



Is Satan Real?

By Pete Vacca

It is amazing how things regenerate themselves. This is a subject that I haven't heard for quite awhile and it's starting to come back again. Some 20 years ago, I met some people who were telling me that Satan wasn't real. I read a lot of literature by a man named Shelton Emory and had an opportunity to talk to some of the people who were part of his organization. I haven't heard anything on the subject for a long time but now, all of a sudden, it's coming back.

At the same time an individual was trying to teach me about Satan, I learned of two or three other folks who have people in their families that do not believe Satan is real. Do you believe Satan is real? I sure do.

Twenty years ago, when this first came up to me, they claimed Satan was not real—that he was merely a personification of evil. In other words, he wasn't literal. Personification is a noun. It is an inanimate object which is endowed with human qualities, having rational thoughts. So you take something inanimate and you make it rational, as opposed to irrational. An example in the book I was reading says, "In confusion you heard his voice," or "In confusion, you hear a voice." When I first heard about this, I was taken back. I did not know this Shelton Emory, but I had read some other articles he had written on the Holy Name and on the Sabbath, and I thought it was good. But, when I got this, I was really shocked. While talking to his people, who attended our Feast, I learned they believed in the Holy Name, the Sabbath, clean foods and holy days. I didn't know where they had gotten the idea that Satan wasn't real. Well, like I said, I had forgotten about this encounter with the question "Is Satan Real?"

This idea has recently come up again and I thought maybe we had better do some research on it. Maybe we should do some more reading and, if this is coming out again, it needs to get out to the people who need to hear what's being said about it and they need to know how to refute it. The more I hear about it, the more it sounds like New Age. New Age is a concept of "God" within. In

other words, we are "God." That is what is going on out in the world and it has become extremely popular. So, if you do something bad or when you're tempted, it is actually the sinful nature within you causing you to do it. So, if it's "God" within, it's also Satan within. I haven't heard any of the New-Agers picking up on this yet; however, if it gets out there, they will be picking up on it. This is the kind of thing that goes on out there. There is no substance in what they believe. They will just pick something out of the air and all of a sudden they will go with it and try to build a case for it. It happens time and time again. Some of these ideas are the silliest things you have ever heard, but it happens.

In this article, we are going to cover responses to correspondence received on this topic. That correspondence includes the following:

"You would think that considering Yahweh was sorry to have created humans on the earth, that Yah would also make mention of being even more grieved to have created a certain angel who became HaSatan. Strange how no mention of that is ever found anywhere in the Holy Bible. Yahweh mentions that He was sorry to have made humans on the earth, but somehow never makes mention that He was sorry to have created that very famous angel who later became Satan...For from WITHIN, OUT OF THE HEART OF MEN AND WOMEN, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, deceit, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; ALL THESE EVIL THINGS COME FROM WITHIN and defile a person (Mark 7:18-23). He continues: Each person is tempted by his or her own desires when they are lured and enticed. Remember that—it's very important—he makes this comment: Each person is tempted by his or her own desire when they are lured and enticed.

"I believe that where the word devil (diabolos) or Satan (satanas) occurs in the Bible, the two terms [sic] should be either understood as the inherent sinful nature within humankind and the human being's inclination to disobey their eternal Creator...

“There are many anti-messiahs in the Bible, but none of them match up to the popular definition of the ‘supernatural’ Satan the devil.”

We’re going to see about that, along with the other comments made above. I don’t know a whole lot about where he is getting this information, but I do know and understand Scripture, which will give us our answers.

Let’s begin by saying that Satan is true to his name. They say that Satan is the great deceiver and I believe that. Right now, he’s trying to make you believe he doesn’t even exist. That’s the ultimate deception. You’ve got to give him credit. To plant this in people’s heads and to make it look like he doesn’t even exist—that’s really good.

We will start in **Matthew 4** because there is an individual there who was confronted by Satan. **And Yahshua was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness and tempted of the devil [by the personification of evil?]. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward hungered. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of Elohim, command that these stones be made bread (Matthew 4:1-3).** If Yahshua had been out in the desert for forty days and forty nights and was hungry, I think He could go get something to eat. He wouldn’t have to have somebody come to Him and say, “Make these stones into bread if You are who You say you are.” But His answer was, **...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Elohim. Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto Him, “If Thou be the Son of Elohim, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone” (Matthew 4:4-6).**

Once again, stop and think. This is our Savior, Yahshua the Messiah. Could He have been hallucinating after forty days and forty nights in the desert? He wasn’t hallucinating because He gave such a good answer. **Yahshua said unto him, “It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Yahweh thy Elohim.”**

So, we have this controversy: Why is Yahshua doing this? Is He having this problem from within? Is He hallucinating? Did this temptation just come from within Him? Did the fasting cause this and, if it did, how could He still be coherent enough to quote that Scripture, word for word?

Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, “All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.” How can you possibly worship

a personification of evil? How can you worship a thought? Common sense will tell you that just doesn’t make any sense. We’re talking about the status of Satan and the sanity of our Savior. Evidently, Yahshua believed that this entity was real—not just a personification of evil. This brings up a very important question. See if you get this: ***For within, out of the hearts of men and women proceed this evil thought, adultery, fornication, murders, deceitfulness, blasphemy.*** Those are all sins, aren’t they? Did Yahshua commit any of them? No—He was the perfect sacrifice, without sin. That’s what the Scriptures teach me.

Does anyone believe that Yahshua was capable of sinning? I’ve never met anyone, even out in the Christian world who believes that. He was perfect. He was sinless. The entire Scriptures talk of His being without sin. The Old Testament predicts it and the New Testament defines it. You cannot have it both ways. Scripture says that Yahshua was tempted. Did He have a sinful nature within Him, or was He perfect, without sin? You can’t have a sinful nature and, at the same time, be free from sin—it’s impossible. That’s an oxymoron—you can’t have it both ways.

Maybe **Matthew 4** and **Luke 4** are just stories. They’re not real. If we look at it that way, what else in the Bible isn’t real? Do you see where that leads? That kind of thinking leads to disbelief, total disbelief in Yahweh’s Word—from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation. I’ve already been there with somebody who said, “These are just stories, they’re not real. It wasn’t a worldwide flood, that was just a story. The virgin birth wasn’t really a virgin birth—that was just a story.” We can start picking and choosing which ones we want to believe as real and which ones we believe to be fabricated. We can pick at this Book and we can throw stuff away and end up out here with the covers and that’s it. This is how it starts.

Are there some Scriptures that back up this idea that Satan isn’t literal? I’ve never been able to find any. There are Scriptures that prove he is real. There’s an interesting story in **Job 1:6, Now there was a day when the sons of Elohim came to present themselves before Yahweh, and Satan came also among them.** Okay, all these sons were there and this **personification** was there also. **And Yahweh said unto Satan, “Whence comest thou?”**

Wait a minute. Does Yahweh have this problem, too? If you believe in the pre-existence of Messiah, then Messiah, as a Spirit Being, had this problem. The correspondence I received indicated that “each person is tempted in his own desires...an inherent sinful nature within humankind and a human inclination to destroy their eternal Creator.” He’s not human! If it’s Yahweh

or Yahshua in Their pre-existent state, it's not human—it's spiritual! That was not even addressed! But we're not talking about humans! We're talking about Yahweh. Yahweh said to Satan, **Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth Elohim, and escheweth evil?**

2 Corinthians 4:4 says, **In whom the mighty one of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious good news of Messiah, who is the image of the living Elohim, should shine unto them.** "The mighty one of this world has blinded the minds"—now if these words were written by men who had Yahweh's spirit, then we have another problem here. Yahweh's Spirit must be confused, but we know that is not true.

Now, look at **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**, **For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Messiah. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.**

This personification of evil has the ability to transform itself into an angel of light! Nothing I read about Satan can possibly be tied into an imaginary personification of anything. Otherwise, I'm befuddled by what I'm reading here. It just doesn't make any sense.

Marvel not, Satan himself can be transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers can be transformed... Back in Matthew and Luke, where we read that he [Satan] told Yahshua—I'll give You all this—he must have power. He's going to give his ministers the power to become angels of light; he must have power. How could a "personification of evil" have power within himself?

Yahshua is talking to these men and He says in **John 8:44**, **Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.** Does it sound like the Messiah is talking about anything here BUT an individual who started out to be a liar and continued on to be a liar and is the father of lies? I mentioned before that Satan is a deceiver and he's good at it. In **1 Peter 5:8**, Peter holds this up, too: **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.** Have you ever seen an imaginary anything walking or looking and acting like a lion?

Revelation 20:1, **And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and**

a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. Why must an imaginary personification of evil be bound? Why does the Bible try to make us believe that Satan is literal if he is not? The only answer I can come up with is because he is literal—he is real—he is not imaginary. **And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea (Revelation 20:7).** Again, he had to be chained up and then he had to be turned loose. It doesn't sound like it's an imaginary thing—it sounds like it's something literal. See **verse 10** of the same chapter, **And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are...** Do you believe that the beast and the false prophet are just imaginative? Are we going to imagine them in the end times? The beast government that's going to come up and the false prophet that's going to lead everybody away—do you believe they are imaginary? I don't. Satan the devil is put into the same category. He is going to be put in the same place—in the lake of fire. So, he's going to get his in the end, isn't he? Now, if it was our imagination, we could just snap our fingers and that would be it—he would be done with. In the meantime, we have to be careful.

