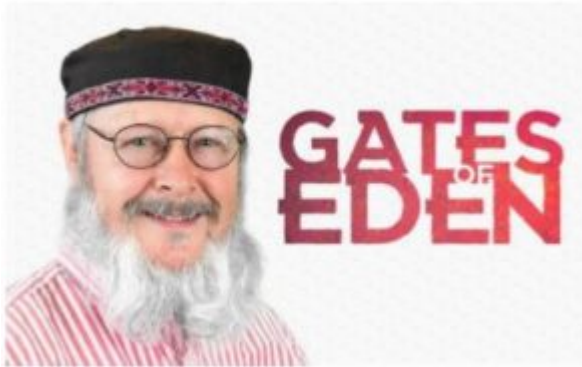


Guest Blog: Linguistic Superstition & The Sacred Name Movement by Daniel Botkin



Any questions about this article can be directed to Daniel Botkin at his [ministry webpage](#). Daniel has a bi-monthly newsletter and speaks at events around the country if you would like to hear him live.

Linguistic superstition is the belief that saying certain “negative” words will produce negative results, and saying certain “positive” words in just the right way will produce positive results. This sort of belief system is most apparent in occult magic. Practitioners of occult magic believe that certain words have an inherent power of force within them which can be harnessed and utilized when the words are pronounced in a precise, prescribed manner. The seven sons of Sceva believed this. When they saw Paul doing miracles in the name of Yeshua, they tried to cast out a demon by saying, “We adjure you by Yeshua whom Paul preacheth.” The demon in the man replied, “Yeshua I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” Then the man leaped on them and gave them a good beating. (See Acts 19:13-16.)

You would think that Bible believers would know better than to get entangled in linguistic superstition. Sadly, that is not the case. We have seen linguistic superstition manifested by some Christians in the “Word of faith”/“positive confession” movement. Now we are seeing linguistic superstition of another

sort being manifested in the Sacred Name (SN) movement. The SN movement is a movement that began in the late 1930s as an offshoot of the Church of God, Seventh Day denomination. The main focus of this movement (as the phrase "Sacred Name" suggests) is the use of God's Hebrew name. In most SN literature God's Hebrew name is transliterated as "Yahweh" (though at least 38 other variant spellings exist among SN believers). Jesus' Hebrew name is usually mis-transliterated as "Yahshua" (though at least 55 other variant spellings exist among SN believers).

Hard-core SN believers are afraid to utter the words "God" or "Lord" when referring to the Creator. They insist that He must be addressed by His Hebrew name. Most SN literature gives a reader the impression that knowing the correct pronunciation of God's Hebrew name is more important than knowing God Himself.

Much of what I have read in SN literature is dangerously close to the occultic thinking that existed in first-century Gnosticism. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* (pg. 27) says this: "Heretical Gnostic systems combined magic and astrology with the Bible. The Hebrew name of God, IAO [*the Greek transliteration of YHWH -DB*], fascinated sorcerers by its vowels, always crucial in ancient magic."

Like first-century Gnostic sorcerers, many SN believers seem equally fascinated by the Hebrew name of God, and have made a fetish out of the Sacred Name. This in itself is not sorcery, of course, but it is a step in that direction. Rotherham's *Emphasized Bible*, a translation that has greatly influenced the SN movement, says in its introduction that "the name Yahweh has some inherent meaning of great force" and speaks of "some self-evident force" contained in the Sacred Name (pg. 26, 28). This sort of thinking can lead to linguistic superstition and worse. Noted Hebrew scholar David Bivin, in an article called "The Fallacy of Sacred Name Bibles," writes: "The use of correct formulas and correct pronunciations is very important in magic rites, but not in one's relationship with the God of Israel" (*Jerusalem Perspective*, Nov. -Dec.

1991, pg. 12).

The SN movement has produced a mixture of good and bad fruit. On the positive side, the SN movement has done a lot to help people see that the Sabbath, the Feasts, and the dietary laws are still valid for New Covenant believers. On the negative side, this movement has spawned a lot of rotten fruit. I am not in a position to say whether the good fruit outweighs the rotten fruit or vice versa. I will let God be the Judge of that. I do not wish to judge, but I do need to warn people not to swallow rotten fruit, because it will poison you.

The purpose of this article is not to attack people, but to expose errors. I do not wish to embarrass or publicly humiliate anyone. This is why I will not be citing the sources when I quote from SN writers. If readers wish to know my sources, I will share that information privately.

Some minor errors in a person's thinking can be relatively harmless. Unfortunately, some of the errors in the SN movement are not harmless. The proof of this statement is in the rotten fruit the movement has borne. The rotten fruit to which I refer is primarily a glaring lack of love for brethren. We all know the importance of loving one's neighbor as one's self; we know that the fruit of the Spirit is love; we know about 1 Corinthians 13. We all know the importance of loving the brethren. Yet if it were not for a few loving SN friends whom I know personally, I would have to conclude from SN literature that SN believers *hate* the brethren. And I have been reading SN literature regularly since the mid-1980s.

Indeed, many SN believers do not even consider the brethren their brethren. Christians who do not use the Hebrew name are often regarded as lost at best and as devil worshippers at worst. One large SN organization printed these words in a newsletter some years ago: "Christianity calls 'God's' Son by the name 'Jesus.' Thus, those worshipping 'this son' are committing spiritual adultery!!" This is from one of the more tolerant SN organizations. Other SN writers have flatly stated that Christians who use the words "God," "Lord," and "Jesus Christ" are actually worshipping Satan.

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SN believers do not fare much better when it comes to loving their own. One well-known SN leader who has been around for decades admits this. He writes: "The Sacred Name movement has been characterized by knowledgeable observers as 'a bunch of splintered, divided sects'; and *this is EXACTLY what I found.*" (Emphasis his)

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If you are a Christian reader who is hearing about this for the first time, you might be asking some questions: "These people think that I'm actually giving homage to the devil when I pray to 'God' or 'the Lord'? All the worship I've given to God all these years has really gone to Satan, simply because I didn't address God by His Hebrew name? Where in hell did that idea come from?"

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The answer to your last question is in your last question. However, for the benefit of those who want an explanation of how this convoluted idea developed, let me explain.

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SN believers reject the English words *God* and *Lord* because these are words which, when not capitalized, can refer to pagan gods and to human lords. SN believers think it is disrespectful at best or Satan worship at worst to refer to the Creator by these generic titles. However, the Hebrew equivalents of these two words, *elohim* and *adonai*, are also generic words that often refer to false pagan gods and human lords. Yet the Creator refers to Himself as *elohim* and *adonai* hundreds of times in the Hebrew Scriptures. If He is not offended by the generic titles in Hebrew, why should He be offended by the equivalent generic titles in English? English even has the added advantage of capitalizing the *G*- or the *L*- to distinguish the true Creator from the false pagan gods and the human lords. If the Creator is offended by generic titles, He would be more offended by the uncapitalizable *elohim* and *adonai* than He would be by *God* and *Lord*.

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SN believers imagine a linguistic connection between the English *God* and Hebrew *Gad* ("luck, fortune"). Because the pronunciations of these two words are very similar, SN

believers claim that "God" is the god of good luck. However, the fact that two words in two different languages sound the same is not proof that the two words are cognates. On the contrary, such is usually not the case. For example, Spanish *con* ("with") has no connection to English *cone*; German *nein* ("no") has no connection to English *nine*; Hebrew *ki* ("because") has no connection to English *key*; Yiddish *teler* ("plate") has no connection to English *teller*; Russian *tut* ("here") has no connection to English *toot*, etc., etc.

Concerning the SN believers' ban on *God* because of its similarity to *Gad*, noted linguist and Hebraist Isaac Mozeson, author of *THE WORD: The Dictionary That Reveals the Hebrew Source of English*, wrote this in a personal letter to me: "If the word *Gad* were so terrible per se, there would be no tribe of Israel or prophet of King David by that glorious name. It seems I agree with you on these issues."

SN believers avoid using even the Hebrew *Adonai* because of its similarity to the Greek god *Adonis*. Some refuse to transliterate *Adonai*, even though Scripture uses this word over 200 times to refer to the Creator. I have even seen one SN Bible that translated *Adonai* as "Yahweh." This is not honest translation; it is deliberately misrepresenting what the Hebrew Scripture really says. Isaac Mozeson wrote (in the letter previously mentioned): "I don't shun the Hebrew *ADoNe* (master, lord) + suffix *AI* simply because *Adonis* is a pagan god or because the Brits have a House of Lords."

The Hebrew Bible refers to the Creator as *Adonai* over 200 times. It is linguistic superstition to avoid a word that the Hebrew Bible freely uses. Yes, it is possible that the Greeks borrowed the Hebrew *Adonai* and used it to refer to their god *Adonis*. So what? We know that *Yahweh* is the true *Adonai/Elohim/Lord/God*. The fact that pagans use some of the same nouns for their idols is no reason for us to stop using the words. If the pagans were to say that their gods are "good" and "strong," would SN believers feel a need to avoid these two adjectives and use different synonymous adjectives such as "beneficent" and "powerful"?

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Most SN literature substitutes *Mighty One* and *Master for God* and *Lord*. However, the terms *mighty one* and *master* are every bit as generic as *god* and *lord*. This is evident even in SN literature, which refers to false gods as “mighty ones,” the only difference being capital letters. This is not spiritual progress; it is simply reinventing the wheel.

