: It is more that you have been led to believe.

## IX THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Here we have a number of instructions concerning the return of Christ and what He expects of His disciples until that event.

1. "Hold fast till I come" Rev. 2:25; Rev. 3:2-3
2. "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh" Luke 12:40
3. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord" Luke 12:35-36
4. "Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life" Luke 21:34

5. "Remember Lot's wife" Luke 17:31-32 [Don't look back. Also see Luke 9:62]
6. "Take heed that ye be not deceived" Luke 21:8; Mark 13:5-6
7. "Watch" Mark 13:34-37

I think most of these should be self-explanatory. Even so, each verse contains the requirement to discover exactly what Jesus meant when He gave these instructions and what He expected the disciple to do – and by extension, what we are to do. What should our own mindset should be?

Do we teach these things to the congregation?

## X SUPREME LOVE TO GOD

1. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength" Mark 12:30
2. "God, and Him only shalt thou serve" Matt. 4:10
3. "Worship the Father in spirit and in truth" John 4:23-24
4. "Call no man your father upon the Earth" Matt. 23:9
5. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" Matt. 4:7
6. "Fear Him (God) which hath power to cast into hell" Luke 12:5
7. "All men should honor the Son" John 5:22-23

In the first instruction us how to love God. But the real question is this: What does this verse actually mean and how does one 'do' it?

In number two, what is the acceptable "service" that God requires?

In number three, what does this mean and how does one accomplish such worship? The answer may be a little harder to come up with than first meets the eye.

Now, number four is really a hard one, for Greek thinkers. For example, Paul himself refers to himself as Timothy's father in the faith. Does this mean that one is not to call their biological father, father? So, what does this verse really mean?

Next, we have number five. How does one tempt God? Might have to dig a little for this one.

What are the expected results of 'fearing' God?

In number seven we have a rather disquieting note. Why are we to honor the son rather than worshipping Him? Why did Jesus say this, and what was He expecting to see in return? Note: The only other time the phrase "honor God" is found in the Bible is Judges 9:9, and honor me (God) in Isa 29:13; 43:20, so this is not a new concept.

Loving God is a verb, not a noun. It requires action on our part – what is it?

## XI OUR DUTY TO GOD AND MAN

1. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" Mark 12:17
2. "Swear not at all" Matt.5:34-37; Mark 4:22
3. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" Matt. 19:5-6
4. "Agree with thine adversary quickly" Matt. 5:25
5. "We saw one casting out devils in thy name - Forbid him not" Mark 9:38-40

Added (6). "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" John 6:12

The first item most folks do not have a problem with – or do they? Giving to “Caesar” seems rather easy, pay your taxes and follow the other laws of the land, as we are instructed to do. But the question really is, “Do we give unto God ‘all’ that is God’s?”

Now we come to one of the wonderful paradoxes in the Bible. Number two instructs us not to swear [an oath] at all, yet under the O.T. instructions we are given many examples of where and in what manner of swearing an oath. What gives? To unravel this apparent contradiction, one must dig into the word – from a Hebrew point of view. Also, study Matthew chapters five through seven, not just read them.

Did God actually join you to your spouse together – or was that of your own doing? Think about it! How many marriages have you participated in where you asked God to bless the union before being convinced that God had already given His approval for it

Now, here is another tricky one. What does it mean to “agree with your adversary”? Quickly? Context is still everything!

Now, in number five we have a real problem. One of the major problems that have been discussed about is what to do with false teachers and those who exercise spiritual authority whose life simply does not measure up to biblical standards – especially among the “ministry”?

Finally, number seven (added instruction). This instruction was given to specific men at a specific time for a specific purpose. Have you ever asked yourself why Jesus expressed such concern over the leftovers? Now, granted there was a big mess there, baskets full. But was cleaning up the mess what Jesus was concerned about?

## XII OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOR

1. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" Matt.19:17-19
2. "Thou shalt do no murder" Matt. 19:18
3. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" Matt. 19:18
4. "Thou shalt not steal" Matt. 19:18
5. "Thou shalt not bear false witness" Matt. 19:18
6. "Honor thy father and thy mother" Matt. 19:19
7. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" Luke 6:31

I think these instructions are rather self-explanatory. Yet, the eternal questions remain:

- (1) Who is my neighbor?
- (2) Do I hate someone (kill them in my heart), what does this mean?
- (3) Have I lusted after another's spouse or even someone else. Do thoughts without action still constitute sin?
- (4) Have I ever taken that which is not mine to have?
- (5) Have I ever lied or "shaded" the truth by either adding to or taking away from (the omission) facts concerning an event or situation? Does motive count?
- (6) How do I honor my mother and father, and how do I dishonor them, and (7) Is this not like number one?

