

# Searching for and removing the leaven of rebellion

Written by: Todd D. Bennett  
[www.shemayisrael.net](http://www.shemayisrael.net)

This article was originally published as a weekly Newsletter on Day 20 of Month 12 on the Creator's calendar, also known as March 2, 2024 on the Roman calendar.

This particular Roman month was named after Mars (Marius) - the Roman god of war.

The reason is because March was the month when active military campaigns resumed. Many farmers were soldiers and vice versa. So it was important to coordinate wars around the harvests.

That is where the following phrases originate.

*"He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."* Isaiah 2:4

*"Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am a warrior."* Joel 3:10

*"He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."*  
Micah 4:3

Isaiah speaks of peace, Joel speaks of preparing for war and Micah refers to a final peace.

Metal was a scarce commodity, so a soldier's sword would be transformed into a farmer's tool through a flame and a forger's hammer at the appropriate time.

In fact, the prohibition against blacksmithing by the Philistines was one of the earliest form of "gun control."

*"<sup>19</sup> Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Yisrael, for the Philistines said, 'Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears.' <sup>20</sup> But every one of the Yisraelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle, <sup>21</sup> and the charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads. <sup>22</sup> So on the day of the battle there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan, but Saul and Jonathan his son had them." 1 Samuel 13:19-22*

By prohibiting the Yisraelites from forging steel, the Philistines kept the Yisraelites in a constant state of farming with no means of rebelling.

Last week we talked about rebellion in the wilderness because if you carry rebellion in your heart, you aren't going to make it out of the wilderness.

Rebelling against the Philistines is one thing. Rebelling against YHWH is an entirely different matter.

We also talked about the rebellion of King Saul. Samuel ended up taking a sword and hacking to pieces Agag, the King of the Amalekites. It was a job that Saul was supposed to do himself.

Do you remember those stinging words spoken by Samuel during that event?

*"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of YHWH He also has rejected you from being king." 1 Samuel 15:23*

Those are strong words. We already looked at the Hebrew word for "rebellion" which is pronounced "meri." We also discussed the fact that it was rooted in stubbornness and pride.

But witchcraft? Really?

In Hebrew we read the word "qesem," which also means "divination."

Did you know that what happened in the Garden between the "nachash" and the woman was a form of divination? If you look closely at the meaning of "nachash" it goes far beyond just a "serpent." It was as if the nachash placed the woman under a spell.

After she added to the Torah by stating that YHWH said they could not touch the tree of all knowledge, she opened herself up to receive deception.

Of course, divination and witchcraft involve exercising spiritual power without the set apart spirit of Elohim. It involves doing things our way to get what we want.

You see, YHWH gives His people power to operate within His Kingdom according to His plan. When we misappropriate that power - the talents, the giftings and abilities - to serve our own purposes, that is rebellion and it is all sin.

Rebellion is extremely serious in the eyes of YHWH.

Did you know that there is a specific Commandment concerning the rebellious son?

*“<sup>18</sup> If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, <sup>19</sup> then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, <sup>20</sup> and they shall say to the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. <sup>21</sup> Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Yisrael shall hear, and fear. <sup>22</sup> If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, <sup>23</sup> his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which YHWH your Elohim is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of Elohim.” Deuteronomy 21:18-23*

Again, notice the connection between stubbornness and rebellion. They are the same sin and the punishment associated with them is very serious. I am thankful to YHWH that my children are loving, faithful and obedient. But I know a lot of parents with rebellious children. They couldn't imagine stoning them.

A person subjected to capital punishment was typically hung on a tree or a wall as an example. That was the ancient form of “deterrence.”

This Command was purposeful and prophetic. It actually hearkens back to the rebellious Sons of Elohim described in Genesis 6. Those “Fallen Angels” rebelled against Elohim, which led to the corruption of Creation and ultimately the flood.

Of course, this takes us back to the Garden. It was there that we see the rebellion of man, prompted by one of the fallen ones.

This is why Yahushua was hung on a tree. He bore the sin of a rebellious son that brought sin and death into the world. His sacrifice was also modelled through the Yom Kippurim ritual that specifically refers to the fallen one named Azâzêl. (see Leviticus 16 where the name Azâzêl is often translated as “scapegoat.”)