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The New Testament, by its glaring silence on the “Name” issue, also refutes SN teaching. If avoiding generic titles and using the Hebrew names is so vital to one’s salvation and spirituality, why do the New Testament writers consistently refer to God by the generic Greek titles *Theos* and *Kurios* (words which can also refer to pagan gods and to human lords)? And why do they consistently refer to the Messiah by the Greek form of His name, *Iesous Xristos*? The New Testament writers could have written the Hebrew characters into the Greek script, but there is no solid evidence that they did any such thing. They used *Theos* and *Kurios*, just as the Hebrew Scriptures use *Elohim* and *Adonai*.

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It is very important to note this: *Even when they were directly quoting Old Testament Scripture, the New Testament writers used the generic Greek titles as substitutes for the Sacred Name*. Many Old Testament verses which contain the Sacred Name are quoted in the New Testament, yet the Sacred Name itself never once appears in the New Testament. A generic title is substituted every single time. If the New Testament is to have any bearing whatsoever on our theology, we cannot ignore the fact that New Testament writers used generic titles as substitutes for the Sacred Name.

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The only argument SN proponents can use to try to refute these facts is to accuse “wicked scribes” of changing the New Testament manuscripts. Some go so far as to claim that the entire New Testament was originally written in Hebrew, complete with the Sacred Name, of course. History tells us that Matthew originally wrote his gospel in Hebrew, but there is no reason to suppose that the rest of the New Testament was

originally written in Hebrew. On the contrary, when one considers the fact that the epistles were addressed to congregations composed primarily of Greek-speaking believers who knew little if any Hebrew, the idea seems ludicrous. To accuse wicked scribes of tampering with the text is circular reasoning, and has no basis in historical or linguistic fact.

Theories have been put forth to try to debunk the Greek New Testament. Some SN proponents have claimed that Paul could not have known Greek well enough to write his epistles in that language. Jews did not learn Greek, we are told by SN writers. We know from Acts 21:37 that Paul knew Greek well enough to converse in it. I also found this information in a pamphlet: "The Oxyrinchus Papyri shows that even Jewish children could read and write Greek. The Greek language was common in Palestine, even though the vernacular was Aramaic and the Sacred tongue was Hebrew." It is very ironic that this information appears in a pamphlet written by the late A.B. Traina, the man who is regarded by some as the "granddaddy" of the SN movement.

Some SN believers argue against a Greek New Testament by stating that the Greek text is awkward and clumsy, "poor Greek"; therefore the New Testament must be a translation of a Hebrew original—which, it is assumed, contained the Hebrew names, of course. Do these SN believers know Greek well enough to tell that the New Testament is a poor translation of a Hebrew original? Is the Greek of the New Testament so poor that a Hebrew original must be assumed? I do not know Greek well enough to answer that question, so I will let two scholars who know Greek better than I do answer the question. Dr. Brad Young, a present-day scholar of great repute, states that Paul, in his epistles, "gives evidence of his bilingual abilities by writing in Greek like a native" ("Paul the Pharisee," *Yavo Digest* 19:4, Sept. 1997, pg. 15). Robin Griffith-Jones, master of London's Temple Church and formerly a New Testament teacher at Oxford University, says that Luke used "very sophisticated Greek. He would have been asked to write New York Times op-ed pieces" ("Gospels according to new book," *Peoria Journal Star*, 5/28/00).

In 1978 George Howard wrote an article in *Biblical Archaeology Review*. Howard did not argue for an original Hebrew New Testament in this article, but he did theorize that the writers of the Greek New Testament might have written God's name in the Hebrew characters when they wrote their original manuscripts. A SN believer sent me a copy of this article, complete with his complimentary underlining, arrows, brackets, and exclamation marks in the margins. I marked a few more things in the article myself. In Howard's short essay, I circled the following words: "...suggested that... suggested... argued that... it seems to me... is hardly likely that... In all likelihood... very probably... suggests that... no doubt... Perhaps... may have... Assuming this to be generally correct... In all probability... probably... no doubt... must have... impossible to know with certainty... must have been... must have taken... must have meant... must have meant... was probably... probably... suggest that... it may be that... probably... may be known..."

The appearance of all these words and phrases of ambiguity on just one and one-half pages of text tells me that Howard himself is not very certain of his theory. Yet SN people will swallow an unproven theory simply because it agrees with their doctrine.

One major reason SN believers misunderstand the "Name" issue is because they do not realize the broader meaning of the Hebrew word *shem* (usually translated "name"). When SN believers read a verse that says something about "the name of Yahweh," they think mainly in terms of nomenclature, the word that is used to address someone. *Shem* means much more than just "name" in this narrow sense of nomenclature, however. *Shem* also means the reputation, honor, or character of the person. Any good lexicon will confirm this. Isaac Mozeson also confirms this in his letter to me: "Also SHeM means 'repute' more than merely 'name.' The problems of the 'sacred name believers' will lessen when they consider this."

Even in English we use the word *name* in its broader sense: "You've ruined the family name!" Such a statement does not mean that the person has altered the pronunciation of his surname or changed it to a common name like "Jones." It simply

means that he has brought shame and reproach on the family by his behavior.

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The Scriptures say many things about the name of Yahweh. There are verses that speak of misusing, blaspheming, or shaming His name. There are verses about knowing, glorifying, praising, trusting in, and speaking of the name of Yahweh. These verses are not referring to the correct pronunciation of the four-lettered Tetragrammaton; they are speaking about the *character* and *reputation* of Yahweh. Thus, trusting in "the name" of Yahweh means that we trust in His *character* and His *reputation*, not in the correct pronunciation of His nomenclature. A person who trusts only in the correct pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton is reducing the name of Yahweh to nothing more than a magical incantation.

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Some readers may think that I am opposed to using the name of Yahweh, but this is not the case. In our congregation, we utter the name every Sabbath when we face Jerusalem and say the *Shema*: "Here, O Israel, Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is One." Every day throughout the week, I utter the Name in private prayer more times than I can count. However, I do avoid using the Name in casual conversation, because I truly do regard it as a Sacred Name which should be used only in a sacred context. I have witnessed some SN believers using the Name in a light-hearted manner in casual conversation, even while joking around.

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My main complaint against the SN movement is not the use or non-use of the Name per se, but the fact that the linguistic superstition about "God" and "Lord" unnecessarily alienates and separates brethren from one another. The linguistic superstition discredits SN believers and gives Christians an excuse to reject everything else that is being restored through the Messianic movement – the Sabbath, the Feasts, the dietary laws, etc. Paul warned Timothy about teachers who are continually "doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings

[suspicions]" (1 Tim. 6:4). I cannot think of a more accurate description of the SN movement.

SN writers also discredit themselves in the eyes of intelligent, thinking people by their sloppy scholarship. Some of it is so pathetic that calling it "sloppy scholarship" is actually a great overstatement and a compliment. SN writers often try to prove a point by making long, detailed linguistic arguments based on the details of a Hebrew word. They end up proving nothing to people who know Hebrew. All they end up doing is advertising in the most embarrassing manner their ignorance of linguistics and the Hebrew language – and in some cases, their ignorance of the English language, too.

I know a brother who leads a large Messianic organization based in Jerusalem. I once asked this brother what he thought about the SN movement. "We have scholars in Jerusalem who have done nothing but study the Hebrew texts for their entire lives, and even they are not 100% certain how God's name is pronounced," he said. "And yet we get letters from people in places like Arkansas telling us that they know exactly how the Name is pronounced, even though they have never studied Hebrew." (No offense to people in Arkansas. He could have named any other state.)

One thing that has been cropping up in SN literature in recent years is the alteration of certain Hebrew words. The Hebrew word for Judah is no longer transliterated as *Yehuda*; now it is *YAHudah*. Jacob is now written *YAHakob* instead of *Ya'akov*. Jerusalem is no longer *Yerushalayim*; now it is *YAHrushalayim* (or, according to one writer, *YAHUWSHELEM*). Even Messiah is changed from *Mashiach* to *Messi-YAH*. It seems that whenever SN people see the letter "Y" in a Hebrew word, they think that there should be an "H" after it, so they remedy the problem by restoring the missing "H" that the wicked scribes allegedly removed in their attempt to suppress the Name. Anyone who knows Hebrew can see the foolishness of this. One SN writer (who since has declared that Yeshua of Nazareth was a false messiah), when trying to explain why Joseph's name was really *YAH-sef* instead of *Yosef*, stated that "it doesn't take much imagination" to see that wicked scribes,

intent on hiding the Sacred Name, removed the “H” from the original name of *YAH-sef* and turned it into *Yosef*. Maybe it doesn’t take a lot of imagination to see this, but it certainly takes *some* imagination to see it. It also takes complete ignorance of the fact that the *yo-* prefix is the common, standard prefix that is used to conjugate third-person, masculine singular, future tense verbs in this category.

One of the most bizarre allegations I have seen in SN literature is the claim that the word *Hallelujah* is “a hybrid with one word of Hebrew and one word of Greek.” The SN writer who made this amazing discovery has “unleavened the hybrid” and restored the “correct” pronunciation for us. According to this SN writer, we should be saying “Halle-atah-YaHWaH” instead of “Hallelujah.” This erroneous conclusion would never have occurred if the writer had known that the plural imperative is formed by adding a *vav* suffix to the verb. This is something that a beginning Hebrew student learns in *ulpan* within the first couple weeks of study.