### XIII COVETOUSNESS

1. "Take heed and beware of covetousness" Luke 12:15
2. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" Matt. 6:19-20
3. "Ye pay tithe and not leave (them) undone" Matt.23:23
4. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" Matt. 5:42
5. "Give alms of such things as ye have" Luke 11:41
6. "When thou makest a dinner... call not (invite) thy friends, nor thy brethren but call the poor" Luke 14:12-13 [Taken out of context from a parable.]
7. "[Do not ...] Make yourselves friends of the mammon?" Luke 16:9

It covers everything from kids wanting more toys, to church leaders desiring new carpets, pews, paint, etc., for the church, or even a new building. Yes, it even covers the need to frequently buy new clothes, electronic toys, career advancement, investments, etc., etc. The personal costs in relationships and spiritual harm that comes from the desire to have more – anything other than Christ is harmful to one's walk with the Lord. You could preach on this for months!

G4124: πλεονεξία pleh-on-ex-ee'-ah. Greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice

Number two is like unto number one. If one works to lay up wealth and/or possessions here on earth and not lay up spiritual wealth in heaven, what does it profit you? You might be able to get buried in a more expensive casket? Oh sure, that will make you very happy!

Now we come to a very controversial statement in number three: Out of context this statement has no meaning at all! Tithing was required only for the (food) support of the currently serving Temple priesthood, the poor and the destitute, including the "stranger" (non-Jew). We were not intended to support the entire tribe of Levi. However, this statement opens up another modern-day doctrine (tradition) on tithing that is held in error by many. Go for it! As an aside: The tribe of Levi was not landless, or without livestock, fields of produce, or an additional source of personal and tribal income.

Number four relates to the desire (need) not only to gather in more and more, but to hold on to what one already has (selfishness).

Number four and five go together.

In number six we have yet another interesting command. It is part of a larger teaching by Jesus. Making a “dinner” did not mean cooking supper. There is a lesson to be learned here. What is it?

Now we come to number seven. The text refers to unrighteous mammon (worldly wealth). Now, how does this fit into the need to support one’s self and family? What about trying to make life a little easier from them or leaving your children an inheritance? Is this another bag of worms?

#### XIV HYPOCRISY

1. "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" Luke 12:1
2. "Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes" Luke 20:46-47
3. "Do not ye after their works" Matt. 23:2-3
4. "Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise" John 2:16
5. "Do not your alms before men, to be seen of them" Matt.6:1-4
6. "When thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites, to be seen of men, enter into thy closet and pray in secret" Matt. 6:5-6
7. "When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast" Matt. 6:16-18

Hypocrisy can be defined as, “An expression of agreement that is not supported by real conviction. or as, “Insincerity by virtue of pretending to have qualities or beliefs that you do not really have.”

So, number one, what was the leaven of the Pharisees that was hypocrisy?

What was the hypocrisy of the scribes, and why should one beware of them?

Number three is like number two.

In number four we have a real problem, , we know the story concerning the money changers, but is this all to the lesson Jesus taught? Do we, today, in our own way make the church a house of merchandise?

Number five is not so hard. A great many churches simply do not engage in alms giving either because they never think of it, or they don’t have any resources left after paying the church bills.

Does number six present an admonishment against corporate or public prayer? If not, what does it mean?

Last, but not least, is number seven. There is more to this one than just fasting. There is a broader implication/application.

Another question I love to ask is this: For example, what did James teach on giving? What did Andrew teach concerning the problem of actually following after Jesus? Or, what did Bartholomew teach on prayer, and what did Lebbaeus teach concerning a disciple's love of God?

If we are going to tell the world that we follow the Apostles' teaching, I think it would be proper to actually know and adhere to their teaching, don't you? But, how can we know with a certainty what they taught, when there is so little in the N.T. concerning what they actually said - to anyone? Or, is there? Actually, for those who have looked behind the curtain, you already have the answer, and you found it in exactly where you would expect to find it, right there in the N.T.

An added note: The English hypocrisy in Greek is the word is Hupokrisis, meaning "The act of deceiving", or Hupokrites, which means the same as the above but also includes "pretender".

## XV MEEKNESS

Now this subject requires a little background.

The English definition for meekness, or meek, is: (1) Humble in spirit or manner; suggesting retiring mildness or even cowed submissiveness, (2) Very docile, (3) Evidencing little spirit or courage; overly submissive or compliant. Meekness is defined as being (1) The feeling of patient, submissive humbleness, (2) A disposition to be patient and long suffering.

As used in the first example given below, the Greek term, Praos means gentle, mild, meek. I'll let you look the definition for gentle and mild. Another term used in this verse is Tapeinos, translated as lowly, used as a metaphor meaning (1) as a condition, lowly, of low degree (2) brought low with grief, depressed (3) lowly in spirit, humble.

