

HONOURING YAHWEH

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HONOUR WHERE DUE

"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." Romans 13:7

As the people of Yahweh, can we truthfully say that we have given Him the proper tribute and honour that He is due? I am afraid this is something we cannot say. By our blatant disregard of His commandment to hallow the Sabbath day, we have brought great dishonor to Him. From the beginning, Yahweh sanctified the seventh day of the week and set it apart as holy time to commemorate resting from His great work of creation [Genesis 2:2-3]. He has commanded His people to cease from their own labours on this day as a tribute to Him [Hebrews 4:9-10, Exodus 20:8-11]. Time and again, however, His people have departed out of the way He specifically commanded them to follow and have polluted His true worship, particularly with regard to His Sabbath. In Ezekiel 20:10-13, Yahweh comments on this matter. *"Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Yahweh that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my Sabbaths they greatly polluted."*

For forty years, Yahweh performed a special miracle in the wilderness by sending manna from heaven to teach the children of Israel the importance of observing His Sabbath. This is discussed in Exodus 16:15-30.

Nevertheless, they continued to rebel against Him and refused to obey. *"Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And YAHWEH said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that YAHWEH hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."* Exodus 16:26-29. As a result of this rebellion, only two individuals out of the several thousand who originally came out of Egypt were allowed to go into the promised land (a type of Sabbath rest). In Hebrews 4:1-4 we are, therefore, cautioned: *"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the good news preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And Yahweh did rest the seventh day from all his works."*

A concluding warning is found in Hebrews 4:9-11: *"There remaineth therefore a rest [Strong's #4520 'keeping of Sabbath'] to the people of Yahweh. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as Yahweh did from His. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."*

The rest that we are admonished to labour to enter into actually involves the labour of ceasing from our own works of sin and doing, instead, the works of Yahweh. When we truly begin to do this, we must deny ourselves and resist the natural lusts of the flesh. Describing this struggle in Galatians 5:24-25, Paul states: *"And they that are Messiah's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."*

Needless to say, dying to the flesh entails a certain amount of suffering on our part. Peter points out that, *"Forasmuch then as Messiah hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of Yahweh."* I Peter 4:1-2. In the next verse he describes the time past of our life before we "ceased" from sin as one in which we "wrought" [worked] the will of the gentiles by walking in *lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries*. The fact that Peter specifically names six categories of work is significant and very likely is a subtle allusion to the fourth commandment in which man is to work six days and rest the seventh. The problem with man, however, is that he has not used this time allotted to him for the labour of ceasing from his own works of sin, but for the contrary. Before we can ever hope to enter in Yahweh's rest, we must first cease from our own works. This is something the majority of the children of Israel who first came out of Egypt were not able to do and, as a result, never entered into the promised land. Apart from the physical creation which Yahweh memorialized by resting the seventh day, perhaps His greatest spiritual work of creation is still in progress, as He creates in us the perfect righteous character of Yahshua Messiah. See Ephesians 4:13, Hebrews 12:23, and Matthew 5:48.

In order for Yahweh to perform this work, we must stop doing our own works and yield to the power of His Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 2:2-3, Paul also discusses the time past when we walked according to the natural lusts of the flesh and were died in sins. He continues to say that by Yahweh's grace we were saved from that sinful past and given a brand new direction in life. This new path we take of ceasing from our own works and allowing Yahweh to create Messiah's righteousness within us brings us closer and closer to Yahweh's kingdom and His millennial rest. *"For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yahshua unto good works, which Yahweh hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* Ephesians 2:10.

It should be stressed that it is Yahweh, not ourselves, who actually performs this good work in us and enables us to obey His laws and commandments. *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is Yahweh which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."* Philippians 2:12-13. Once we have begun to submit to Yahweh's rule and have allowed Him to begin to purify us, we must continue to walk in His light and grow spiritually until He has perfected HIS work of creation in us. As Proverbs 4:18 declares: *"...the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."* The Hebrew word translated perfect in this verse is Strong's #3559 *kuwn* and literally means 'to stand erect.' The day Yahshua appears and we stand in the resurrection is the day He will consummate our perfection.

In light of this, Paul offers tremendous encouragement and hope in Philippians 1:6; *"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Yahshua Messiah."*

As Yahweh ended His physical creation on the seventh day of creation week, so will He also finish His spiritual creation. *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with Yahweh as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."* II Peter 3:8. Being that Adam's creation was approximately 4004 B.C. we are quickly approaching the end of man's sixth day of work [6000 years] and the beginning of the seventh. For those who have ceased from their own works of sin now and are allowing Yahweh to create in them the righteousness of Yahshua, there is great anticipation and hope for the rest which the seventh day will bring.