Consider the tradition that we read from The Book of the Watchers that the fallen Sons of Elohim taught men how to work with metal and make weapons. “And Azâzêl taught men to make swords, and knives, and shields, and breastplates, and made known to them the metals (of the earth) and the art of working them . . .” 1 Enoch 8:1a

That knowledge is what brought Rome to power through their worship of the fallen one that they called Mars. Did you know that there is a statue of Mars at the entrance of the U.S. Capital Building in Washington, D.C.?

Mars is worshipped in America on a much greater scale than ancient Rome. Of course, that explains why the United States is so hell-bent on projecting power and funding wars around the world.

Now, I mention The Book of the Watchers from 1 Enoch because I think it is helpful to provide us with a Second Temple perspective of the Genesis 6 events and how rebellion corrupted all creation.

It is important to understand that the texts of 1 Enoch were compiled from a variety of manuscripts around the second and first century BCE, and possibly even much later.

They were definitely not written by Enoch and I have never promoted 1 Enoch as “Scripture” since it contains clear errors, such as the Book of Luminaries.

It is an interesting text that has become a test for many. While it describes the source of rebellion that has infected creation, it also includes one of the many rebellious solar calendars found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Of course, the Dead Sea Community that used the scrolls of 1 Enoch that were found in the caves was not filled with righteous Zadokites as many incorrectly teach. They rebelled and rejected Jerusalem and the Temple. They were like Korah in the wilderness. They wanted what was not theirs, and they were going to try to get it, even if it was outside of the parameters set by YHWH.

Remember that John’s father Zechariah was a Levite priest serving in the Temple. Gabriel appeared to him while he was presenting the incense offering. As long as the Temple was still standing, that was where the Levites were supposed to serve. That was where the prophetess Anna remained to await the Messiah. The man Simeon was led there by the Set Apart Spirit to see “the Consolation of Yisrael.” (see Luke 2)

And, of course, that is where the parents of Yahushua went after His birth, and it is where Yahushua continued to go for the Moadim at the Appointed Times on the correct calendar.

So the notion that the rogue groups out in the Dead Sea were somehow more righteous than the people following YHWH with their whole hearts in Jerusalem is pure fiction.

The so-called “sons of light” that went into the wilderness thought that they were a fulfillment of the prophecy provided through Isaiah:

*“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of YHWH; Make straight in the desert a highway for our Elohim.”* Isaiah 40:3

Well they were wrong. All of the New Testament “gospel” texts confirm that this prophecy related to John the Immerser. (see Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4 and John 1:23)

So, the people out at the Dead Sea were presumptuous and they were living in rebellion. They wanted to function in a prophetic role that was not for them. Again, they were like Korah and the other rebels that died in the wilderness and ironically, they ended up dying in the wilderness as well, because their prophecies failed.

While they stayed out in the seclusion of the desert following their man-made solar calendars and cursing the “sons of darkness” they were actually walking in darkness. Yahushua, on the other hand, came into the darkness and brought light to the people by teaching and healing them.

He was the obedient Son who was the Light of the World from the very beginning as described in John 1. He was not a rebellious Son, but He took on the punishment of the rebellious son. After His death, resurrection and ascension, He sent the Spirit of Elohim to help His people.

Where did He send the Spirit - into the wilderness? No.

When did He send the Spirit – according to the Enoch Calendar? No again.

He sent the Spirit to Jerusalem on the Appointed Time of Shavuot according to the Calendar of Yisrael using the sun and the moon.

So, rebellion lies at the heart of this cosmic struggle that we find ourselves in, and I see rebellion rampant in the so-called Torah community that supposedly follows the Torah.

Instead of a flock of humble sheep loving and serving one another, I see a bunch of know-it-all rebels chasing new revelation and strange fire in their quest for new knowledge. This quest for knowledge doesn't seem to lead to greater love, unity and giving. Instead, I see more false teachers and greater division. It's clearly rooted in pride.