A third term that should be noted in number one for correct interpretation of the verse is Zugos, 'yoke'. Another word that has a as metaphoric meaning, troublesome laws imposed on one, hence the term is transferred to the commands of Christ as to contrast with the commands of the Pharisees which were a veritable "yoke"; yet even Christ's commands must be submitted to, though easier (?) to be kept. (Edited excerpt from NET Bible comments)

1. "Take my yoke upon you, for I am meek and lowly in heart" Matt. 11:29
2. "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, but it shall not be so among you" Matt. 20:25-26
3. "Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" Mark 10:43-44
4. "Be not ye called Rabbi" Matt. 23:8
5. "Sit not down in the highest room" [or chief seats] Luke 14:8-11 [Also see Matthew 23:6]
6. "Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you" Luke 10:20

Therefore, in number one we have a metaphoric statement which paints us a picture (as with all Hebraic thinking, even when expressed in the Greek language). What is it? For extra study, compare this picture to the times when Jesus is confronted by the religious leaders of the day, the cleansing of the Temple, and Jesus during His trial. The question then becomes, how does this, and similar verses (Matt 5:5) to be reconciled and practiced in one's daily life?

Numbers two and three go together and it is a hard one. How does one become a "servant leader" and what does it look like in practice? Personally, I would love to hear this taught!

Now we come to number four. This one affects me personally because I am often referred to as Rabbi or Rebbe (a term of endearment for a Bible teacher or scholar [a serious student] who may not have a traditional Jewish ordination – that's me) by a number of folks. So, why do I continue to allow that? Are you sometimes referred to as a Bible teacher? Why do you allow it? [Remember: context, also see my previous post]. Also see James 3:1; what does the term 'master' mean in this verse? So, what is Jesus saying number four? Why? What is it that one should be on guard against? BTW, I am not looking for more people to call me Rabbi! LOL

Number five. Sitting on the platform or on the front row of the pews? What is Jesus getting at here? To whom does it apply? How? When? What does this have to do with 'meekness'?

Finally, number six. Do you have and exercise spiritual authority over others? Why? For what purpose? How was it assigned to you, by whom, and by what authority? One should be careful in how they approach and answer; it could be a "black hole"!

Added note: Numbers 2 & 3, above, were not general commands to the entire church, but to the 12. However, I included them here for consideration and meditation. Is there a spiritual principle being taught that every disciple of Christ should submit to? If not, why not?

Search your heart, not to justify your position/office within the body, but rather to discover your motives.

## XVI OUR LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN

1. "Love one another as I have loved you" John 15:12
2. "Despise not one of these little ones" Matt. 18:10-14
3. "Have peace one with another and be reconciled to thy brother" Mark 9:50; Matt. 5:23-24
4. "If thy brother trespass against thee go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone" Matt. 18:15-17
5. "If thy brother trespass against thee seven times a day thou shalt forgive him" Luke 17:3-4; Matt. 18:21-22
6. "Judge not according to appearance, first cast the beam out of thine own eye" John 7:24; Matt. 7:1-5
7. "Condemn not" Luke 6:37

Number one: Question: How did Jesus love His disciples – how did He express that love, and how are we to do likewise?

Number two. This one can be a little tricky. Is Jesus speaking only of “children” or is He including something else? Consider the history of His disciples during the three years ministry of Jesus. I am not at all sure, but there may be more to this that first meets the eye.

Number three: This one may be a little difficult to practice. What do you think?

Number four. Many times (most of the time?) we confuse this instruction with the need to make correction of spiritual transgressions (sin) of a brother or sister. While the instructions on how, when and where one should correct an elder or a member of the congregation is discussed by the Apostles, we can still look to the four gospels to see how Jesus made these corrections/reproofs.

As recorded, each correction/reproof was always recorded as being made at the time and place of its occurrence – without regard as to who else might be present. This subject of handling personal trespass and spiritual correction needs to really be studied again.

Number five. This is an extension of number four.

Number six. While this is a very short verse, within its context it becomes very difficult to practice. One reason is that many continue to confuse the purpose and practice of correction, reproof, judgment and condemnation in personal conflicts and spiritual failure (sin). Who is authorized to do what and when – based on what scriptural authority?

Number seven. What does it mean to “condemn”? One might like to check out the terms, judging and condemning, as both terms occur in this verse. Also, there should be no contradiction between what you find here and what the Apostles taught. This same instruction applies to everything we are covering in this list.

## XVII PERFECT LOVE

We are all familiar with the Love Chapter (1Cor 13), right? It might serve us well to review it before attempting to address these instructions.

1. "Be ye therefore perfect" Matt. 5:48
2. "Sell that ye have and give alms" Matt. 19:21; Luke 12:32-33
3. "Love your enemies" Matt. 5:44; 26:52
4. "Do good to them which hate you" Luke 6:27-28
5. "Lend, hoping for nothing again" Luke 6:35
6. "Resist not evil" Matt. 5:39-41
7. "In your patience possess ye your souls" Luke 21:19

Again: Context!



In number one: Be perfect, (teleios, hint: complete). What is biblical perfection and what does it look like? The term “perfect, perfection, etc.” is one of those hard words in the original languages. I’ll post a note on this word separately.