Speaking of this glorious time, the prophet Isaiah says: *"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of YAHWEH, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious."* Isaiah 11:9-10.

The hope of entering into this glory rests primarily upon whether we have allowed Yahweh to finish His work of creating the righteousness of Yahshua in us. Paul says it all: *"Messiah in you, the hope of glory:"* Colossians 1:27b. And regarding this hope, John adds: *"Beloved, now are we the sons of Yahweh, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."* I John 3:2-3.

WONDERFUL FUTURE COMING

Reiterating the admonition in Hebrews 4:9-11: *"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of Yahweh. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as Yahweh did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief [disobedience]."* Yahweh's commandment to keep the seventh day holy remains the same for His people today. Contrary to what may Christian teachers tell us, it has not been changed. It offers a foretaste of the wonderful future and foreshadows the soon coming time when Yahweh's people will rest in glory.

In I Corinthians 10:11, Paul warns that all the things which happened to ancient Israel as a result of their disobedience, including breaking the Sabbath, are examples for us now and are written for our admonition. For those who take Yahweh's commandments lightly, Paul warns: *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."* I Corinthians 10:12.

In Hebrews 13:8 it affirms that Yahshua Messiah is the same yesterday, today and forever. The good news preached to us today, of which Sabbath observance is an integral part, is in fact the same evangel that was preached to ancient Israel [Hebrews 4:2-3]. They, however did not have the faith to believe [obey] it [Hebrews 4:11]. In I Corinthians 10:4 it confirms that the Yahshua Messiah we worship today and the "Spiritual Rock" that followed them in the wilderness are one in the same. Today, Messiah expects the very same obedience from His people as He did then. See Hebrews 3:6-19. This includes observing the seventh day Sabbath of which He still is Master. *"For the Son of man is Master even of the Sabbath day."* Matthew 12:8. Yahweh is pleased when we hallow His Sabbath and keep His commandments. A willingness to do this demonstrated a true love and devotion to Him. *"By this we know that we love the children of Yahweh, when we love Yahweh, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of Yahweh, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous."* I John 5:2-3.

Not only in keeping Yahweh's commandments not grievous, there is also great profit in doing it. *"The law of Yahweh is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of Yahweh are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is they servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."* Psalm 19:7-11.

In light of the wonderful things we see in these verses, how can ministers today preach Yahweh's law is a yoke of bondage and should be discarded? Please do not be deceived by

these false teachers! The truth is, there is, indeed, great reward in keeping them. One such reward for hallowing Yahweh's Sabbath is promised in Isaiah 58:12-14: *"...Thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on **MY HOLY DAY**; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of YAHWEH, honourable; and shalt **HONOUR HIM**, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in YAHWEH; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of Yahweh hath spoken it."*

The promise of these blessings apply not only to Israel but also to all Gentile converts who join the ranks of Israel and begin to keep the Sabbath day. See Ephesians 2:12-13; 19 and Romans 11:24-25. Notice also Isaiah 56:1-7 in this respect. *"Thus saith Yahweh, Keep ye judgment, and do justice for my salvation [Strong's #3444 Yahshua] is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Neither let the son of the stranger [Strong's #5336 foreigner or heathen], that hath joined [Strong's #3867-lavah from which Levite and Levi are derived--Genesis 29:34] himself to Yahweh, speak, saying, Yahweh hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith Yahweh unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant: Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.*

Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to Yahweh, to serve him, and to love the name of Yahweh, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."

These are unmistakably New Testament promises and include the greatest promise of all, eternal life, as verse five indicated by assuring us an *everlasting name*. These promises are not offered only to Israel, but to all people who join themselves to Yahweh by taking hold of His everlasting covenant to keep the Sabbath [see Exodus 31:16-17]. The *burnt offerings* and *sacrifices* to be offered by the stranger mentioned in Isaiah 56, verses six and seven, are to be understood in a spiritual sense. Yahshua's sacrifice itself was a spiritual type of "burnt offering," as seen in the context of Hebrews 13:11-12. As the bodies of those beasts were *burned without the camp*, Yahshua, also, *suffered without the gate*. And as further noted in Hebrews 13:13-16, we, too, are to follow the same example and present ourselves to Him *without the camp, bearing His reproach*. See also Ephesians 5:1-3 in the same context, which stresses that as Messiah's sacrificial offering was motivated by love, so should ours also be by *walking in love*. Paul warns in I Corinthians 13:3 that is love is not the central motivation, this sacrifice we offer is in vain: *"...Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [love], it profiteth me nothing."*