Again, the temptation traces straight back from the Garden, when there was no written Torah, Prophets, Writings or Dead Sea Scrolls.

There was a time when there were no cities, and no artificial light. People would rise up and lie down with the sun. They would see with clarity the moon and the stars at night.

There is an ancient story written in the Mazzaroth that was corrupted by the pagans, but from the beginning man was supposed to use the two great lights for "*signs and moadim, for days and for years.*" Genesis 1:14

The stars are also mentioned as lights, but they do not provide the same function as the two great lights. They are not intimately connected with this planet like the two great lights, although they have a purpose.

We are currently in a period when the seeds of rebellion are manifesting themselves in a community of people who are just as divided as the religion that they were birthed from.

Christianity, of course, is the epitome of a lawless religion. It specifically rejects the Torah and most Christians refuse to submit to the Commandments, which they incorrectly interpret as being “under the law.”

Of course, they support this lawless stance based solely on some letters attributed to a guy named Saul.

How ironic.

Recall that Saul was the name of the rebellious king of Yisrael who sought to kill the anointed one - David.

Now we see Christians following another Saul as their king because of some letters attributed to him. I say attributed to him because it is fairly clear that not all the texts attributed to “Paul” were written by Saul.

Some of them are clearly pseudepigraphal. I talk about that in the Walk in the Light series book titled The Scriptures. Nevertheless, people are willing to follow this man’s opinions, and their understanding of his opinions, in complete contradiction to the express teaching and Commandments of YHWH and His Promised Son Yahushua.

It’s simply mind-boggling to watch people go to the grave defending someone they don’t even know, because the Roman Catholic Church decided to place his letters in a dominant spot in their codex called the Bible.

Despite the fact that Yahushua chose twelve and then seventy, and despite the fact that He had an inner circle of Peter, James and John, these individuals are not highlighted to any great degree after the Gospels save for Peter and James.

What about the journeys of the twelve and the seventy as they spread the Good News of Yahushua after being filled with the Spirit on Shavuot so they could spread the Good News in all the languages of the Nations through the gift of languages (tongues)? Crickets.

Instead, we are given the missionary journeys and the writings of someone who Yahushua never disciplined. His life and teachings are emphasized as the model for the Christian religion. Through his letters we can discern that he had a serious problem with Peter and James, and was constantly trying to elevate himself to an Apostle, even though he was not one of the original twelve or seventy taught, trained and sent by Yahushua. Sounds a lot like Korah.

Well, like I said, there were no written Scriptures in the beginning.

In the beginning was the Word - not the Bible. (see John 1) The word was Yahushua, not the contents of some one-sided letters from Saul.

Saul was a man. Yahushua was Emanuel – El with us.

Yahushua was present at Creation during Creation. He was manifested into physical creation through the frequencies of sound and then light. He was then incarnated in flesh to specifically show us how to walk in these vessels of flesh.

Therefore, it is important that we all “tune in” to the frequency of the Word and stay tuned to His channel. We need to get away from the noise of Babylon, tune out of the Catholic Channel, and find a

quiet place so we can receive His frequency – listen to His voice and bathe in His light.

The focus from the beginning of creation was a Word that was spoken and became light. We need to walk in His light and keep watching the lights that He placed in the heavens for us to guide us through our sojourn.

And that brings us back to our original discussion. At the heart of stubbornness and rebellion is selfishness

It is the desire to elevate ourselves beyond our position. To toot our own horn - to be noticed and recognized. We like attention and it feels good to be acknowledged and esteemed. But it is all vanity.

The fallen ones wanted what was forbidden to them. Remember how we looked at Jude last week?

Jude stated: *“And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”* Jude 6

They desired the forbidden fruit of the daughters of men. They wanted their own offspring, their own seed. That is why Hawah was first approached with the same seed of rebellion.

The nachash told her that she could be like Elohim.

*“<sup>4</sup> Then the nachash said to the woman, You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For Elohim knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Elohim, knowing good and evil. <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”* Genesis 3:4-6

The seed was planted, and the desire took root.

Why be satisfied with being a servant of Elohim when you can be just like Elohim?