Number two: Why are there so many instructions in the Bible concerning ‘giving’? What is God getting at with these instructions?

Number three: Exactly what kind of love is Jesus referring to here? What then does He expect of us? [Hint: Agapao; of persons, to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly

Number four. This is not unlike number three.

Number five. Again, context. Are you getting tired yet of my constant reminder of this? Well, take head of the context of this verse; it is critical to our understanding of this passage in its entirety.

Number six. Is found in a very difficult passage to interpret, understand and to implement. This part of a much greater teaching and must be taken in light of the whole passage. Again, much of the New Testament is written from a Hebrew worldview, and it is full of idioms and metaphors. Does this passage lend itself to such interpretation? If so, what is the lesson being taught? If not, is this passage to be taken literally?

Number seven. Another hard one: There is more to this than is indicated here in this one-liner. Check patience, possess and souls in a good Greek Lexicon, not a dictionary. There is a better way of translating this line in order to get at the fundamental teaching.

## XVIII FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

Well now, isn’t this a fine kettle of fish? Okay, some of the included verses do not say explicitly, “death”, but the implication is rather clear, and not that one shouldn’t take steps to protect themselves, as instructed in number four.

1. "Be thou faithful unto death" Rev. 2:10
2. "Hold that fast which thou hast" Rev. 3:11
3. "When men shall revile you, and persecute you, rejoice, and be exceeding glad" Matt.5:11-12, Luke 6:23
4. "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another" Matt. 10:23
5. “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:” Rev. 6:26
6. "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak" Matt. 10:19
7. "Look up and lift up your hands" Luke 21:28

Number one. To be faithful. What does it mean, from God’s point of view, to be faithful?

Number two is an interesting line. How can another man “take your crown”? What does it mean to “hold fast” and how do you do it?

Number three. Oh boy, can hardly wait, can you? Well, here in America it has been gaining momentum over the last 50 years. So, not to worry – as promised, it is one its way! Question: Are any of us up to it?

Number four. Better look at the context of this one!

Number five. Overcome what, and what are the “works of the Lord” that we should be doing them?

Number six. Deliver you up to whom and for what reason/purpose? With what are the expected results at the hands of men? Ask Paul (Rabbi Sha’ul, Saul).

Finally, number seven. This verse is better translated as, “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up (be elated), and lift up (raise up) your heads; for your redemption (ransom in full) draweth nigh (approaches, or to draw or come near to).

## XIX PREACHING THE GOSPEL

At first blush this should be an easy list to work through. Ah, but is it really? Do you think that you really know and understand “The Gospel?” You might just want to take another look at the subject. In this exercise, please set aside the desire to search the scriptures for support (proof) of what you already think you know, and search the scriptures for what they actually say. Not an easy task, I assure you.

1. "Preach the gospel to every creature" Mark. 16:15; Matt.10:7
2. "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His (Christ's) name" Luke 24:46-47
3. "Baptize disciples, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost" Matt. 28:19
4. "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded" Matt. 28:20
5. "What I tell you, that speak" Matt. 10:27; Mark 4:22
6. "Feed my sheep" John 21:15-17

Number one is a real kicker! It contains two hard words to understand. They are “gospel” and “creature”.

How Many Gospels Are There? Well, here is a test: What is the gospel of

- (1) Jesus Christ, Romans 1:16,
- (2) the kingdom of Heaven? Matthew 3:2,
- (3) the kingdom of God? Matthew 6:33,
- (4) of salvation? Ephesians 1:13,
- (5) of Paul? 2 Timothy 2:8,
- (6) of Paul, Silvanus and Timotheus? 1Thessalonians 1:5,
- (7) the everlasting gospel? Rev. 14:6,
- (8) of God? 1 Peter 4:17,
- (9) of peace? Ephesians 6:15,

(10) of the uncircumcision? Galatians 2:7,  
(11) of the circumcision? Galatians 2:7, and  
(12) of grace? Acts 20:24?

Any of the cited verses in this list may not be their only occurrence. So, the question to be resolved is: How do all of these gospels relate to one another, and which one(s) do you teach?

One more question: Which of all of these gospels must be the "one" that is to be preached to all nations before the return of Christ? Do you know which one, and can you actually preach it?

The second term, creature, requires another change in perspective. Do you take this verse to mean that Jesus wants you to preach the gospel to such things as deer, bears, fish, and birds? I doubt it. Here the term creature is used as, "after a rabbinical usage (by which a man converted from idolatry to Judaism was called)". This is further indicated by the use of the same Greek word, ktisis in 2Cor 5:17 & Gal 6:15. This would make for an interesting word study.

Number two. This is rather straight forward, provided one also understands what the various terms used here mean.