Let's go all the way back to the very beginning, **Genesis 3:4**, **And the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die."** And **verse 12** says, **And the man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."** And **Yahweh thy Elohim said unto the woman, "What is this that thou hast done?"** And the woman said, **"The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."** So we have this personification of evil—that inherent sinful nature within human-kind and human beings—which is evidently in spirit beings and now it is in animals! An animal has the ability to do this? That's amazing, isn't it?

Zechariah 3:1, **And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Yahweh, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.** Is this an imaginary resistance? Does anybody have any idea what an imaginary resistance could possibly be like? I can't think of anything. Isaiah says that Satan was created. Yahshua said in **Luke 10:18** that He saw Satan fall from heaven. A second witness to that is in **2 Peter 2:4**.

Jude 6 says, **And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains...** So we know that these bad spirits do exist because they're in chains. **Jude 9** says, **Yet Michael the archangel, when contending**

with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses. So evidently, Michael had the same problem that these humans had, that Yahshua had, and that the snake had!

None of this really makes any sense. I don't understand why somebody would be putting out this kind of thinking to begin with. What does this have to do with salvation?

I believe any individual that understands who the Creator of the universe is—in whatever way they believe—wants to somehow satisfy that Creator. But there's something that is constantly coming up against them, causing them to go the wrong way. I can't believe this is just imaginative. Satan has the ability to empower people, he is in charge of dominions, he has messengers and followers, he constantly tempts people, and he resists good and truth. He will be held accountable, he will be charged with guilt, he will be judged and, eventually, he will receive punishment. These things will be done—they will be carried out—if not against an individual, then the Scriptures are false. There are no two ways to say that. If this individual is not taken care of for all these things, then the Scriptures are lying. And, if the Scriptures are lying, then why are we here? What has this life got for us? What do we have to look forward to? Will they be carried out against a wicked spirit being or against an emotion, an idea, a personification of evil—against something that really exists or something that doesn't exist? How could you have all these things carried out against something that doesn't exist? It doesn't make sense.

Yahweh has blessed us all with common sense and that means something that is just right out there, visible, that's easy to see and understand. You have to take into account that these are Yahweh's words we're talking about. Could an emotion keep an angel away for 21 days that was going to help Daniel? Yahweh sent an angel and that angel fought against the devil for 21 days (**Daniel 10:10**). It took two angels to fight him off. Michael the archangel came and joined another angel and they fought. And then Michael took over so the other angel could go and help Daniel. Does that sound imaginary? How can you read stories like this in the Scriptures and come up with something like "it's a personification of evil"? This angel evidently was fighting against himself, because there was no other human there. The angel was on his way to help a human—Daniel—but there was nobody there. And then it took two of these angels to fight against this thing that really wasn't there.

Yahshua taught by telling stories. He tried to teach good from bad by telling stories, called "parables." And they are stories because they are easy to understand. They are easy to tell and understand. But, do you think Yahshua would try to teach us it is wrong to lie by tell-

ing us a lie? That is what I mean about common sense. **Matthew 13** is the parable of the sower. In **verse 37**, He is explaining to them, **The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the Kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.** Yahshua came down here to tell us and show us how to keep Yahweh's laws. One of Yahweh's laws is "don't lie." **There are six things Yahweh hates, seven is an abomination" (Proverbs 6).** Out of seven things, lying is in there twice.

This concept is so easy to refute, it's almost unbelievable. But my question is: How can someone who reads and studies this Book be taken in by something like that? The only thing I can think of is that they just don't know the entire story. They concentrate on one thing and that's the only thing they know about—they have studied, read and probably have every Scripture that pertains to their thought in the back of their mind. You cannot concentrate on just one subject. You must try to concentrate on understanding the entire book. In that fashion, everything that's in this Book will fit together like a fine tooth comb—gears that mesh perfectly.

Listen to Yahshua's own words here. This is the One who came down here to fulfill the law of Yahweh: **Matthew 5:17, Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.**

He taught us how to do it, to show us that it can be done. **Finally, my brethren, be strong in Yahweh and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of Yahweh, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of Yahweh... (Ephesians 6:10-13).** Nowhere in there do I see anything about the personification of evil. Nowhere in there did I see anything about an emotion, but something literal. We fight against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and against spiritual wickedness in high places—we don't fight against something that isn't real, my dear friends. We are fighting against something that is real; that is literal. Satan is out there. As Peter said, like a roaring lion just waiting to devour whoever he can.

We can allow ourselves to be taken in by things like "Satan really isn't real, it's just me." Seems to me that all of this stuff is to bring someone away from the truth—to bring them away from Yahweh's Word.

May Yahweh bless you.