In another article, a SN brother writes about the different names people use to refer to the Messiah. This writer tells his readers that the *Yeshu* form used by unbelieving Jews is made up of three Hebrew letters which can form an acronym for “may his name and memory be blotted out.” This information is true. The three Hebrew words are “*yimach sh’mo v’zikhro.*” (See Stern’s *Jewish NT Commentary*, pg. 5.) However, this SN writer tells us that the three Hebrew words are “*yiddish sh’mo w’zither.*” This gross mis-information does not appear in some self-published rag that is obscure and unknown to SN people. It appears in a glossy SN periodical that has been around since 1937. If SN believers want to be taken seriously, they have to do better than that. And they have to do better than the SN believer who ended his letter of rebuke to me with these words: “I am shure you mean will, but lets speak the truth in love.”

Early Sacred Name Movement by Sis. A.L. Schulze



This is a wonderful old article by Sister A.L. Schulze sent to me by [Daniel Botkin](#) of Gates of Eden, who has guest blogged here previously, about the early origins and fruit of the Sacred Name movement. Now, modern

“sacred namers” are not people who like to pronounce the Name of God, but those who militantly insist that those who do not do so are not saved, their prayers are not heard, etc. I have seen this doctrine, in it’s current incarnation, tear apart congregations, families, and friendships. This was written by a first-hand witness to it’s more benign beginnings. I personally have no problems with the usage of Jesus, God, Lord, etc. just to be clear, nor do I have a beef with anyone who uses the sacred names. I do not agree with every view expressed in this article, but thought it was interesting how the joy of learning something so wonderful can later be used to divide people who agree on almost everything else.

Part 1

Reconstructions of the Early Sacred Name Movement

By Rev. A. J. Schack

The Sacred Name movement got underway in earnest in the early 1930s, but I am more aware of its history in the 1960s when I came in contact with the early pioneers.

Bro. David of the Michigan group I believe was active even before Elder Dodd came on the scene. I met him and his lovely step-daughter in 1962 in Nevada, Missouri, at the Feast of Tabernacles. She wrote very lovely poems for the paper of the Assembly. They are both deceased.

I first heard the name Yehoweh at a COG, 7th Day meeting at St. Louis, Missouri. Bro. Elton was at the meeting and actively promoted and explained the names to those who would listen. He stayed with the COG.

Years passed before I heard the name again. Like many others I never realized the importance of the name until Bro. James Anthony of Florida started giving the Faith magazine edited by Elder Clarence O. Dodd. He shared it with us back in the late thirties, printing out passages that revealed the importance of the names Yehoweh and Yehowah as well as the Feast days.

One day I returned again to the work with Holy Name texts by Bro. Dodd and James in the courtroom. For some reason I went to the case well before the trial.

Why I left doesn't come to mind, except to say I believe it was through Yehoweh's Spirit. Following a discussion on facts about the Name which included interesting, thought-provoking items. After putting away the groceries, I sat down and read and read! I could not stop until I had read most of them. I knew then I was reading the truth. When finished reading them, I took them to my mother who lived across the street and asked her to read them. I told her I was convinced they were the truth.

Bro. her, she marked each with an A as she finished reading them. She was also convinced that Yehoweh printed out to my name who kept the Sabbath various places in the Bible dealing with the second Name. She was an uneducated but smart, but open. She was not long in accepting the truth of the Name as the continued reading the books. One other sister also accepted Yehoweh and Yehowah as the true Names of the Heavenly Father and His Son.

In 1960 my mother, my oldest son and I went to Benton, Arkansas, to our first Feast of Tabernacles. It was so wonderful. Bro. Dodd and Bro. Traina were both there, and their sincerity was so great and the need for truth was understandable.

At this meeting we sang "All Things Are Ready, Come To The Feast," before each meal. We all ate at

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one long, long table. We had great, sustaining meals, prepared by the local cooks. But the meals there were the revelation of truths that came from the ceremony. We each had our Bibles and mine had many marks and notes to bring home with me.

We were a blessed crowd as we were "hanging out and thinking for righteousness." I will never forget my first Feast of Tabernacles. There I met the Dadds, a lovely couple. Bro. Traina was a delight with his rebuke sessions. I never met his wife as she ran a care center for the elderly and kept the home fire burning. She was literally a true supporter of his efforts.

These sisters are all gone from the living, but their works do indeed follow them. I hope to add to this report as I am able in the next newsletter. May this account strengthen your faith and give you endurance.

YNCA NEWS

Many Jews, along with many others, are skeptical of the 712 and Yaweh Ansel's integrity in denouncing all previous activities. More letters have been submitted to the six months following the September handshake than in the six months previous. Perhaps we all should "pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love them." (Zech. 1:18)

12:24: I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the grip both against Judah toward Jerusalem, and in that day will I make Jerusalem a hard stone for all people of that border themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. (Zech. 12:3)

Spice of Life Especially for Women

Reconstructions of the Early Sacred Name Movement

PART 2

Rev. A. J. Schack

There always said the first Feast we attended was the best, perhaps because we were so hungry for truth and we knew we had found the "bread of great price."

We had two or three who spoke besides Bro. Dodd and Bro. Traina, but those latter two gave us the deeper sessions. They also had a few women whom they allowed on to ask questions and we always were given good answers. The Name was the subject of most interest and the questions were many.

I asked Bro. Traina to write his name in another language, when he said he wrote "Yehoweh Shalom" in Latin letters for English speakers, it would sound the same in any language.

Bro. Joseph Deans was also there and explained that he was Polish and upon coming to the United States, there were no letters in English to carry the correct sound to give the proper pronunciation of his name, so he changed it to Deans. He explained that we must change our names and have it made legal, but our Heavenly Father says, "I am Yehoweh, I change not." (Malachi 3:6). He himself has not changed the Name, but marked to ignore

only those by accident.

How well I recall when I first accepted the sacred Name my sleep was disturbed quite often and I was unable to participate in my mind to try to, to make me doubt. I would look up the names the next day and Yehoweh always went out. I have long since forgotten the feelings that would come to me.

By my own search in the Bible, don't be surprised at the way I feel about the Name, for he will do his best to show us away from sound doctrine.

Being the "father of lies," he fights against the truth so it honors his grip and takes away his hold over people. Each one or deeper truth we find will soon get us to the back, and we are told to "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." (1 Thes. 5:21) Just as he knows as "Prince of the power of the air," and doesn't want his authority taken away, for he believes caused our Savior to be stripped of the garments, the Name has come in getting closer.

Bro. Dodd often asked various ones for their favorite Bible verse, and my choice was Isaiah 54. This was my mother-in-law's favorite as it was a comfort to people with handicaps. She was called to a wheelchair and would often read when some day she would leap and run like a deer. My understanding of anticipation is that my eyes will again have perfect vision.

Publishing Notice: Issues of the editorial staff are surrounding the spring feast, so are continuing the May issue of YNCA News this issue.

Part 2

Part 2a

In 1902 we had another meeting near Scottsville, Ark., at the home of Mrs. Williams and her husband. We held the meeting in the local country school house, but we all slept in and out of the Redden home. There were in the past and a number of us were in their lovely home, including my mother and me. They made everyone so welcome it was a joy to be with the brethren.

There were the only two ladies here. Dodd was in the meetings I attended. His wife and daughter Mary attended a meeting held in Nevada, Mo., after Mrs. Dodd's death. At the Redden meeting and at my suggestion we held a few more into the north of the Name.

Mrs. Dodd recalled how difficult it was to give up the name "Travis." She had learned to love that name. However, she was not long in joining the Name. Dodd in converting to the correct Hebrew Name Yehovah, which means "Declaration of Faith."

The Dodds and his Travis initially used "Yehovah," thinking that was the true name. After continued deeper study they changed to the correct "Yehoweh." The Dodds found the truth of the Holy

Days even before they encountered the same truth and Peter Dodd wrote some booklets on the Feast Days.

They held a meeting south and west of Nevada about 12 miles where their daughter was two years of age. That was 80 years ago, as our oldest son was then. I joined my husband in driving his mother to the meeting and she wrote thrilling cards home telling how interesting everything was. I was young and not too interested. Her soon afterward I started my study on the Sabbath and the law. I became a member of the Church of God 7th Day.

I was in that group until the late fifties when I started my serious study on the Second Name. After my study of the facts which I wrote of in my last writing, I asked to have time to make a few statements at our local Church of God 7th Day. The superintendent allowed me the time and I stated by the precept and stated I had accepted the Holy Name and had works on the subject if anyone would like to study them. It was an all-day meeting and the next were all filled.

(To be continued...)

The Captive He Ransomed

The joy that surrounds His presence
 Enriches me greater than gold.
 His gentle hands lift the burden
 Which I can no longer hold.

He dresses the wounds of my spirit
 Inflicted at such great cost.
 He reaches for me through the darkness,
 And I am no longer lost.

For I am the captive He ransomed,
 The reason for which He came.
 And touched by His infinite mercy
 My heart is no longer the same.

Born without any possessions,
 What can I do these few give,
 For I belong to the Master,
 And I am no longer my own.

By Jesse Reese

Tomato Lace Quiche

Crust:
 2 eggs cooked and
 1 egg beaten
 1 deep galled Parmesan cheese

Filling:
 1/2 cup butter
 1/4 cup green onion, chopped
 1 cup peeled, seeded, and coarsely chopped tomatoes

3 ounces shredded Swiss cheese
 2 deep galled Parmesan cheese
 1 egg
 1 cup evaporated skim milk
 1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese
 1 egg Italian mixed herbs
 salt and pepper to taste.

—Submitted by Daisy Smith

Part 3

It Won't Matter

One hundred years from now, it won't matter
 what our I drove,
 What kind of house I lived in, how much I had
 in my bank account.

No, what my clothes looked like, but, the world
 may be a little better
 Because I was important in the life of a child.
 Another Christian.