Number three. Ah the bane of the Trinitarian vs. Oneness conflict over the correct baptismal formula: Titles vs. Names. I have a short write up on understanding biblical names which I will post as a follow on to this thread. Meanwhile, the use of the Father, Son, & Holy Ghost, if they were actually part of the original manuscripts note the absolute unity of God, the Hebrew view of deity. But, for now, the conflict (paradox) that exist for the Greek orientated mind between Matt 28:19 and the book of Acts baptismal formulas poses no linguistic problems for the Hebrew reader. They are indivisibility one in absolute unity.

Number four. Okay kids, just how many of these instructions (commands) Jesus gave do you actually teach? Next question: Are you qualified to teach all of these commands of Jesus? And, just to keep the air clean: No I am not qualified, but I am trying to become qualified as soon as I can – if even it is for my own relationship with Christ!

Numbers five & six. Here we are, back to number four. How long are we going to be satisfied with the fundamental things of Christ (Heb 6:1-3)? Have the saints of God become complacent with sucking milk and eating pap? Now, not all professing Christians are actually disciples of the Messiah (Christ). So, like our Master, you may have to be selective to whom you open up the deeper meaning of the scriptures, and allow them to instruct the others in the assembly by their Christ-observant lifestyle.

Even so, perhaps not all will embrace the costs of discipleship. For a foretaste: How many of these instructions do you, personally adhere to? Any resistance coming up for you? I'll be honest; this is a struggle for me!

XX WISDOM

Ah, that we all should be so endowed. Even so, the following verses actually do not address what wisdom is or how to obtain it. It is understood that the people Jesus was addressing were familiar with the Old Covenant writings and oral law so they were already aware that the “fear of the God is the beginning of wisdom” and they have learned the message of wisdom contained in the book of Ecclesiastes and Psalms. So, what we have here are primarily examples of wisdom in practice.

1. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" Matt. 10:16
2. "Beware of men" Matt. 10:17
3. "Let (the blind leaders) alone" Matt. 15:12-14
4. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine" Matt. 7:6
5. "Consider the lilies? how they grow" Matt. 6:28
6. "Whosoever will not receive you shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them" Luke 9:5; Luke 10:10-11

Number one. Here we have two Hebrew idioms. The first is “wise as serpents”. Picture a snake searching out or lying-in wait for its pray. Be wise (phronimos, thoughtful, , sagacious or discreet, implying a cautious character). This also points us back to Genesis 2:1 and the ‘crafty’ serpent. The Hebrew word עָרוּם (‘arum) basically means “clever.” This idea then polarizes into the nuances “cunning” in a negative sense, and ‘prudent’ in a positive sense. (NET translation notes.)

The second idiom is, “harmless as doves”. Again, this is a picture presentation. Harmless (Akeraios, of the mind, without a mixture of evil, free from guile, innocent, simple) as doves, a non-aggressive bird. Also used metaphorically as a symbol of the Holy Ghost.

Number 2. This one should be self-explanatory!

Number 3. This is rather straight forward, , if someone refused to hear the truth and willfully continues in their error, allow them that privilege. Their judgment is upon their own heads. Remember, God in the flesh could not reach everyone – so don’t think you can.

Number 4. This is actually a precursor to number 3. Sharing your experience of God (testimony) and the gospel of the kingdom is one thing – to enter into a fruitless debate is something else again.

Number 5. This one is particularly important. This touches on the very heart of one’s faith (trust) in God. Just how far will one go in trusting God for all of their life’s needs? At what point does our Greek heritage take over and say, “Okay, God, I’ll take it from here?”

Number 6. This is a reinforcement of all of the above. While this is one of the instructions given to the seventy for their evangelistic mission, there is a truism embedded in it for everyone. What is it

## XXI RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Receive ye the Holy Ghost John 20:23
2. Let the children first be filled Mark 7:27

3. If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink John 7:37-39
4. Keep my commandments and ... the Father ... shall give you another Comforter John 14:15-17
5. Ask ... with importunity John 16:24. Luke 22:5-13
6. Tarry ... until ye be endued with power from on high Luke 24:49
7. When the Comforter is come ... He shall testify of Me and ye also shall bear witness John 15:36-27

I leave that one to you to work on.

We now come to the close of the matter:

## XXII IF A MAN LOVE ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORDS.

John 14:15, 14:21, 15:10

This is the sum of the list, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” James 1:22. The hardest deception to identify is self-deception, and it is also the most difficult to correct.

Here are three utterances by an angel in heaven to the Apostle John that I think we all should take to heart – even though it goes against many churches’ doctrinal positions. They cry out for consideration, study, and implementation in our lives:

Revelation 12:17

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Here we see that keeping the commandments of God goes with the testimony of Jesus. He was and remains a Jew, and their king to come. Consider the implications of this verse.

Revelation 14:12

Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

In this verse we have the word, patience (Hupomone, steadfastness, constancy, endurance). In the NT the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings. Now we have keeping God’s commandments goes with our faith in Jesus, not something separate or to be ignored.