That, after all, was the desire of the Serpent, referred to as Heylel in Isaiah:

*“<sup>12</sup> How you are fallen from heaven, O Heylel, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! <sup>13</sup> For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of El; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ <sup>15</sup> Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.”* Isaiah 14:12-15

Ezekiel provides the following as a prophecy to the King of Tyre: *“<sup>12</sup> . . . You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and beauty. <sup>13</sup> You were in Eden, the garden of Elohim; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. <sup>14</sup> You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of Elohim; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. <sup>15</sup> You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.”* Ezekiel 28:13-15

Think about the examples in the last message. King Saul was given specific commands from YHWH by the Prophet Samuel. That was the order in YHWH’s Kingdom. But Saul was the King. He wanted to call the shots. He wanted to have the final say on how to obey YHWH.

Korah and those who followed him wanted to elevate themselves. They wanted to be equal with Moses and Aharon. They were not content with the privileges that YHWH had given them. They didn't like the chain of command that YHWH had established.

They all carried the seed of rebellion that was planted in the Garden. They were not satisfied with their place in Creation. They wanted more. Despite the fact that YHWH promises to make us Sons of Elohim in His timing, people still want to do it their own way.

For the past 33 years I have dealt with greedy, mean, cruel and selfish people. Functioning as a lawyer for all those years I have seen how destructive people can be to themselves and those around them.

I have seen families destroyed by alcohol, drugs, violence, greed, pride, rebellion and selfishness.

I currently have a case involving a family divided. They are fighting over a 30 year old Ford tractor and a dilapidated old farm house that their elderly mom can't maintain on her own.

She is in a rehab facility completely distraught over what she is witnessing in the final season of her life. I spoke to her the other day and she bemoaned the fact that "we were a tribe." (Her words)

She said everyone in the community knew her family. They stuck together through thick and thin. Now the kids are divided and arguing over a bunch of stuff.

I've been harping a lot about stuff lately, because I have a fairly unique perspective on how "stuff" ruins people. I handle estate cases where people go crazy attacking their siblings so they can get their

hands on their parents stuff. Many cases involve outright theft. They'll sneak into the deceased parent's home when no one is looking and pillage what they want.

I have been doing bankruptcy work for three decades and I have seen what people will do in order to obtain the materialistic objects that western society holds out as the goal to acquire and possess.

I have seen divorcing couples, who apparently once loved one another more than anything on Earth, almost kill one another over their marital stuff.

The irony is that in the eyes of Elohim, it's not about how much stuff you can accumulate. It's about how much you can give away. He owns it all. We are simply custodians. The question is whether we are good custodians or selfish custodians?

You see, the economics of Babylon are the exact opposite of the Kingdom of YHWH. These are two diametrically opposed realms.

You've heard the saying that you can't out give God. Well, that's actually grounded in Scriptural principles.

*"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this, Says YHWH of hosts, If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:10*

YHWH challenges us to "try Me now in this." Other versions provide "test Me now in this." In other words, if we just focus on Him, He will bless us more than we can imagine.

Well, sadly most of us have been trained from our youth to fixate on our retirement plan that is solely focused on making sure we have

enough to last us through our “golden years” in pleasure and comfort.

While Yahushua specifically instructs us not to worry about tomorrow and the needs of life, that is all that we told to do our entire lives. That leads to all sorts of problems, especially in many of the families that I deal with.

At the heart of many of the problems there is usually someone who is simply self-centered. I have seen both fathers and mothers who cannot put themselves or their family first.

I have seen countless families destroyed because a single person is selfish, stubborn and rebellious.

Most of the time, these people have developed defensive strategies to cope with their issues and deflect their problems upon others.

They are never the problem. It’s always someone else.

In my role as an attorney, I can’t always tell from the first interview whether I represent the victim or the culprit, but it eventually becomes clear who is to blame. It can often be both.

What I have found as a common thread is that people have a tendency to become “stubborn” and “set in their ways.” They put up blinders and they build a fortresses with walls around them. After awhile, they can only see the world from their perspective, and they have no idea how they look and act from the perspective of others. Their walls and defenses won’t let them see themselves for what they truly are.