—Submitted by Bill Messinger

Recollections of the Early Sacred Name Movement

Part 1

by Sil. A.L. Schuler

To know the ones who labored so truly and studied the Word so sincerely in order to pass the truth on to others who had not known would be to have had the very foundation of this movement. There were many who sensitively gave of themselves and sacrificed to convert the truth. Each one did what he or she could to walk closer with Yehovah.

I will take those I personally have met and also those I wanted to know from their writings and from those by whom I have been instructed who have since taken the responsibility of spreading the truth they in years past had studied. Paul refers to this when our plastic, another nation, but Yehovah gives the income. (1 Cor 16)

I have already mentioned Sil. Dodd and Sil. Travis, both of whom I most consider first because they labored to publish the truth in *The Faith Magazine*, and both put out tracts, which were the bulk of the school of truth they were promoting. Their writings were the means of my acceptance of the Name: Yehoweh and Yehovah.

Sil. Dodd was more of a scholar and teacher, while Sil. Travis was a powerful preacher who was so firm with his words that there would be no danger of anyone's going to sleep. Sil. Dodd's writings were always well thought out, and he was not afraid to admit when he made a wrong claim for a Feast day, which he scarcely ever made. They were both very able and strong leaders. Even though they had some differences, they worked together smoothly. They were above talking out over details. They have both fallen asleep in Yehovah, and were faithful to the end.

Bro. Dodd's faithful companion told how he fell asleep in death with his last words "Yehovah Yehovah." He was only 36 years of age but he passed from

life. Bro. Travis was older at death.

Bro. C. J. Ayres was the first member of the Sacred Name Movement we met. He was a fiery speaker, being born in the Pentecostal movement for a number of years. He hosted the 1900 Feast of Tabernacles, which was my first Feast. He did a wonderful job. Previously, I wrote about the big, long table where we had our three meals each day. It was full of those who had founded a diocese, but the few books I believe had their own meals, however, I eat not more.

Bro. Ayres had an song "Come To The Feast." (Fittingly, the first line was "All things are ready.") His hair and beard were white, making him appear older, but he was in his early 40's, I believe. If I recall, he is deceased, but his wife is still living and resides here in France, which was very special to me.

Bro. Joseph Carter was present at this 1900 Feast also. As mentioned previously, he was the one who could not find enough English letters to transcribe the Hebrew name correctly, so he shortened it to Graham and made it his legal name.

He was at one of our Nevada, Missouri, Feasts and I recall my oldest sister attended one Sabbath during the Feast and began questioning him about different things. Our question was, "Do you think we should leave the faith we were brought up in?" His answer was, "Yes, I was raised in the Catholic faith. Do you think I should have stayed in that faith?"

It was the perfect answer. She had no further argument. Sadly, she remained in the Christian faith because she did not want to desert her family who were still in that faith. I truly think she believed we were right doctrinally, and seemed interested, but did not have the strength to put Yehovah first, the part her family first instead. I hope she will be

Part 3b

SYNOPSIS

with those who will bear the truth in the thousand-year reign where no false doctrine will be taught.
Bro. Owen fell asleep in the faith at an advanced age. He was very adamant when it came to following the Bible in every thing.

We enjoyed another young preacher whose name I don't see writing words with beautiful tunes, all sacred songs. His wife was a good musician and wrote the music and played the piano for these seven or eight children who sang the songs but he had composed. I believe the only son was the oldest, who along with his sisters would march up front with the smallest who was only eleven then—they all would sing those songs really well.

Later I got a record of these James children, some grown, and most of the songs and music was composed by them. A really talented family.
Bro. Duff, being in ill health at the annual meeting at Rome, Ark., sent Russian Duke Ivan Florida to help at the Feast. He had been a Jehovah's Day Adventist for over 20 years. He had his ministerial retirement pension taken from him because he had accepted and taken the Holy Gospels. They cut him out just as a reward after the Feast of Tabernacles, but he took it as a reward for the fact that he had accepted and taken the Holy Gospels. (Watch 44:5)

Bro. Burke had depended upon this pension for his retirement years, but was cut off so his name's sake. It is always amazing how many so-called Christians continue to rely on the human element. He was a good speaker and to his credit he died in the faith.

Then Dr. Webster from Washington, D.C. who had spent 30 years as a preacher for the 7th Day Church attended one of our Feasts in Nevada. He was a good speaker, a steady appearing man, and a doctor of Divinity. I understand he also had his pension from the Nation.

Then Bro. Hays Matheson, the author of *The Fugitive Faith of The True Worshipers* was also a very capable speaker. He was raised a Catholic in America, he was for a time a Jehovah's Witness and maybe the COG 7th Day. He joined the Sacred Name Movement, a well-known speaker whose sermons were on the details of the meaning of the Yahuwah. He long ago says showing how the gods were placed and given information dealing with the foundation. (Now I will have to insert we seem to have his work follow in the person of Elder Lucy Hodson, who delves into deeper meanings of the Yahuwah

and other symbols found in Yahuwah's word.)
I think Bro. Matheson's daughter is the one the mother of his parents by the name Turke. He was but two or three years old. He had both heterochromia, and became so translocated over with, he was, he was unable to walk or talk for those 4, four years. His mother and uncle cared for him and through their counsel and care they were able to restore him back to normal.

He came to this country when a young man and worked for the Wallbeam Watch company as I recall. After years of service, he was able to retire comfortably.

Bro. Matheson and Bro. Owen had a slight rivalry as they were from the old country and both were raised Catholic. His people will grow out and find pasture, we read in John 10:9. This is so true, they keep searching for pasture with greater greenness, reaching out for the latest teachings to find the good of great price. These have all died in the faith, but their works do indeed follow.

I must add Bro. Pearl Smith to the list of leaders who have fallen in death from the ranks of believers. She and her lovely adopted daughter Lucille Ottensamp both of whom I have previously mentioned, were always active. She Smith lived near Cherry, Michigan, and once spoke to the whole assembly where I remember one statement that stood out about with the Sabbath and holy days. She said Yahuwah makes the appointment and we must on His appointed times. We don't see the time to meet and tell Him to come on our appointed time.

It was worth her trip to Nevada's Feast of Tabernacles, if we didn't remember anything but only that statement. It is so true. We are all the best. He is!
She spoke again to a women's meeting with advice for marriage and how to care for our bodies, which was good. There were other outstanding women, including two women sisters, Ella Wright and Mrs. Julia Hayes who were or had showed the seeking of our good health.
I could go on and on with these precious memories. It is difficult to name all who helped in so many ways. These last two are still living. All others I have mentioned have fallen in death. Hopefully these faithful true believers will add to our faith and give us living hope while we occupy till He comes to start His thousand-year reign that reaches through all eternity.
As the Son runs His reign over to the Father, those in their graves who await the resurrection and

Part 3c

those who are living will be able to be in that wonderful "Heaven on earth" Kingdom. All earth made new, like the original paradise. As the song says, "Wah! it be wonderful those!"

I'm sorry I cannot remember the details Bro. Matheson requested in a letter to me to relate the incident of Bro. Tinsler's coming to the lecture saying, "I am anti-Chris! Yes, I am anti-Chris, and by the way I think my sermon, I hope you are anti-Chris too!" I am sure he said it as I quoted him. For it sounds like Bro. Tinsler, I'm certain, he was finally against the title "Christ," as he went into the source of these names we had grown accustomed to. He was on fire for the True Names of Yahuwah and Yahuwah.

How could a Hebrew-speaking Greek Jewish family give the name a Hellenized Latin name that has no meaning in any language? I'm sure to translate the only language we had spoken by Yahuwah and His angels in Hebrew. The English title Messiah is much more fitting than a puny Greek "Christus."

By the way, have you ever seen "I see Christ" in the Old Testament Scriptures? Why if that is His name, is there no mention of it until the New Testament was handed down to us? Why do some preachers explain to church over TV that the word "CCC" is of pagan origin, but continue to refer to Almighty Yahuwah by that pagan "Wah?"

Part 4

Spice of Life

Reconstructions of the Early Sacred Name Movement

Part 4

-Rev. A.L. Roberts

In concluding this writing on the Sacred Name Movement, I want to mention an assumption Rev. Dod made in the last newsletter. Having received a letter from Ruth Apers saying she knew the address of the 1982 Feast of Tabernacles, Rev. Dod assumed Ruth Apers was a widow of C. J. Apers whom I had placed among those having died. Rev. Apers was dead before he did and his wife Apers in the wife of C. J. Apers' was. (My apologies—DHR)

This last individual I want to devote to the encouragement of the present leaders who are striving to carry on the truth their former pioneer leaders devoted their time and life to. These leaders who have taken from the battle of death in death had shown their devotion in many ways.

Instead of a worshipful gathering, it became more like a three-ring circus.

For example, two of them, Dr. D.C. Weiner and Ransom Burke, furnished testimonial pieces from the 7th Day CDC because they believed so strongly in the Names Yehovah and Yahshua. They left the true Name of our Heavenly Father and the Son was a truth to be cherished above all and thus left their present homes for their old age.

I must mention another convert to the Sacred Name I met in 1986 at Boston, Arkansas, Elizabeth C. Rose, who wrote words to several songs in our song books. She was a very nice-looking lady, and I believe she helped at one time at Rev. Dodd's secretary. Happy to say I recently got acquainted with her, and I imagine she has since left the land of the living.

Also, Elsie Dodd put words to some songs as well. John Riggs wrote several good songs. In many instances who are gone as well as some who are still living have given so much of their talents to carry on

the work of Yehovah.