Revelation 22:14

Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Blessed are they ... (G. Makarios, blessed, happy) This term and its Hebrew equivalent (Barak) is most often used when referring to a person who is in right standing with God and who finds favor with Him. Here we see that knowing and keeping the commandments of God are tied to one's entrance into the city (New Jerusalem) and having access to the tree of life. Now that should give some added importance to one seeking a place with Jesus after the Judgment.

It should also be noted that there is a alternant translation to this last verse. **“Blessed are those who wash their robes so they can have access to the tree of life and can enter into the city by the gates.”** The phrase “...wash their robes...” more closely represents the actual Greek. This is a reference to Exod. 19:10-14, where the washing (baptism) of their clothes and themselves was their obedience to God's instructions in order to prepare themselves for the receiving of God's commandments (Torah, Instructions in Righteousness). Those who have washed their garments (obeyed the word of God) have prepared themselves for acceptance into the city and to the tree of life.

These three verses put to rest our many man-made holiness standards, while we continue to miss what it is God desires of us. If we, ministers of the word of God, have missed so much of what Jesus commanded of His disciples, and have failed to implement those Christ given “religious suggestions” in our own lives, what are the saints of God to do as they depend upon us to lead them in the right path?

I tell you the truth, our judgment shall be more exacting than that held for the saints of God, for our failing to teach the scriptures as God intended them to be taught. I and many others have made a profession of telling everyone that we have the “truth”. Well, if you have steadfastly gone through this simple list of the commands of Jesus, you, without a doubt, now know better.

If you are considering teaching a series on the commands of Jesus to His disciples, you might want to consider starting with the three statements of the angel in heaven in the book of Revelation (12:17, 14:12 & 22:14). In addition, please, please review 1 John 5:2-3 and 2 John 1:1-11. Also, please note that *this list of commandments is not necessarily exhaustive*.

There is enough material here to keep you, the preachers and Sunday school teachers busy for a very long time. And, while you are at it, compare the teachings of Jesus and His commands to our western church doctrines, and be prepared to confront our own modern-day religious traditions. Taking the commands of Jesus to heart will come at a very high price because we have so misused them, ignored them, and have done great violence to them. May God forgive us.

Brothers and sisters, it time we stop “having church” and become “the church” that Jesus intended. Time has run out.

With the completion of this series on what Jesus commanded His disciples to act and teach, I thought it might be instructive if I (and anyone else interested) to go back through the different groupings and develop a weekly teaching/sermon outline for each.

Anyone interested to joining me on this quest?

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## **A COMMENTARY ON THE SERIES**

### **The commandments of Yeshua HaMashiach**

We have been looking at the “universal” instructions Jesus gave His disciples. There are quite a few of them! I also included a couple of instructions that He gave that were not universal, but specific to either to specific individuals or situations. These were included for additional study.

First, there is nothing in the New Covenant writings that was not first brought up under the Old Covenant writings. No, nothing new! Be it grace, salvation, judgment, circumcision of the heart, or baptisms, or the identity of the “son of God”, etc. In the New Testament we have one thousand forty quotes from the Old. That alone should give us all pause to stop and reflect on the importance of the Old Covent writings to our understanding of the New Covenant scriptures. Yet, there is more.

It is written that the Old Covent writings were given to us as a “school master”, to lead us to Jesus Christ, even for the O.C. hearers/readers. Those writings are also identified as “types and shadows”, which would be fully expressed in the coming Messiah. Something to consider: In order to

have a type of anything, or its shadow, there must first be an original somewhere. What and where was the original? Then there is the question of authorship of the scriptures. If the “living word of God” was also the full deity of God manifested (expressed) in the flesh, frequently misidentified as that nonexistent Godhead (1), who was the source of the patriarchs and prophets’ inspiration, from where did they receive their instructions/revelations? Right, they received their instructions from the deity what indwelt the man, Jesus, the anointed one of God (the Messiah). Remember, Jesus had the Holy Spirit poured out upon Him without measure.

So, what does all of this Old Testament – New Testament stuff have to do with this series on the instructions (commandments) that Jesus gave to His disciples? These were not some holy sounding suggestions given by a man, but rather instructions, teachings, and commandments given by God Himself through the man Jesus Christ! Therefore, what did every Apostle teach? Well, since there is no record either in the Bible or in secular history concerning any Apostle going astray (except Judas Iscariot of course), even when they were facing death for their teaching (faith expressed, lived and shared), then we can safely assume that each and every one of them taught exactly what Jesus taught them, just as any good disciple (student, Talmid) of a teaching master (Rabbi) would have done. We have neglected the teachings of the Apostles by neglecting the teaching of Jesus. How do I know this? Simply because most of us, including me, do not know, understand, nor practice all His teachings. How can I be so sure? Because I have never been in a church (and I have been in many churches representing almost every major Christian denomination), or heard of a church, that taught everything that Jesus taught! Actually, in some of those churches the minister even repudiated some of Jesus’ words! They no longer apply?