They refuse to change because they are comfortable with their adopted or accepted belief system. While they can be well-meaning,

they may also be dead wrong. These issues are not isolated to legal matters, they exist in all areas of life, including religious people.

Jesus saves . . . we're not under the law . . . stand with Israel . . . the Enoch calendar . . . you name it.

People have their beliefs and they dig in. They are usually sincere beliefs, but they aren't all right.

As I have pointed out many times – Yahushua warns that many will be shocked and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. There will be many who thought they were all set, but they get cast out of the wedding.

We must be willing to listen to the still small voice of the Spirit in the midst of all the clamor and the noise. (see 1 Kings 19:11-12) You must remain humble and you must be willing to obey, even if it means discarding something that you believed was right.

When considering the calendar issue I have my own testimony.

Many years ago, I was good friends with Michael Rood. I was in the inner circle of his ministry. I even had a set of keys to his home in Poriya Illit, Israel where I would stay during some visits. Michael stayed in my homes in New York as well, and we travelled to Africa together to do ministry together.

I loved Michael and I still do, but YHWH separated us. Michael was fully invested in teaching the Karaite traditions concerning the calendar. I used to believe we had to inspect barley to tell time because that's what Michael taught. A lot of people now follow the false Karaite teaching because Michael has continued to promote it. He even sells calendars based upon the Kariate traditions, and I used to purchase those calendars.

It all changed for me at Shavuot many years ago in Jerusalem. I was staying in Jerusalem with Michael and his wife Judith at the Advent House. As I was walking by myself in Jerusalem I had a “divine appointment” with two witnesses who showed me the error of the Karaite tradition and led me to the truth.

As a result of this encounter, my eyes were opened and I saw clearly the errors of the Karaite traditions. I was humble and teachable enough to confess that I was wrong to follow the Karaite error, and I was able to turn and follow the pure Torah.

Of course, that’s what happens when you ask YHWH for His guidance every day of your life. As I faithfully travelled to Jerusalem over the past decades He has revealed Himself and His truth to me in many ways. We should always be learning and growing.

People often ask me how I wrote the Walk in the Light series. That’s how. I took Him seriously, and I sought Him out when He could be found.

*“<sup>6</sup> Seek YHWH while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.  
<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to YHWH, and He will have mercy on him; and to our Elohim, for He will abundantly pardon.”* Isaiah 55:6-7

YHWH schedules meetings and appointments for us. They are times to collectively meet with Him, not for a bunch of people to get together without Him.

You may find people with opinions about the calendar, but I have a unique testimony. I travelled to Jerusalem nearly 60 times over two decades rehearsing the Appointed Times as diligently as possible.

I took YHWH at His word when He said *“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”* Jeremiah 29:13

As a result of diligently seeking Him, YHWH literally guided me to His truth while in Jerusalem on Shavuot – the most difficult Appointed Time to determine. In fact, it was a unique Shavuot when most of the calendars aligned on the same day.

Thankfully, YHWH did it before I finished my book *The Appointed Times*, so I would not mislead people by writing some false traditions that add to the Torah.

I could provide a lot more details, but it's not necessary. That is my testimony in short. You can take it or you can leave it, but I'm not guessing or giving you my opinion. I am simply functioning as a witness for Elohim. That's the responsibility that He gave me.

Well, apparently years later Michael decided to rip up my book *The Appointed Times* on his television show and throw it in a trash can. I never watched his show, but people told me about it. I'm not sure if he ever even read it, but that's his loss. His actions speak volumes about what is in his heart.

Now I've never shared that publicly before, and it is not meant to disparage Michael. Everything he has said, done and taught is public knowledge – the good, the bad and the ugly. His position of the calendar is certainly no mystery.

I certainly appreciate the times we shared together in ministry. I know that he has played a part in many people “waking up,” but he is also misleading people. And that's the point of my comments.

It's not about Michael or me or any other teacher or ministry. It's about YHWH. We all have roles to play in YHWH's Kingdom. We are not supposed to be building our own kingdoms within His kingdom. We are not supposed to be selling tickets for Passover events. We are supposed to be obeying the Torah and observing Passover in the intimacy of our homes. And we are required to observe the Passover on Day 14 using the sun and the moon - not on Day 15 using the barley.