Now to encourage those who are carrying on these truths to practice to all of us, I want to include some incidents that took place during the years of Brothers Dodd and James who were deeply devoted to truth. They defended the truth against those who attempted to trouble and divide those who had found the narrow way.

I believe it was my third Feast of Tabernacles, which took place in Arlington, a minister who had accepted the name Yehovah objected to spelling it with a V instead of a W. (Just kidding), his first name in the name carried the spelling as "Yahweh." He wanted against Rev. Dodd in possessing the erroneous spelling as "Yahweh." (Josephus spelled the Tetragrammaton in a variety of four vowels, and the V is a consonant.)

It came with a good-sized group of his followers to this meeting. I assume he had learned of Rev. Dodd's last illness, which would take his life, so he came and took over the meeting. However, Elsie Dodd must have assumed that he would do this. In being unable to attend personally, Elsie Dodd had sent her younger brother, Ransom Burke of Florida to take his place at this meeting to ensure it was carried on properly.

I won't mention this individual's name, but he had his own way of a very good musician take over the only piano. He played the songs of worship like jazz and his father kept urging the congregation to sing along so he said "I'm in the mood of the building." I didn't sing as I could not hear my own voice and I didn't really want to blow away the roof.

Part 4b

He was also making altar calls every night and mostly women went to the altar. (Where do we find altar calls a part of worship in the Bible?) I don't recall their kneeling, but they would wave their arms over their heads and jump up and down. One heavy woman in particular made quite a spectacle as she jumped up and down. They all continued and around.

One lady of Rev. Dodd's group was sitting by one and she got to her feet and raised her arms and gave a very shrill scream and went up to the altar and then she was loudly protesting the action. But when I said something to her, I realized by her answer that she had been taken in by the others at the altar.

She and her friend discussed between themselves what a great leader this minister would make. I was heartily and wholeheartedly in his favor. The next night Rev. Ransom Burke was the speaker and he tried to correct the outbreak and actions of the night previous with Scripture. He illustrated those actions to the times of David and the 430 prophets of Israel.

From the close of his address Rev. Boyd stood up and exhorted Rev. Burke, alleging he was quoting the Spirit. I agreed in my mind, but not in the way Rev. Boyd meant. I knew Rev. Burke was trying to quash the unruly spirit, not the Holy Spirit. After the close of the night's service, I went to Rev. Boyd and told him that the Scripture says, "Rebuke me an elder, but stress David as a judge" (1 Tim. 5:17). He was not to rebuke Rev. Burke in front of the entire crowd of people. And I added that I did not think Rev. Burke needed any rebuke.

This minister who was taking over saw an outside as I was standing alone, waiting I would have. He approached me and tried to pacify me. But I was very mindful of his trying to have away his fellow altar kisser. I assume, members who had been converted to the Holy Name through Rev. Dodd's good faith, instead of a worshipful gathering, it became more like a three-ring circus.

When I got home I wrote Brothers Dodd and James what had taken place. Rev. Dodd's daughter Mary responded, as he was too ill. She stated that her father had expected such might happen. Rev. Dodd wrote "When the cat is away the mice will play."

That was a perfect summation of the whole affair. Rev. Dodd had not a sign he had made for those at the Feast. Instead of playing it before the audience it was played in front of me. Hardly any knew of it as it was never announced, and so only a handful of us heard his message.

Reflecting this is a bit painful, but I am doing this to show the very truth that leaders before you want to know that you know the price they paid to give us the knowledge we share today.

I know most of you will go through some of the same, as some of you have already experienced. We were not presented a new path, but rather a very narrow and thorny way. It was not based on a title we would not know we had what it takes to endure. Our older brother Yehovah has more than we will ever have.

Let us all pray for the ministers that they will endure and be steadfast to the end. Won't it be wonderful in the Kingdom? HalleluYAH!

Too Busy

Too busy to pick up the Book of John,
Too busy to ask how the Son came to save,
Too busy with duties from morning till night,
Too busy to study the way that is right,
Too busy with planning for things that we never,
Too busy to ask about sin and the grave,
Too busy with self and the idols we own,
Too busy to know that Yehovah sits on the throne,
Too busy to love the dear name of our King.

Too busy to praise Him, too busy to sing,
Too busy to kneel, and too busy to pray,
Too busy to keep the true Sabbath day,
Too busy to walk in the ways of Yehovah,
Too busy to read the truths in His Word,
Too busy to ask for our help from on high,
But waste day we won't be too busy to die,
—copyright—
—submitted by Virginia Johnson

I wish I had a way of knowing who this wonderful sister is, but I pray that posting this will honor her testimony in a small way.

Guest Blog: You're In God's Army Now!



So, my second official Guest Blog, I hope you are as excited about it as I am. About a month or so ago, I got this awesome idea of comparing the concept of being the image-bearers of God to the real life context of how soldiers represent their country. I just had a small problem – I have never been in

the military and would be forced to fake an article, which I was not willing to do. Fortunately, I have this amazing colleague who actually is military, and who studies with the Wisdom in Torah Talmidim teachers – so when I told him that I wanted and asked politely (begged might be more accurate), he said yes! So, without further ado – here is Matt Nappier of Beit Shalom congregation in Monroe, La.

I often like to take inventory of my personal space and the interactions around my small slice of this world to see God wherever it is I happen to find myself. Over time and as I've grown, like all of us, I've found Him within many different experiences. When my wife and I decided to start a farm, our sole focus in the beginning, and hopefully still, was to learn to see God in a deeper way through His creation, digging our hands into the most basic aspect of it. Before that, we became parents, and our prayer was that God would not only show to us how to be great parents but also reveal to us a deeper understanding of Him as Father. Going even further back, as we were married, our prayer was that God not only would teach us to be fruitful spouses to each other but also

that he would guide us in showing the world that relationship He desires to have with all of creation.

One other identity I hold is that of an Army soldier over the last 15 years. Having just graduated from another leadership course, I find myself also looking for God in those experiences. As the Army has trained me over the years to be a leader within its ranks, I have prayed God that God will continue to show me how to use those tools to be a leader within the ranks of His Kingdom on earth. While I was away, one emerging area of contemplation for me has been that of the ancient concept of humans as the image-bearers of God; as a result, a physical picture of what that means has presented itself, as so many other times, in the experiences around me.

I'd like to offer somewhat of an analogy, a physical comparison of something we may relate to today to help illustrate what it means to be the image-bearers of God on earth. I'd like to paint this picture through the palette of my career in the US Army. Let me be clear that I'm not suggesting that the Army of the United States is a good or equal comparison to God's Kingdom and reiterate that this is simply an analogy in the physical world around us.

Although my focus for this comparison is our current worldview and responsibilities as image-bearers in the Kingdom of God here on earth, carrying the identity we have through Yeshua (Jesus) our Messiah, it wouldn't be correct if I failed to mention the original image-bearers of God – Adam and Eve.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

-Genesis 1:26-27

At the very inception of our existence as human beings, the intention was that we should be the image-bearers of God. Often, we overlook the middle section of those verses that states our image-bearing is in relation to the dominion of the world, bringing God to all creation. Anglican bishop, professor, and theologian N.T. Wright explains that image as being like a mirror one looks into at an angle – seeing a reflection, not of themselves but another that is standing a few feet away. When creation looked to Adam and Eve, they should have been able to see God, but Adam and Eve corrupted that image. Since then, God has been working through His creation to restore the Creation Covenant made with us, humans, to restore us as His proper image-bearers on earth.

Fast forward to the first century, and we are given Yeshua, the incorruptible image of the invisible God, the One Who came to establish order and restore the image-bearers back to the intended image. Through His restorative act of the resurrection, we are no longer captives to sin, nor are we slaves to bearing the burden and image of Egyptian captors, but are instead set free to walk out into the world bearing the true image of our God, King, and Creator. That freedom, however, comes with a heavy responsibility.

When a person joins the military, their very first action as a soldier, sailor, marine, or airman is to raise their right hand and swear to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies. We even call on God to help us do this, and this moment is always a very solemn one. I don't know many brothers or sisters in arms that don't remember that moment of raising their right hand. It's serious. There's a real task at hand, one that can very well include an enemy threat. As I assume anyone reading this would agree, the seriousness of the task we undertook by coming into Covenant and swearing allegiance to the Body of Messiah has often been diminished. Can you imagine the seriousness of God's oath to Abraham when it was promised that his offspring would be a blessing to all

nations? Can you imagine the seriousness of the oath taken at the base of Mt. Sinai, which carried the expectation of being true image-bearers to the nations?

Once the oath is sworn, new recruits are then sent to Basic Training, the discipleship camp that transforms those who have never served into the image of a United States soldier. Through long hours of training and intense study of material, those who once only dreamed of what it looked like to be an Army soldier now embody the role. They've been given a uniform, taught how to stand and walk, and trained rigorously to be fit to fight. The great transformation occurs over a short nine weeks, and it's a remarkable change. Parents and loved ones often have trouble recognizing the new soldiers after they've completed those weeks. They've been transformed into the image that the Army desires.

These exterior changes, however, are not the important ones nor are they the most significant. These changes are merely the simplest and easiest. We throw some clothes on them, give them a haircut, and workout with them for nine weeks; this only accomplishes the external, or physical, changes. The harder task is changing what can't be seen: what's inside the soldier. The greatest change is only evident when we can see that a person has fully embodied the intent of their Army training – to be instilled with the Army Core Values that motivates us not only to be soldiers who can not only win any war but also have the integrity to win that war honorably.