What we are doing here is to bring back to light the neglected instructions that God gave to mankind so that we might live a life pleasing to Him. Not to be hearers of the word only – but also to be doers of the word. To live, and yes, even to walk in the Spirit.

Going through this study I have been driven to my knees in repentance simply because I did not know all of these instructions that I am listing in this series. Among those that I did know, many I did not fully understand, and what I did understand I often failed to obey. Now, consider the consequences of the failure to know, understand, and obey God’s instructions (commandments). Consider also the judgment reserved for those who teach error (incomplete, misleading, or even outright false doctrine, or who willfully omit some of God’s instructions for righteous living) to a congregation. What price shall we be called upon to pay for our failures?

Whatever happened to allowing members of the congregation to share and discuss what God has given them concerning Himself and His word? That is, to take personal responsibility for their own salvation? Who ordained any of us to be “the final spiritual authority and resident expert and all things biblical in a congregation, when there may be others sitting in the pews who know more and/or have a better understand what God is teaching us? Whatever happened to a teacher’s “I don’t know”? My answer is, “I don’t know.”

So, where do we go from here?

Perhaps one place would be repentance, confessing our sin before God and our congregations. To hit the Book once again, leaving behind our religious indoctrinations, church dogma, personal



doctrines and allowing God to open up the scriptures to our understanding. To test what we think we know and understand against The Word, the Spirit, and other Disciples of Christ.

Perhaps that is why I am more known for the questions that I ask, than I am for the answers of give. I freely admit that I am frightened for myself, as well as for the souls that I have mislead or acted as a road block to their salvation and spiritual growth, rather than pointing them past me and on to Jesus Christ. May God forgive me, even all of us. Meanwhile, I try to drive, push, pull and encourage folks to get into the word for themselves, and not to take my words too seriously – unless and until they have been proven to be correct –that includes even this commentary.

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The Godhead. Neither the term nor its equivalent exists in any original biblical language texts. It was a term made up by the translators to express in one word three different aspects of God's deity in English. Colossians 2:9 should be translated as, "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the state of being God, , the (full) essence of God's deity expressed bodily." For a more complete discussion on the subject see:

<http://hatalmidim.boards.net/index.cgi?board=language&action=display&thread=61>

Also, here is another common biblical term that is NOT found in the Bible, church, and of course neither is the common term, rapture. But at least most Christians agree that the rapture represents 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Review again Revelation 12:17; 14:12 & 22:14. Obeying all of God's commandments is not something I think we should treat lightly, or to add to or take away from, or otherwise modify in order to meet our own desires, wants, religious or personal agendas. Review Deut 4:2, 12:32, Prov 30:5,6.

Also please note the following:

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3) Now compare this with Acts 15:10, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear (Peter, speaking about the law)? Who is telling the truth? Please think about it — study the scriptural context.

Hint: They both were right, from a Hebraic worldview. One of them must be wrong from a Western, Greek world view. If you really get stuck on this one, let me know.  
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Again, this series was never intended to answer all of the questions that could arise from their reading, nor does it address all of the possible issues that can come up for discussion. Rather, its single purpose is to encourage everyone to go back and study the scriptures from a fresh point of view. And, to bring to light some topics that need to be taught within the church today

Shalom Aleichem (Peace be unto you)

A.W. Bowman

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The primary source material for this study was compiled from several open-source publications.  
1<sup>THE COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS</sup> - wowzone.com. [www.wowzone.com/commandm.htm](http://www.wowzone.com/commandm.htm)  
Compiled and published by Evangelist. J. S. McConnell in 1925.  
This copy is being made available in 1999 by his son,  
John McConnell, Founder of Earth Day.

Also compared with:  
The Commandments Of Jesus: the complete list from  
[www.loveallpeople.org/pearl-thecommandmentsofjesus.html](http://www.loveallpeople.org/pearl-thecommandmentsofjesus.html)

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This study may not be sold or used for profit without various original source material author's approval and proper citation.

May the God of our fathers find your labor pleasing to unto Himself. Amen.

### **This will be the conclusion of the book**

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Additional thoughts to consider adding to the teaching:

The following were either spoken to John or seen by him as a part of his heavenly visit/vision. Also see 1John 2:3, 4; 3:22, 24; 5:2, 3 and 2John 1:6. Plus the words of Jesus in John 14:15, 21 and 15:10.

1. Revelation 12:17, And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

(The commandments married with the doctrines of Christ. His evidence given on our behalf.)

2. Revelation 14:12, Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

(Commandments and faith in Jesus working together.)

3. Revelation 22:14, Blessed are they that do his [God's] commandments [alternate translation: wash their robes, see Exod 19:5-11], that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

(Being “born again” is more than a simple change in one’s state of mind or exercising a spiritual gift. Obedience to the word of God plays an important role in one's salvation as well.)