Time is short and this calendar issue is serious. It's not difficult and it's not harmless error if you get it wrong. So let me be blunt.

If you are looking for barley crops to determine the new year after being told that it is simply a tradition that adds to the Torah, then you are in rebellion.

If you are not using the two great lights to determine years and the moadim, then you are in rebellion.

If you insist upon following the Pharisaic "Jewish calendar" so that you can be in unity with the people who rejected and continue to reject Yahushua the Messiah, then you are in rebellion.

If you insist on following some calendar from an extinct and rebellious Dead Sea community that ignores the moon cycle and follows fictitious 30 day months, then you are in rebellion.

If you think that the Hebrew day begins in the morning instead of the evening, then you are in rebellion.

Did I hit them all? Probably not.

I don't have time to explore all of the false calendars nor do I have time to waste exploring them all. The Torah is really pretty simple

and if you need some very clear help, continue to the bottom of this message where I included some links from a precious brother of mine.

The historical research is also quite clear on the issue. Consider the scholarly article written by Philip Derstine and Magdel Le Roux titled "*The Ancient Israelite Calendar*" published in the Trinity Journal at TRINJ 43NS (2022) 3-28.

The authors reached the following conclusion:

"The observational aspects of the Israelite calendar – the sighting of the evening crescent, the setting of the sun for the start of the day, and the rule of the equinox for determining intercalation – all remained normative for most Jews until the Middle Ages."

Did you catch that conclusion? Please read it again if it wasn't clear. You don't have to take my word for it. Listen to the calendar experts. While some rogue cultic sects may have used solar calendars, Yisreal did not.

What the experts just stated about the calendar is how torahcalendar.com reckons time. So, please stop listening to the rebels who are spreading lies and confusion all throughout the Torah community concerning false calendars. It's time to stop this nonsense and move on to other issues of importance.

Now, if you find yourself offended, then that probably means I've struck a nerve and we have spotted some rebellion or pride. Go ahead and unsubscribe if that makes you feel better.

Like I said before, it's not about likes, subscribers, tv shows or anything else that Babylon exalts. I'm not selling calendars and I don't reap any financial gain from you following the Creator's

calendar based upon the sun and the moon. It's all free as it should be.

This is simply about finding the way to life, and Messiah says few will find it. (Matthew 7:13-13) In fact, He tells us to "strive" to enter through the narrow gate "*for many . . . will seek to enter and will not be able.*" Luke 13:24

Whenever I get a little blunt I typically see people unsubscribe. That's ok. Again, I don't make money off of any social media so I don't have anything to lose. I am simply accountable before YHWH to speak truth.

Maybe go to a channel or a web site that says nice things that make you feel good about yourself. Of course, they probably won't be warning you and preparing you to pass under the rod in the wilderness. In fact, if you follow them you might not even make it into the wilderness.

Sadly, many teachers, preachers and sheep have blinders on. They are unable or unwilling to see things from another perspective. They get to the point where they are unable to step outside of the paradigm they have constructed due to pride and stubbornness.

They build their mental "ivory towers" at the center of their "kingdom of self." They are unable to see how far they have strayed from the One who said "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his stake daily, and follow Me.*" Luke 9:23

Instead, they appeal to the desires of Babylon for bread and circuses. They provide entertainment for the masses and as a result they build a cult of personality. It's a dangerous model.

I'll never forget the premise of a book that I read decades ago titled "The Kingdom of Self." You don't really even need to read the book. You can summarize it in a paragraph.

We are all born into this world expecting everyone to provide our every need. When we are hungry we cry and we get fed. When we are thirsty we cry and we get a drink. When we have a soiled diaper we cry and we get changed ... you get the point.

We all start out with the unwavering belief and understanding that the entire world revolves around us, our needs, our wants and our desires. My friend Carrie Foreman wrote a book about it titled The Disease of SELF.

It truly is a disease when it controls your life and you worship yourself over Elohim. It's hard to be healed of the disease in a free society, although the military and prison are both pretty good at it.