For those who haven't heard of the Army Core Values, they consist of Leadership, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. These are the weightier matters of our service. That's quite a hefty list of characteristics, and so it is readily understandable that Basic Training can only be the beginning of this molding process. For many, it takes years to truly internalize these values, and for some, it never happens. Yet, this is the intent of the Army – to train soldiers that will fight and

fight honorably.

The United States Army has been the leading army in the world for quite some time now, and when we think back on why, it's because we fight the honorable fight. Sure, we may have hiccups along the way, but overall, we have fought to restore justice and righteousness in the world. Being the strongest army isn't all that matters – being the strongest and most honorable is. Think of WWII when we saw the Nazis as enemies, a force that fought hard yet failed to overcome the prowess of the United States. Yet, their strength never matters to anyone today because the world looks back with almost universal disgust at the shameful acts committed. They may have had strength, but no honor.

The Body of Messiah should work in similar fashion. We should be taking new believers through Basic Training, explaining to them in a quick, efficient manner those things which we are not to do at all. Our example is Acts 15 where we see new converts instructed to stop their overtly pagan practices, which was then supplemented with weekly training on how to walk out the task of becoming the image of God on earth. These quick changes, doing away with idolatry and the overt acts of worldliness, are akin to the uniform and haircut given within the first week at Basic Training. Yes, it changed our image a bit, but it wasn't a full transformation. Some may still look as weak and skinny as I did when I left for Basic Training. Others may still need to trim a little fat. Most importantly, they all need to continue to learn the values of how to take on the desired image honorably.

Every Sabbath, at our weekly training session, we should be learning more and more about what our new image in Messiah looks like and, following our Acts 15 example, that learning can and should come through the writings of Moses – the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. This is, functionally, the mission statement of our congregation, Beit Shalom Messianic Congregation. In our beginnings, we made a

decision that, no matter what else was taught, the instructions of Moses would be read in our community every Sabbath. Therefore, every service opens with a reading of the entire weekly Torah portion. This corresponds to the training, the putting on of the uniform, and the resultant trimming down or bulking up.

In the Messianic or Hebrew Roots movement, we've taken this new uniform or realized that maybe we weren't given the full uniform when we became believers in Messiah. Those that led us in giving us a haircut and a brown t-shirt sometimes innocently left us sitting in the barracks. We weren't given the full picture of what it meant to walk in the image of God. Yet, in our current understanding, we've found the uniform and performed those nine weeks of training – only to forget that the original intent was to instill those unseen values within us that would allow us to become members of God's Army fighting the enemies of His Constitution, the Torah, honorably.

We've taken these externals that are definitely part of the image of God, the uniform that anyone who sees us should know us by, and we've made that the end-all focus of our training as image-bearers. We've taken the easier things to change, tying on tzitziyot, taking some days off of work, and changing our diet; we implemented those while forgetting to tackle the tough, internal sins that serve to separate our character from God's character – as displayed in His love, righteousness, mercy, justice, and kindness.

In the Army, we judge those within our ranks to a harder degree, and this is done in the name of maintaining the proper image of an honorable institution. When soldiers get caught doing that which is dishonorable, things that go against the Army Core Values, they aren't allowed to remain in the ranks, and when we release them from the ranks, it's usually done in a manner that publicly shows what we expect in terms of honor.

However, if soldiers simply fail in maintaining the outward appearances, those physical changes that are easy to adjust, we help our brother or sister in arms make the necessary corrections. If we see a deficiency in a uniform, we make a simple on-the-spot correction, and we do so respectfully. We don't rip their uniform off and show everyone in the unit how they had missed a string on their pocket or had their boot laces out. If someone gains a little weight and can't pass the physical requirements, we put them on a program towards success and get them back in right standing, again, doing so respectfully.

I can see our flaws as a movement through these experiences – and how we can improve. We put on these uniforms, get a haircut, lost a little weight, and then we go around kicking in the doors of innocent people – poking our chests out as though wearing medals, yet having earned none. We've put on the easy physical changes, but haven't embraced the deeper changes that come through painful refinement. I see our Core Values plainly laid out in the Scriptures, but are we working diligently to make sure those are our priorities in training?

For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.

-Genesis 18:19

We all know that Abraham was blessed for keeping the instructions of God, but Abraham's leadership, his installation as the progenitor (commander) of the Israelite people, is ascribed to his walking in righteousness and justice. He not only kept the instructions of God but kept them honorably. He took the full image of God, inside and out, and went train those others coming after him, the children and his household to do the same.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

-Matthew 5:3-12

Are we walking in the deeper image that was shown to us through the perfect image of God made manifest in the flesh? Are we seeking mercy, peace, and righteousness? Are we turning the other cheek when others mock us through the new 1st Century world of shame: Facebook and YouTube? Are we putting on the uniform and cutting our hair but forgetting to comfort those around us, humble ourselves, and serve as Yeshua taught us to serve?

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

-Galatians 5:22-23

This list, given to us in Galatians, represents our Core Values. When people look at us, the covenant members of

Israel and God's Army, do they see love, joy, and peace, or do they see a bunch of strife, bitterness, and hatred wrapped in the physical changes of tzitziyot, Sabbath, and Feast Days? I can't tell you how many times in the past I've been involved in arguments full of sarcasm and negative speech towards others on the Sabbath, and I see it going on every week around the world. Are people seeing us and seeing the image of a longsuffering God, or are they seeing short-sightedness that cuts people down if they don't immediately mold to the image of ourselves? Do people see kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness in our walks, or are they seeing harshness and rudeness towards those that don't agree with us? And finally, do they see the image of our God in self-control, or do they see people who can't control their tongues?

Have we become First Century Judaism, a sea of people trying to build others into the image of ourselves rather than the image of God, not hesitating to cut down our brothers and sisters when they don't conform? Have we lost sight of the fact that we are supposed to be the image of a God who is abounding in mercy, goodness, graciousness, and longsuffering?

And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

-Exodus 34:6-7

I want to share one more Core Value verse with you, one that has been a focus for me over the past year, one that God keeps bringing back to me.

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord

-Hebrews 12:14

How do we present the image of the one true God to the world, being right and honorable image-bearers for His name's sake? – We pursue peace with all people, as well as holiness. We don't forsake those things that we realized we weren't taught, the holiness in our walk of Sabbath, Kosher, Feasts, Tassels, and more. We most definitely need those physical acts of holiness to point the world around us to the invisible God that desires an intimate relationship with all – but when we pursue holiness without peace, without walking out that holiness honorably, the world cannot and will not see the true image of God.

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Guest Blog: The Slippery Slope of Sola Scriptura by Daniel Botkin

You are probably reeling with shock right now as I have never done this before, but as you might know, we are moving to Idaho over the next two weeks and I am up to my eyeballs in alligators. Someone sent Daniel my [Is Standing Your Ground Destroying the Goal of God's Word?](#) blogpost after reading the one I am about to share with you and so he sent his to me and I liked it and wanted to share it with you. It's a long article, but worth your time. He doesn't have a formal blog but instead a newsletter that you can subscribe to – check out his website and especially his comics at gatesofeden.org.

Daniel has a show, [Gates of Eden](#), which airs on HRN and can also be seen on [youtube](#). I hope you will check out his teachings!



“‘The Slippery Slope of *Sola Scriptura*’? Did I read that right, Daniel? Haven’t you written in favor of *sola scriptura* in the past?”

Yes I have, and I still firmly believe in *sola scriptura*. However, there is a slippery slope that exists when people misunderstand and misuse *sola scriptura*, and you need to be aware of this slippery slope so you can avoid sliding downward into error and making shipwreck of your faith.

Before I discuss the slippery slope, let me briefly explain what *sola scriptura* means, for the benefit of readers who may not be familiar with that term.

Sola scriptura is a Latin phrase that means “by Scripture alone” or “only the Scriptures.” It is a concise way of stating that the Holy Bible, in its original languages, is the only infallible, God-inspired written text, and is therefore the highest and supreme and final authority that governs all matters of faith, doctrine, worship, and morality.

Sola scriptura was the motto of the 16th-century Protestant Reformers, and it is the one thing that accounts for all the many differences that exist between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. In Matthew 16:19 Christ gave authority to the Church “to bind and to loose” (i.e., to forbid and to permit things), and He said that whatever things church leaders bind or loose on earth will be bound or loosed in heaven. In other words, heaven will require church members to abide by church leaders’ decisions to forbid and to permit things.

The Roman Catholic Church claims that this authority is absolute. They say that church leaders can decree or repeal any laws whatsoever. Church leaders can even repeal Biblical laws and they can permit things which the Bible forbids.

Roman Catholics are expected to obey the Roman Catholic Church even when the leaders teach things that seem to contradict the written Scriptures.

The Protestant view is that church leaders must exercise their authority within the boundaries of the written Scriptures. This means that Protestant church leaders must not teach doctrines or make decrees that contradict the written Scriptures. The Bible has the final say in determining which doctrines and practices and morals are true and pleasing to the Lord. If church leaders teach or decree things that clearly contradict the Scriptures, they are overstepping their authority and should be rejected or ignored, not obeyed.

Many years ago when I was a young believer and first learned about the Roman Catholic view of church leaders having absolute, unlimited authority from Christ, I asked myself: "Is it possible the Roman Catholic Church is right about this? If so, I'll become a Roman Catholic."

I prayed about this and asked the Lord to show me the answer.