HONOUR OR DISHONOUR

Speaking of unprofitable sacrifices, Yahweh reveals in Malachi 1:6-8 that the sacrifices that should have been offered to Him in honour were, in reality, a dishonour; *"A son honoureth his father, and a servant his mater: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith YAHWEH of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name.*

And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of YAHWEH is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sic, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?..." These sacrifices brought to Yahweh by the people were totally unacceptable. The blind, lame and sick animals they presented were, in fact, a physical type of the people themselves and reflected their own spiritual imperfection that with which Yahweh was not pleased. Yahweh demands the very best from us and will not settle for anything second-rate. As we know, the animal sacrifices offered under the Levitical priesthood were merely *shadows of good things to come* [Hebrew 10:1].

They were shadowy types of a much greater sacrifice and have been superseded by the sacrifice of Yahshua Messiah. Today, instead of coming before Yahweh at His appointed feasts with animal sacrifices, He desires His people to present themselves willingly to Him as a *living sacrifice*. *"I Beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of Yahweh that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Yahweh, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of Yahweh."* Romans 12:1. [See also Hebrews 10:7].

The animal sacrifices were, in fact, only a rehearsal and pointed to our own beastly nature being put to death, which as II Peter 2:12 shows, was *made to be taken and destroyed*. In Psalm 73:22 the psalmist, Asaph, declared that in his foolishness and ignorance before drawing near to Yahweh (verse 28), *he was as a beast before Yahweh*. *"I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that Yahweh might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts."* Ecclesiastes 3:18.

Romans 8:7 confirms that the *carnal* mind that we naturally exhibit from birth is *enmity* to Yahweh and not subject to His laws and commandments. This beastly nature must be destroyed if we are to become an *acceptable sacrifice* to Yahweh. The ordinance of baptism symbolically pictures the death of the old man [or self] with this carnal nature and the rebirth of the new man, Yahshua Messiah, exhibiting the divine nature of Yahweh. [See Romans 6:3-6; II Peter 1:4]. It becomes a continual battle, however, to keep the old man submerged in the watery grave in which he was put to rest at baptism. Time and again he attempts to revive and rise up again within us. That is why we must be continually immersed and *"washed by the water of the word"* [Ephesians 5:26].

The Apostle Paul fought this battle admirably and his life is a fitting testimony of a true over comer who took up his own yoke to follow Yahshua, as Yahshua directed in Luke 9:23-24. Quoting Paul's own words in the face of struggle *"...I die daily."* I Corinthians 15:31. In I Corinthians he confessed he had to fight to keep under his body and *bring it into subjection*, lest, after he preached to others, he himself should be a *castaway*. He stated in Galatians 5:17 that the flesh and the spirit are actually at war with each other and shows in Galatians 5:24-25 that those who walk with Messiah have crucified the flesh and its lusts. Yahweh gave us the ability to wage this war by the Holy Spirit we receive at baptism [Acts 2:38]. It is only through His supernatural power that we can finally *mortify* [put to death] the works of the flesh, as directed: *"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of Yahweh cometh on the children of disobedience."* Colossians 3:5-6. [See also Romans 8:13].

Paul's directive to mortify the deeds of the flesh is actually presented here in the context of a discussion of Sabbath and Holy Day observance and is given by him as a more acceptable sacrifice and substitute for the sacrifices offered under the old Levitical system. Paul had just explained a few verses before [Colossians 2:16-17] that Yahweh's Sabbath and Holy Days are a *shadow of things to come*, but **the body is Messiah**.

Apparently, some of the Jewish converts were still clinging to the old Levitical system of worship with its meats, drinks, and carnal ordinances *"Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."* (Hebrews 9:9-10) and were passing judgment on those who were no longer doing those things on these days, but were instead seeking a higher form of worship. The body of Messiah itself is the **SPIRITUAL REALITY** of those things and now takes their place, being "good things to come" described in Hebrew 9:11. As Paul is explaining, we are no longer under an earthly priesthood, but a heavenly one which now overshadows the old. In Colossians 2:3 he urges; *"Set your affection on things ABOVE, not on things on the earth."* In reality, the animal sacrifices offered in these days are a shadow of the spiritual act of mortifying our old carnal nature. These sacrifices have now been replaced by the **PURE OFFERING** of the "body" of Messiah [*"Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."* Hebrews 10:5b], which, in a **SPIRITUAL** sense, is the Assembly itself.