Outside of those exceptions, most westerners spend their lives living within, and building their own kingdom of self. This is a problem if you claim to follow Yahushua and are supposed to be building the Kingdom of YHWH. That is when you find yourself in a "conflict of interest."

As an attorney, I am supposed to determine if my interests conflict with a client's interest. In other words, am I capable of representing a client "zealously." The Ethical Canons actually use that word.

Interestingly, we are all supposed to perform that same conflict check daily when it comes to our service of Elohim. Do we have any conflicts of interest that prohibit us from serving Him zealously?

In my law practice I deal with failed marriages all of the time. It usually comes to a head when the selfish desires of one or both

become incompatible with maintaining a “united kingdom.” At that point, the couple decides to separate and divide into two kingdoms. It is the division of the kingdom that is often the most difficult part of the process.

It’s the story of Yisrael played out in the lives of so many people every day.

Solomon, the third King of Yisrael, was handed a united Kingdom from his father David. He rebelled against the Commandments given by YHWH concerning a king, and he went after his own wants and lusts. He neglected and abused the people he was supposed to be serving. Instead of being a shepherd king like his father, he acted like a king from the Nations.

His son Rehoboam was no different, so the House of Yisrael separated from the House of Yahudah. The Kingdom was divided into two separate kingdoms that both ended up losing their focus and straying from YHWH.

Yisrael had a specific purpose – to obey Elohim and be a Nation of priests who could direct the Nations back to YHWH. Yisrael failed, so YHWH sent His Son to accomplish the job. Again, Yahushua was not just some guy. He was the Word made flesh. I cannot imagine that it was very comfortable doing what He did, knowing what the mission entailed. Nevertheless, Yahushua gave up everything to obey the Father, and if we follow Him then our mission is the same.

At the end of the day, we each need to look back and assess how we spent our time and energy that day. Did we add a “living stone” to the House of Elohim and help build the Kingdom, or were we focused on our own plans and pleasures.

When you lie down to rest on Shabbat, consider the week that you left behind you.

Were you a blessing to YHWH and to others? Did you give or did you take? Did you spend your time building your own kingdom or were you building YHWH's Kingdom? Did you seek attention for yourself, or did you provide food, drink, clothing, shelter, love, prayers and healing for others?

YHWH gives us a day every week to stop, think, regroup, rest, pray and meditate on our lives and on Him. He also gives us the opportunity to repent, and fix what is broken. I suggest that you use the time wisely.

I have people regularly ask me how far they can go to attend a fellowship on Shabbat. I typically tell them the distance from their bedroom to their living room.

We must be careful not to adopt the Babylonian Church model into our Torah walks. You don't need to get up, get dressed and stressed because you are on a schedule, drive an hour to attend a service, sing some songs, listen to a sermon and then return home exhausted.

Remember the simple Command - *"Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a set apart convocation (miqra qodesh). You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of YHWH in all your dwellings."* Leviticus 23:3

The question you must ask is whether you are obeying YHWH or are you promoting some alternative kingdom on Shabbat? Ministries come and ministries go. Most of the time they end up becoming consumed with a person or a building and promoting their own kingdom. They start raising funds, scheduling events, buying land,

constructing buildings and before you know it, it's all about the kingdom of "Beit Me" or "Beit Us," rather than Beit YHWH.

As I've mentioned before, I have seen "successful" ministries leave a lot of broken and wounded people in their path. They get so consumed about their mission and their kingdom, that they forget the fact that they are supposed to be in the Kingdom of YHWH serving the King.

I have seen people so obsessed with the ministry that they cannot see the wake of destruction that they are leaving behind. Even if they see the people they hurt, they justify it because of the "great work" that they are doing. Their definition of success is warped.

They generally don't care about the sheep who stray outside the walls, get lost or are wounded and left behind. The focus is typically on those sheep who remain and support their ministry, or should I say "their kingdom."

In YHWH's Kingdom it is about how we treat one another, not how many likes, subscribers or followers we have. It's about learning to be a community that serves one another and helps each other through our giving. It's not about fundraising, love gifts and growth of an organization. To the contrary, it's how small we become so we don't take any attention away from the King.