I found my answer by "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." I knew enough Scripture and enough history to know that Jesus lived among religious leaders whose view of authority was virtually identical to the Roman Catholic view. I knew from the Gospels that the rabbis of Yeshua's day, like Roman Catholic priests, sometimes put more weight and emphasis on their traditions than on the written Scriptures. "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men... Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:8f). I knew from the Talmud that the rabbis described their authority thusly: "The sayings of the elders have more weight than those of the prophets" (Jer. Ber. i.7) and "an offense against the sayings of the Scribes is worse than one against those of Scripture" (Sanh. xi.3).

When the doctrines and decrees of religious leaders in Jesus' time contradicted the written Scriptures, Jesus affirmed the Scriptures as the highest and supreme and final authority. He did this not just once but on several occasions. I realized that as a follower of Jesus, I should do likewise. I realized that following Jesus includes viewing

the Scriptures the same way He viewed them. And in Christian terminology this view is summed up in the Latin phrase *sola scriptura*. So I believe in *sola scriptura*.

What then is the "slippery slope" of *sola scriptura*? What's the problem?

The problem is tens of thousands of Protestant denominations and independent churches. Even within many major denominations there are sub-groups. Among Baptists, for example, there are literally hundreds of different types of Baptist denominations. A new Protestant denomination forms, then leaders within that denomination disagree about something, so another new denomination is formed. The same thing happens with independent, non-denominational churches. Someone in the congregation comes to a new understanding of something, and he cannot convince the leadership to see it his way, so he splits and forms another new independent congregation. Believe it or not, this has even happened among Messianic congregations. Really!

The problem is not so much caused by *sola scriptura* itself, but rather by a misunderstanding and misuse of *sola scriptura*. Many Protestants (including Messianics) approach it this way:

A brand new believer is given a Bible. He is told to read it, believe it, and obey it. He is told that he can get help understanding the Bible by going to church meetings and Bible studies, by reading books and magazines, and by listening to teachings on CDs or film. But he is warned to be careful, because there are many false prophets and teachers out there, all claiming to teach Biblical truth, and they are very clever. They know how to twist the Scriptures and they deceive a lot of people, so watch out.

Thus this babe in Christ, armed with a Bible that he has not yet fully read through even in English, let alone in the original languages, is now expected to figure out for himself which Bible teachers are teaching truth and which ones are teaching error. Thus each individual believer eventually becomes an authority unto himself. And even though every individual believer might be doing things the way he sincerely believes is the Bible way, we still have every man doing that which is right in his own eyes. We have a bunch of hyper-independent sheep without shepherds.

I have read some of the Roman Catholic arguments against the concept of *sola scriptura*, and to be honest, some of their arguments are quite compelling. If I did not have the example of Yeshua affirming the Scriptures as the highest and supreme and final authority in matters pertaining to faith, I might be easily persuaded to reject the notion of *sola scriptura*. But of course I *do* have Yeshua's example, as well as the testimony of the Apostles that "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), and Isaiah's proclamation, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). And I know enough Scripture to realize that many things Roman Catholicism teaches are contrary to the law of God and to the testimony of Scripture.

One Roman Catholic writer, Patrick Madrid, calls *sola scriptura* "A Blueprint for Anarchy." And brethren, that is exactly what it is when it is used the way that most non-Catholic believers use it today. Madrid writes:

"Scripture alone, as the tragic history of Protestantism has shown, becomes the private play toy of any self-styled 'exegete' who wishes to interpret God's Word to suit his own views. The history of Protestantism, laboring under 'sola scriptura,' is an unending kaleidoscope of fragmentation and splintering. It cannot provide any sort of doctrinal certitude for the Christian, because it is built on the shifting sand of mere human opinion – what the individual pastor 'thinks' Scripture means."

Roman Catholic writers point out that *sola scriptura* (as practiced by most Protestants today) is not even a Scriptural idea. Where in the Bible, Old Testament or New Testament, do you see each individual person determining for himself what the Bible means, and then splitting off and starting a new denomination because of some minor doctrinal difference, or because the music was too loud, or the children were unruly, or the preacher said something that offended him, or the services lasted too long? God's people surely had their differences in Bible times, but we do not see them using *sola scriptura* in the way that people use it today. Madrid calls *sola scriptura* "unhistorical, unbiblical and unworkable," and he is absolutely right if you are talking about the way *sola scriptura* is used by most non-Catholics today.

One of the most compelling arguments that Roman Catholics have against *sola scriptura* is what James Akin calls "Practical Problems of Sola Scriptura." Akin lists seven problems in the form of seven things that *sola scriptura* presupposes. The most compelling of these practical problems is the presupposition that every individual believer will not only have a Bible but also possess scholarly supporting materials to help him understand the Bible (concordances, lexicons, historical resources, etc.), and have enough spare time to devote to long-term, in-depth, independent study of the Bible and of all the supporting materials, and also be equipped with enough intelligence to understand the scholarly supporting materials, and the ability to think critically.

Sola scriptura, as understood by most non-Catholics today, requires every individual believer to become a super-scholar and a deep theologian and to hammer out his own independent theology. The reality is that not everyone has the time, the resources, the opportunity, and the intelligence to become a super-scholar and a theological thinker.

Every believer should read the Bible and become familiar with it and meditate on the Scriptures. But not everyone has the calling and the time and the ability to become a teacher or a prophet or an apostle. This is the reason that "God hath set some [not 'all'] in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor. 12:28).

The original Protestant Reformers never intended for *sola scriptura* to be used in the way it is used today, in a way that requires every individual believer to become a super-scholar and a theological thinker.

In the Messianic Movement it's even more difficult, because Messianics feel a need to know lots of extra-Biblical historical information about the Jewish roots of the faith, and to know the Hebrew language, and maybe even some Greek and Aramaic.

I certainly do not discourage people from studying history or from learning the Biblical languages if they have the time, the opportunity, and the linguistic aptitude to do so. But the reality is that not everyone has the time, the opportunity, and the ability to become proficient in the original languages of the Bible. Not everyone has the time to devote to long-term, in-depth Bible study. Every believer

should read the Scriptures regularly throughout his entire life, but not every believer can become a super-scholar and a theological thinker. Not every believer can eloquently articulate why certain doctrines are true or false. That is a job for teachers, and not all believers are teachers.

From what I have seen in the church world and in the Messianic world, it seems to me that a typical Messianic disciple usually studies the Scriptures more than a typical non-Messianic disciple does. There are exceptions to this, of course, but based on the overwhelming Biblical illiteracy I have seen among church-going Sunday Christians, I believe my observation is generally true.

It is good that Messianic disciples study the Scriptures, of course, but because of the *sola scriptura* approach as it is used today, many (perhaps most) Messianic disciples study with little or no real in-person guidance from stable teachers who are morally, mentally, and doctrinally sound. Messianics are not taught by mature men of integrity who have a record of producing good fruit for the kingdom. Rather, they are self-taught, because a Messianic disciple is made to feel that he must personally figure things out for himself.

The result of this *sola scriptura* approach is a bunch of hyper-independent disciples who have no real authority in their lives because they each have become an authority unto themselves. As in the days of the Judges, every man does whatever is right in his own eyes.

All Messianics agree that we should follow the Biblical calendar, but Messianics cannot even agree which of the calendars out there is "the right one." As a result, there is calendar chaos.

Among the Jewish people, the calendar has helped unite them with other Jewish communities all over the world. Among Messianics, the calendar has divided congregations and families and individuals from each other. Some Messianic individuals, based on "their study," decide that Passover should be a month earlier or later than the Jewish calendar shows. So some Messianics eat *matzah* for a week while others eat leaven, and the following month the roles are reversed. And since the month of Passover starts the calendar year, this means that all the other annual feast days that year will also be a month off from those of the Jewish calendar. So these

Messianics not only celebrate Passover a month apart from others, they do the same for the Feast of Tabernacles and for all the feasts in between Passover and Tabernacles.

It's bad enough that Messianics cannot agree which month to do Passover. Now some cannot even agree when "the true Sabbath" is.

Until around a decade ago, I had never heard of anyone questioning which day the seventh-day Sabbath was. All knowledgeable believers, even Sunday Christians who did not believe in keeping the seventh day holy, agreed that the seventh-day Sabbath was from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. The Jews have preserved the seven-day weekly cycle since the days of Moses, and until about a decade ago, I had never heard any knowledgeable people question this.

But now some Messianics claim that "the seventh day" really means the seventh day of the lunar month, and not the seventh day of the week, the day commonly called Saturday. So these lunar sabbatarians might keep Thursday as the Sabbath one month, and Monday as the Sabbath the following month, depending on which day of the week they site the new moon.

Other Messianics say the Sabbath is only during the daylight hours, from Saturday morning to Saturday evening.

Another theory I have heard is that the Sabbath begins an instant after noon on Friday and ends at noon on Saturday, because, they claim, the "evening" actually begins the moment the sun starts heading west, and the "morning" ends when the sun is at high noon.

I have even heard of people who claim that the seventh day is on the day commonly called Tuesday, because in Genesis the sun was made on the fourth day of creation, the day now commonly called Wednesday. Therefore, the Tuesday sabbatarians claim, the seven-day count toward Sabbath should begin on Wednesday, the day when the sun first appeared.

There are probably other wacky theories out there in the hyper-

independent Messianic world. The source of all this calendar chaos and confusion is *sola scriptura*.

The *sola scriptura* approach that we see today in the Protestant and Messianic world is not the Scriptural model. Look in the Bible. You do not see lone individuals, or even individual local congregations, making up their own versions

of the calendar. Except for King Jeroboam, who was so wicked that every time he is mentioned in the Bible after his tampering with the calendar, his name is followed by the phrase "who caused Israel to sin." But apart from Jeroboam, everyone mentioned in the Bible followed the calendar that was used by mainstream, normative Judaism. True, the Pharisees and Sadducees differed on some of the minor details, but those differences were tolerated and accommodated.