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Eph 2:

<sup>11</sup> Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh – who are called “uncircumcision” by the so-called “circumcision” that is performed on the body<sup>24</sup> by human hands –

<sup>12</sup> that you were at that time without the Messiah,<sup>25</sup> alienated from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise,<sup>26</sup> having no hope and without God in the world.

<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For he is our peace, the one who made both groups into one<sup>28</sup> and who destroyed the middle wall of partition, the hostility,

<sup>15</sup> when he nullified<sup>29</sup> in his flesh the law of commandments in decrees. He did this to create in himself one new man<sup>30</sup> out of two,<sup>31</sup> thus making peace,

<sup>16</sup> and to reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by which the hostility has been killed.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>17</sup> And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near,

<sup>18</sup> so that<sup>33</sup> through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

<sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer foreigners and noncitizens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God’s household,

<sup>20</sup> because you have been built<sup>34</sup> on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,<sup>35</sup> with Christ Jesus himself as<sup>36</sup> the cornerstone.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>21</sup> In him<sup>38</sup> the whole building,<sup>39</sup> being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

<sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

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Sometimes what is not said in scripture is just as important as what is said. Think about it.

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Additional note on the word perfect as noted in XVII PERFECT LOVE

One of the problems facing Bible teachers, and consequently their students, is that we assume that the English words we read in our Bibles are a good rendering of what the original authors meant to convey. While this is generally true, we often miss out on the ‘depth’ of meaning that God desires for us to have, and until the 19th century, the vast majority preachers were well capable of providing this insight.

Ministers had to pass proficiency tests in biblical languages and their translation into English prior to being posted as a licensed minister. Something we are today hard pressed to find. The following quick study is an example of what it is we are missing out on.

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Of the 109 occurrences of the word “perfect” (as rendered in KJV edition of the English Bible), they reflect a dazzling array of original language words. There are fourteen different Hebrew words translated as “perfect” and ten different Greek words translated as “perfect”. Each of the original words has different meanings as well as carrying a wide range of possible individual tones, shadings and understandings. Even in one verse, such as Ps 101:2, we find the word perfect used twice in our KJV editions. However, the first perfect means “whole, sound, healthful”, while the second perfect means “integrity”, which renders Ps 101:2 from:

“I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.” KJV

This translation would frequently be interpreted as: I will behave in a way that is without error or flaw, so when will you (God) come to me? My heart will be without defect or blemish: Fully complete, lacking nothing. Or, some such rendering.

Considering the content of the entire verse and the context of the specific words, my translation of this same text is as follows:

“I will give heed to and follow the path (the way) of complete wholesomeness; Oh when will You come unto me? Inside my own house I will walk (live) my life in the integrity of my heart.” [AWB]

The interpretation could be something like this: I will give heed to (take notice of) and walk (live) in the precepts of your (God's) instructions for righteous living (Torah), requiring nothing else beyond your instructions. Therefore, tell me, when will you come unto me in true relationship? Even as I live out my life, within myself, I shall maintain my integrity (moral soundness, a life devoid of sin) before you.

See:

Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan: ‘Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a whole-hearted and an upright man, one that feareth God, and shunneth evil? and he still holdeth fast his integrity, although thou didst move Me against him, to destroy him without cause.’

Job 2:9 Then said his wife unto him: ‘Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? blaspheme God, and die.’

Job 27:5 Far be it from me that I should justify you; till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me.

In these passages, the English word, integrity is translated correctly from the Hebrew (H8538) **יָמֵן** : integrity.

In Job 4:6 "Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?"

In this case the word 'uprightness' is used; from H8537, meaning

- 1) integrity, completeness
- 1a) completeness, fullness
- 1b) innocence, simplicity
- 1c) integrity

The more correct translation should have been #1c. "Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the integrity of thy ways?"

Note that the English term, uprightness, as used in the KJV translation also means, "Righteousness as a consequence of being honorable and honest". So, while the English translators of the KJV of the Bible did not use the 'correct' English word in this case, they found a suitable substitute that if properly understood, conveys the correct sense of the passage.

Anyway, this is the kind of exercise is required in order to perform an acceptable translation and interpretation of the original language passages into a coherent English rendering. When the task includes taking the Greek and working backwards through the Hebrew to identify the original world view being presented (represented) and the religious context of a particular passage, the job becomes a little more difficult.

While I love working these kinds of problems, I do have a difficult time with Hebrew grammar, which is not surprising for me, as I have yet to master my second language grammar, English. No, English is not my native language, infantile gibberish is, and I didn't need any grammar to speak it - still don't! 😊

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Closing remark: This exercise also demonstrates the need for using a good lexicon rather than just a language dictionary. While a dictionary will give you a list of possible usages for any given word, a lexicon will assist in identifying the correct grammatical usage and interpretation for the word, within the context it is usage.