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? And he is the head of the body, the assembly: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Messiah in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the assembly." Hebrews 10:1-2a and Colossians 1:18 and 24.

With a change in the Levitical Priesthood [Hebrews 7:12-19], animal sacrifices have now ceased to be offered when we *draw nigh unto Yahweh*. We now come before Him by Yahshua Messiah, who resides over a higher, spiritual house as our high priest. *"But Messiah being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."* Hebrews 9:11, [Strong's #2937 creation]. As Hebrews 8:5 explains, the earthly tabernacles with its priestly service is merely a *shadow* of the heavenly. Furthermore, in Hebrews 9:23 we learn: *"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of the things in the heavens should be purified with these [i.e. animal sacrifices]: but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."* These *better* sacrifices are the same sacrifices mentioned in Hebrews 8:3 and are now offered in the place of animal sacrifices by Messiah serving as our High Priest over the *true tabernacle* of Yahweh. With animal sacrifices no longer being offered, we ourselves become a type of sacrificial offering to Yahweh by Messiah, as Romans 12:1-2 shows: *"...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Yahweh, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of Yahweh."*

The specific times when we are to *present ourselves* before Yahweh as commanded above are clearly designated in His written word. See Deuteronomy 16:16 and Leviticus 23. Since true worshipers today are not only to worship Him in spirit, but also in *truth* [John 4:24],

and since Yahweh's truth is in face, His word [John 17:17], Psalm 119:142], we should take every opportunity to abide by it [Matthew 4:4, II Timothy 3:16-17]. In Hebrews 10:21-25, particular caution is given not to forsake this assembling of ourselves together. *"And having an high priest over the house of Yahweh; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; [for He is faithful that promised;]. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

BEING A PERFECT SACRIFICE

When we appear before Yahweh, He is not interested in burnt offerings and animal sacrifices now, nor has He ever been [Jeremiah 7:21-24]. As David explains in Psalm 51:16-17, He desires a change in our heart: *"For thou desirest not sacrifice; else I would give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of Yahweh are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O Yahweh, Thou wilt not despise."* In Isaiah 1:11-12 Yahweh declares: *"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith YAHWEH: I am full of the brunt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?"* These sacrifices had not changed the people's heart when they had presented themselves before Yahweh. In verse 15, He mentions that their hands were still full of blood. In Isaiah 1:16-19, Yahweh explains to us the real kind of sacrifices that He is interested in: *"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith YAHWEH; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land."*

As we see in these verses, Yahweh does indeed desire His people to come to Him willingly at the appointed times and *reason together* with Him. The Hebrew word translated *reason together* here is Strong's #3198 and also means "to be right or correct." Today, Yahweh is calling His people to come to Him, not with animal sacrifices, but with the *sacrifice of righteousness*. As Hebrews 9:10 explains, the sacrifices and carnal ordinances were imposed *until the time of reformation*. The Greek word translated *reformation* here is Strong's #1357 and literally means to be straight, right, or upright. The Greek word translated *time* is Strong's #2540 [kairos]. This is the same Greek word that is used consistently throughout the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word *moed* [Strong's #4150], meaning "appointed time" or "feast." Yahweh's appointed feasts have now taken on new meaning. The shadow is now turning to light. Yahweh's people now assembly together at these special occasions for the purpose of "reformation," or making right. The hope of this high calling is to attain to the perfect righteousness of Yahshua Messiah. To reach this lofty goal, each member of the body of Messiah has individually been given special gifts of the Holy Spirit to use as Ephesians 4:12-13 indicates: *"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Messiah: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of Yahweh, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah."*