In the Bible, you do not see the hyper-independence among disciples of Yeshua that you see in today's Messianic world. On the contrary. In Acts 15 you see a council of apostles and elders in Jerusalem establishing *halachah* for all disciples of Yeshua. After "much disputing" (Acts 15:7), the men of this council came to a consensus, confirmed by the written Scriptures, and James pronounced the sentence. For the fledgling Messianic Community, this council of men in Jerusalem was their "Vatican" if you will. These men had authority, they exercised that authority, and disciples of Yeshua were expected to submit to that authority and obey their decrees.

Unfortunately, we do not have an international council of Messianic leaders to establish *halachah* for all Messianic disciples. Even if such a council were to be formed, good luck convincing all the hyper-independent Messianics to submit to the authority of that council!

If things in the Messianic Movement continue as they are, the slippery slope of *sola scriptura* will result in more bizarre and increasingly wackier doctrines and theories, because the Messianic Movement is like a granola bar – full of nuts and fruits and flakes.

"Daniel, if the *sola scriptura* model as currently practiced is unbiblical and unhistorical and unworkable, and if we have no international Messianic council to establish *halachah*, what are we supposed to do?"

I do not have all the answers, but a good way to begin fixing things is to realize that *sola scriptura* does not mean that every single believer is expected to become a super-scholar and a theological thinker and figure everything out for himself. And *sola scriptura* does not bestow upon every individual the right to be an authority unto himself. A good way to begin fixing things is to recognize authority in the

Body of Messiah, at the very least on the local level. God's kingdom is a kingdom of law and order, a kingdom wherein imperfect humans are appointed by God to exercise authority over other imperfect humans until the Lord returns. Authority in the Body is generally age-based ("Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder," 1 Peter 5:5), although younger men may sometimes be appointed to govern the affairs of a local congregation ("These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth," 1 Timothy 4:11f).

Individual believers can establish their own personal boundaries and guidelines for some things that are not specifically addressed in detail in the Bible (when and how often to pray, study, and fast; how to raise and educate their children; whether or not to have a TV in their home, etc.). Individuals can decide for themselves how they want to fulfill some of the commandments (how to tie their *tzitziyot*, how to affix a *mezuzah*, etc.), but there are some things that are not meant to be determined by each individual for himself. Peter wrote: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet. 1:20). If you prefer a more modern translation: "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation" (NASB).

This verse in Peter, along with the account of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, tells us that the Scriptures were never intended to be interpreted privately by each and every individual disciple *apart from a community of fellow disciples*. The Holy Scriptures were not given to a bunch of lone, independent individuals. The Scriptures were given to a *community of believers*, a community that had elders occupying positions of authority to establish *halachah* for the entire community.

Every individual disciple can privately study and ponder and arrive at his own conclusions, but those conclusions, especially if they are quite different from what is commonly believed, should not be assumed to be true unless they are first tested. If you study and arrive at some conclusion that seems rather bizarre or even just way outside the norm, I suggest that you present your findings to knowledgeable, stable elders whom you respect, or at least to peers whom you trust, and ask them if they see any way that your conclusion

contradicts the Scriptures. Do this before you go forth to preach your new revelation. Many people have made fools of themselves by prematurely proclaiming some "new revelation" that is nonsense.

Another thing that can be done to help remedy the misuse of *sola scriptura* is in regards to the Biblical calendar. Messianic disciples need to understand that the appointed times (the *mo'adim* or "feasts") of God's calendar *must be proclaimed by somebody*. Until these appointed times are proclaimed (i.e., designated by leaders), they do not yet exist. And after the days for the *mo'adim* are proclaimed, those become the days that are Yahweh's appointed times. Whichever days the proclaimers designate as the *mo'adim*, those become the days that Yahweh will recognize as His appointed times. In other words, the proclaimers have authority from God to determine which days to designate as the appointed times for the whole community, and Yahweh says that those are the days that He will recognize as His *mo'adim*.

In the New Testament Yeshua said, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19). In a similar way in Leviticus 23:2, Yahweh says, in effect, "Whichever days thou shalt proclaim as the *mo'adim* on earth shall be proclaimed as the *mo'adim* in heaven." The actual words "earth" and "heaven" are not in the text in Leviticus, but what *is* in the text is the implication that *heaven will recognize the days that are proclaimed on earth*. This is especially apparent if you can read and understand the Hebrew text:

Mo'adei YHWH asher-tikreu otam mikra'ei kodesh eleh hem mo'adai.

The KJV says: "concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My feasts."

The J.H. Hertz Pentateuch says: "The appointed seasons of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My appointed seasons."

The Zondervan English translation of the Septuagint says: "The feasts of the Lord which ye shall call holy assemblies, these are my feasts."

The Stone Tanach says: "HaSHEM's appointed festivals

that you are to designate as holy convocations – these are My appointed festivals.”

The NASB says: “The LORD’s appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations – these are My appointed festivals.”

The DBLV (Daniel Botkin Literal Version), if it existed, would say: “The appointed times of Yahweh, the ones which you shall proclaim them to be holy convocations, these ones, they are My appointed times.” And I would have a footnote to point out that the pronoun “you” here is plural, not singular, which proves that these feasts cannot be proclaimed by just one lone individual.

Regardless of which English translation you prefer, you cannot escape these two facts:

1. A group of people who are authorized to act on behalf of the whole community are supposed to designate and proclaim which days will be the *mo’adim*.

2. Whichever days the proclaimers designate, those will be the days that Yahweh will recognize as His appointed times for the whole community.

Therefore if you want to know on which days the appointed times occur, you simply ask the proclaimers, because whichever days the proclaimers decide to designate as the *mo’adim*, those are the days that Yahweh will recognize as His appointed times.

Simple, right? Well, it would be simple if there was 100% agreement about which people are authorized to proclaim the appointed times.

Personally, I agree with Dean Wheelock, who published a lengthy article titled “Calendar Chaos” in his *Hebrew Roots* magazine in 2005. Dean points out that “there is no record that Y’shua ever objected to the *Sanhedrin*’s announcing the new moons and the New Year” and that “[t]here are no historical records indicating that Y’shua and His disciples kept a different calendar than what was approved by the *Sanhedrin* and observed in the Temple.”

When Paul wrote about the advantages of being a Jew, he said “chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Rom. 3:2). I do not believe this means that the rabbis have authority to dictate every detail of *halachah* for disciples of Yeshua, but if the oracles of God were

committed to the Jews, then I question how proper it is for a non-Jew to make up a different calendar of his own. Some details of *halachah* affect only the individual disciple (how to tie *tzitziyot*, how to affix a *mezuzah*, etc.), but the calendar affects the entire community.

Dean Wheelock further points out: "Since the *Sanhedrin* had *Y'shua's* tacit authority to establish the calendar in His day, it is our view that the *Sanhedrin* also has the authority to establish the calendar for our day. No one else has been given that authority, whether it be a body of Jews called the *Karaites*, an individual Messianic congregation, or private individuals. To allow anyone (other than the *Sanhedrin*) to have such authority puts the Messianic Community into the same situation in which the children of Israel found themselves during the latter days of the Judges: 'In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes' (Judges 21:25)."

Dean also points out the need to sometimes consult extra-Biblical sources: "Yes, there are times when we, as Messianic Believers, must rely on the Oral Traditions of the Jews in order to properly understand difficult passages of Scripture. The Calendar is one of the cases where this is true, simply because there is not sufficient information in the Scriptures to come to a definitive conclusion on how the calendar is to be calculated...

"We believe the only time one should deviate from the *Traditional Hebrew Calendar* is when it can be Scripturally proven that what has been established is incorrect. The only place where we find this to be true is in the setting of *Shavu'ot* (Pentecost), which according to Scripture should always fall on the first day of the week...."

Like Dean Wheelock, I believe that this is the one time when *sola scriptura* can be legitimately used to trump the traditional Jewish calendar. The Bible says that *Shavu'ot* is to be on "the morrow after the seventh sabbath" (Lev. 23:16), and since there are no annual sabbaths during that final week leading up to Pentecost, the seventh sabbath is always, without exception, going to be on a normal Saturday Sabbath. Therefore Pentecost must always, without exception, fall on a Sunday. The Pharisaic (and modern Jewish) manner of calculating *Shavu'ot* always places it on Sivan 6, which can

occur on days other than Sunday. The Sadducean reckoning, which most Messianics follow, correctly places *Shavu'ot* on a Sunday. So I keep it according to the Sadducees' reckoning. If I lived in Israel, where the Pharisaic reckoning is used, I would probably celebrate *Shavu'ot* with the greater community of Israel. But here outside the Land, I follow the Sadducees' reckoning, as most Messianics do.

If you want a copy of Dean Wheelock's complete article, or to get on his mailing list, write to him at: Hebrew Roots, PO Box 400, Lakewood WI 54138. The article "Calendar Chaos" is included in *Fellowship Affairs*, a booklet that contains a collection of articles on various topics. If you can enclose a few dollars (or a lot of dollars) to help Dean and his wife Susan with costs of printing and postage, I'm sure they will appreciate it.

Even if you are not persuaded to agree with me and with Dean Wheelock, at least realize that the *mo'adim* must be proclaimed by an authorized body. *Sola scriptura* does not authorize every individual disciple to decide for himself how to follow the calendar. Let's not use *sola scriptura* as a license to do whatever is right in our own eyes.