Remember John the Immerser. Most people don't realize that he was a "rock star" in his time. He was leading a massive revival in Judea until it was time for Yahushua to take "center stage." He understood that it was not about him, but rather the One that would follow him. That is why he stated "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*" John 3:30

That is good advice for us all to heed.

It's easy to pick on ministries that are out in the open for all to see. It's an entirely different matter to assess our individual lives that we keep contained and hidden behind the walls of our dwellings.

That is why the annual cycle of the Appointed Times begins in our homes at Passover. It starts in our homes, and we need to make sure that we purge all rebellion from our lives and our homes. We must determine if our dwellings reflect the Kingdom of YHWH or the kingdom of self.

Are you a taker or a giver? As the sayings go "Talk is cheap" and "Actions speak louder than words." As we prepare for the wilderness we had all better do a little "soul searching" before we get there.

Consider these words from the text of Hebrews:

*"<sup>7</sup> Therefore, as the Set Apart Spirit says, Today, if you hear his voice <sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, <sup>9</sup> where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways. <sup>11</sup> As I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter my rest. <sup>12</sup> Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living Elohim. <sup>13</sup> But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup> For we have come to share in Messiah, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. <sup>15</sup> As it is said Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. <sup>16</sup> For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? <sup>17</sup> And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And to*

*whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.” Hebrews 3:7-19*

We have the rebellion of the wilderness as an example to learn from. Remember that everyone who took part in Passover and left Egypt went into the wilderness, but only Joshua and Caleb made it into the Promised Land from that generation. Those are some slim odds.

Thankfully, we have been warned ahead of time, and we have the Spirit to help us prepare.

Last week we read how YHWH promises to bring us into the wilderness and meet with us face to face. He will have us pass under the rod and through that process He will separate out the rebels.

This prophetic event has not happened yet and it is worth repeating.

*“<sup>33</sup> As I live, says Adonai YHWH, surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. <sup>34</sup> I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. <sup>35</sup> And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. <sup>36</sup> Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you,” says Adonai YHWH. <sup>37</sup> I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant; <sup>38</sup> I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Yisrael. Then you will know that I am YHWH.” Ezekiel 20:33-38*

The rebels are the ones who refuse to obey. They want to do it their way instead of how YHWH commands. Well, passing under the rod

is what a shepherd does to separate his flock. In the final teachings contained in Matthew, before He was crucified, Yahushua specifically described this event in the context of a wedding.

He first described ten virgins and divided them into two groups. Five of them were wise and they made it to the wedding. The other five were foolish. They were not prepared for the journey to the wedding and they showed up late. As a result, they were not allowed in. This shows the importance of being on time. (see Matthew 25:1-13)

Yahushua then spoke “the Parable of the Talents” where he specifically revealed that people are given different portions. (see Matthew 25:14-30) It is not so much what we are given, but what we do with what we are given. It doesn’t mean anything if you are given great wealth and talents, but squander it all to promote yourself and fulfill your own desires. Again, it’s not what you have, but rather what you do with what you have. So don’t worry about trying to fill someone else’s role. Just do what YHWH has for you to do and be content with that.

Yahushua then concluded with a vivid description of how He would determine to separate His flock.

*“<sup>31</sup> When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the set apart angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup> All the Nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I*

*was in prison and you came to Me. <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? <sup>39</sup> Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me. <sup>41</sup> Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me. <sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer [d]Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' <sup>45</sup> Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'" Matthew 25:31-46*

This is what we can expect if we make it into the wilderness and pass under the rod. The message is clear that the ones who serve others are the ones who pass under the rod and make it out of the wilderness.

The rebellious either don't get in because they show up late or they die in the wilderness because they did not obey. In either case, it is likely because of stubbornness and rebellion that came from a rebellious house.

The Torah commands us to remove leaven from our homes for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (see Exodus 12:15) That physical act is a model for the spiritual exercise that we should all be involved in.

We need oil in our lamps to provide the light required to find the leaven of rebellion, and to guide us on our journey to meet with our Messiah – face to face.