This process involves the complete reformation of our character. As the old sinful nature is sacrificed before Yahweh, the new man within is created and fashioned into Messiah's very

image [Colossians 3:9-10]. We saw earlier in Hebrews that the law had a shadow of good things to come and not the very image. Yahshua Messiah Himself is the mirror image of the law and turns shadow into light. As we continue to come to Him, look into the law, and mortify the old carnal self, the spiritual light of Yahshua shines more and more from within us, transforming us into the image of righteousness [see James 1:25; Proverbs 29:18; Psalm 19:7; II Corinthians 3:18; II Corinthians 4:16-18] continuing in Hebrews 10:9 we read; *"Then said he, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O Yahweh. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Yahshua Messiah once for all."* It is again emphasized that Yahweh's people still come before Him on His Sabbath and holy days, not merely because He has legislated in His word that they do so [Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 16:16], but because they have a deep love for His truth and desire to do His will. The burnt offerings and sacrifices which were formerly offered at these times under the Levitical priesthood [Numbers 28, 29] have now been substituted by the "body of Messiah" [Assembly] itself [see Hebrews 10:5 in conjunction with Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1 and 10]. The *first* Hebrews 10:9 which He takes away includes the burnt offerings and sacrifices just described. It also refers to the *first [old] man*, natural and corrupt, described in I Corinthians 15:47 and Colossians 3:9. The *second*, which He establishes is the law itself, including the appointed times that have now become a "time of reformation" for Yahweh's people to present themselves righteous and acceptable before Him. The Greek word translated *establish* in Hebrews 10:9 is Strong's #2476. The same Greek word also appears in Romans 3:31 where we read: *"Do we then make void the law through faith? Yahweh forbid: yea, we establish the law."*

By comparing this scripture with the previous one [Hebrews 10:9], it becomes apparent by the context that the *second* thing that is established in Hebrews 10:9 is, in fact, the "law." The *second* is also in reference to the *second [new] man* which is being created in the righteous image of Messiah. What greater tribute could be given to Yahweh by His people than for them to appear before Him bearing the very righteousness of Yahshua Messiah?

TRIBUTE TO CAESAR OR YAHWEH?

Looking back to Romans 13:7, we are again reminded of Paul's admonition to render tribute and honour to those to whom it is due. This is something that Yahshua never received among the religious establishment in power during His earthly ministry. On the contrary, they were continually questioning His authority and even went so far as to send spies pretending to be His devout followers in order to catch Him in something He said, to *"deliver Him under the power and authority of the governor."* Luke 20:20. Yahshua, however, quickly saw through their hypocrisy. Hoping to entangle Him in His words, they asked if it is lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not. Yahshua responds by asking them to show Him a penny. Having brought Him a coin, He further asks whose image and superscription it has. Then they respond by answering, "Caesar's," Yahshua retorts by saying: *"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's and unto Yahweh the things which be Yahweh's."* Luke 20:25.

Many today are conscientious to give tribute to Caesar, but have we been faithful to render unto Yahweh the things He is due? The word *tribute* has a primary meaning of "a tax paid." It also can mean a gift, statement, testimonial, etc., that shows gratitude, respect or honour; hence praise or laudation. The word *tribute* is derived from the Latin "tribus," which, according to Webster's New World Dictionary, was one of the three groups into which the ancient Romans were originally divided. The word "tribus" itself is composed of the parts "tria,"

meaning three, and the fu-, a base root meaning "to become." As the dictionary points out, the fu- root is closely related to the word "future," meaning time to come. Many of us today have completely lost sight of the fact that Yahweh Himself has ordained three times or seasons in the year in which His people are to come to pay tribute to Him. In Deuteronomy 16:16-17 we read: *"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before YAHWEH thy Almighty in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before YAHWEH empty; Every man shall give as he is able according to the blessing of YAHWEH thy Almighty which he hath given thee."*

The offering we are to render unto Yahweh is, in fact, a tribute. This is clarified in Deuteronomy 16:10, where it is specifically given that designation: *"And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto YAHWEH thy Almighty with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto YAHWEH thy Almighty, according as YAHWEH thy Almighty hath blessed thee:"* In direct relation to this giving as we are able according to the blessing He has given us, we see: *"Honour YAHWEH with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase."* Proverbs 3:9. In James 1:17-18, he discusses the fact that *"every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights"* who has begotten us with His word of truth that we should be a kind of "firstfruits" of His creation.

As we continue to appear before Yahweh, a transformation gradually occurs within us until the empty darkness of our past life is finally replaced with the fullness of Messiah. John the Baptist sums up this process of conversion this way: *"He [i.e. Messiah] must increase, but I decrease."* John 3:30. The Sabbath and the Holy Day service should provide the opportunity whereby this may be accomplished. As Peter describes this process in II Peter 1:2-8, he implies that it first begins with a faith in Yahweh. Upon this foundation, we should go on to increase and be perfected: *"Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience righteousness; and righteousness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Savior Yahshua Messiah."*

STAYING THE COURSE

The world offers many distractions that impede this growth and development, as Yahshua shows in the parable of the sower. *"And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."* Luke 8:14. The Greek word translated perfection in this verse is Strong's #5052 *telesphoreo*. It is derived from #5056 *telos*, meaning custom, levy paid, impost and from #5342 *phero* meaning to bear or carry. The standard Greek word for "tribute" itself is #5411 *phoros*, literally meaning something that is borne or carried. It is derived directly from #5342. When Yahshua explains *they bring no fruit to perfection*, He is very likely alluding to the fact they fail to bring forth proper tribute to Yahweh. In a parallel account of the same parable, Yahshua explains that the seed that fell on good ground *"beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."* Matthew 13:23. By specifically mentioning three categories of fruit that is brought forth, He, no doubt, is alluding to the three tribute offerings that Yahweh's people are to bring [Deuteronomy 16:16]. In addition, Yahshua makes yet another indirect reference to these three appointed times when tribute is offered. In Matthew 21:23-27, a confrontation is described between Him and some of the religious establishment concerning His

authority to do what He is doing. Yahshua answers by throwing a couple of parables at them.

In Matthew 21:32, He points out that John the Baptist had come in the way of righteousness, but they [religious establishment] had neither believed him, nor repented of their unfruitful works. We are reminded in Matthew 3:8 that John the Baptist had told them to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*. He, of course, was referring to such fruits as love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance that are named in Galatians 5:22-23. In a stinging indictment against them, Yahshua explains in a parable that a certain householder planted a vineyard, prepared it for cultivation, and then went into a far country. He goes on to explain in Matthew 21:34 that when the *time of the fruit* drew near, the householder sent his servants to the husbandmen that they might receive the *fruits* of it. It is very significant that the Greek word translated *time* here is, again, Strong's #2540 [kairos] as explained earlier--Strong's Hebrew word #4150 [moed], meaning appointed time or feast. No doubt, Yahshua, in the parable, is referring to one of the three times in the year when Yahweh's people are to appear before Him and *not empty*. In a parallel account given in Luke 20:10, it specifically states that the servants sent to receive the fruit were beaten and sent away *empty*.

In Matthew 21:36, Yahshua continues: *"Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying. They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard and slew him."* On each of the three occasions, no fruit was allowed to be brought forth. When the son at last was sent, they did not come to offer reverence or tribute: they came to kill him. In verse 40, Yahshua ends the parable by asking what will happen when the master of the vineyard comes. Verse 41, they answer: *"He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons."* [Strong's #2450 karios].

It is apparent that Yahshua's parable is an allusion to Deuteronomy 16:16, and indicates that He upholds the keeping of Yahweh's appointed feasts. What Yahshua goes on to say next is very significant, especially for those whom He is calling to come to Him today. Matthew 21:42-44: *"Did ye never read in the scriptures. The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is Yahweh's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of Yahweh shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."*

Who, then, is this nation Yahshua refers to that will be bringing forth the fruits of the kingdom at the appointed times? The answer is given in I Peter 2:9: *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should skew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."* Yahweh is calling us out of darkness to bring forth righteous fruit in tribute and honour to Him. The shadows are not turning to light. Unlike those Yahshua referred to in Matthew 21:42 that rejected Him, we who believe on Yahshua have made Him the cornerstone of our faith. *"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner."* I Peter 2:7.

Peter further explains that we, as *lively stones*, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Yahweh by Yahshua Messiah. See also Isaiah 56:6-7 in this context of Yahweh's houses, sacrifices, and keeping the Sabbath.

In summary, today we appear before Yahweh at the appointed times He has designated in reverence to Him and to offer Him praise, honour and glory. In this, we are reminded of Malachi's prophesy, foretelling the time when Yahshua would come to His temple and purify those who had joined themselves to Him as gold and silver is refined by fire, so they might offer an offering in righteousness [Malachi 3:1-3]. This pure offering of Yahshua Messiah is the true one and now takes the place of the "offering made by fire" that was formerly offered in conjunction with keeping Yahweh's holy days [Leviticus 23]. As we near the end of this age and the return of Yahshua, we feel it is appropriate to conclude this article by echoing the hope of the Apostle Peter in I Peter 1:7: ***"THAT THE TRAIL OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE PRECIOUS THAN OF GOLD THAT PERISHETH, THOUGH IT BE TRIED WITH FIRE, MIGHT BE FOUND UNTO PRAISE AND HONOUR AND GLORY AT THE APPEARING OF YAHSHUA MESSIAH."***

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