RELATIONSHIPS

Human Relationships: what makes them go wrong, what makes them go right— from Yahweh's Scriptures

1) PERFECTION IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS IS REQUIRED BY YAHWEH

All people seem to have problems with their relationships with other people at one time or another. None of us seems immune to this sin, not even we, the people of Yahweh. None of us is perfect, yet our Father Yahweh, and our Guide and Teacher, Yahshua, have commanded us:

Genesis 17:1 ... Yahweh appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I *am* the Almighty Elohim; walk before Me, and you ... be perfect!”

Does Yahweh expect this perfection only from Abraham? No, for the scripture says:

Deuteronomy 18:13, You shall be perfect with Yahweh your Elohim.

Oh! So, are these only the words of Moses, or are they of Yahweh also? Were these only commands to the children of Israel in the wilderness? Well, in the New Testament we also read:

Matthew 5:48, Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Well, was our Master speaking only to the Disciples? I think not! Are we not Yahshua's taught-ones (Disciples) and sent-out-ones (Apostles) for today? But, aren't we often told that no one can be perfect? That is what men say, but what do the Scriptures say?

Job 1:1, There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright.

Did this only apply to Job, or was this just scriptural hyperbole? If that were so, what does the following scripture mean?

Heb 5:8, Though [Yahshua] was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect [G5048 complete, accomplished, consummate], He became the author of eternal salvation for all them that obey Him.

So, perfection is commanded and, achievable (with the guidance and strength of the Spirit of Yahweh), even in human relationships. It is the world, and worldly attitudes that say that nobody is perfect! It is an excuse for bad behavior or failed relationships. But remember, we're not supposed to be of the world:

John 15:19, You are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world.

Yahweh does not provide or allow for such an excuse (for us). He simply tells us, “Be perfect!”

2) WHY STRIVE FOR PERFECT RELATIONSHIPS?

So, why work at building perfect human relationships? Well, clearly when our relationships with our spouses, children, neighbors, and community are peaceable and positive, our entire lives have and demonstrate the mind of Messiah Yahshua. The Messianic scriptures tell us to have and cultivate this mind within us, as Paul says:

Romans 8:9, ...But you are not in [the] flesh but in [the] Spirit, since the Spirit of [Yahweh] dwells in you; but if anyone does not have the Spirit of the [Messiah], this one is not His.

1 Corinthians 2:16, ...But we have the mind of the [Messiah].

Philippians 2:5, Let this mind be in you, which was also in the [Messiah Yahshua]...

We then can live abundant, over-flowingly-joyous, fulfilled lives of peace within ourselves:

Romans 8:6, For the mind-set of the flesh [is] death, but the mind-set of the spirit [is] life and peace.

But, in addition to helping us achieve quiet and peaceable lives, why else should we strive to make even our human relationships perfect before Yahweh? Well, the scriptures clearly tell us that we are to be perfect examples to each other. Yes, but we are to be equally so to the outside world. This example magnifies and praises our heavenly Father, Yahweh, and leads those on the outside to gain some understanding of Yahweh's nature, even those He is not calling at this time. Notice from scripture:

Matthew 5:16, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and praise your Father which is in heaven.

Romans 12:2, And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove [demonstrate, show, exemplify] what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of [Yahweh].

In our civil lives, our lives at work, and our lives before the community we are told:

Romans 13:3, For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. ... do that which is good, and you shall have praise of the same:

I know it is at times very difficult, but it is our duty, by the word of Yahweh, to observe even the most minute (and sometimes stupid) laws of man, so long as they don't contradict the requirements of Yahweh's law. Are you as careful as you can be on your taxes to follow the rules and not purposefully make false claims? Do you travel the speed limit (but not faster)? Are you careful to put in all the time at work that is expected of you (and then a little bit more—**Luke 16:3-8**)?

Romans 15:2, Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building him up.

1 Timothy 3:7, In addition, he [assembly leaders] must have a good report of them which are outside.

Titus 2:7, Always set an example of good works. ... Then any opponent will be ashamed because he cannot say anything bad about us.

1 Peter 2:12, ...having your conduct proper among the Gentiles, so that in what they speak against you as evildoers, having seen your [honest, righteous] works, they shall praise [Yahweh] in [the] day of visitation.

1 Peter 3:16, But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak evil of your good conduct in [the Messiah] will be ashamed of slandering you.

2 Corinthians 8:21, We intend to do what is right, not only in the sight of [the Master], but also in the sight of the people.

Philippians 2:15, ...so that you may be blameless and innocent, [Elohim's] children without any faults among a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world.

So, by having proper, loving, respectful relationships with each other, we provide an example to those on the outside. If we have poor relationships of quarreling, back-biting, one's-upmanship, (the “gotcha” attitude), unfaithfulness, dishonesty, or mean-spiritedness, we depreciate and blaspheme that kodesh name that appears upon us as members of “Yahweh's Assembly.” If we fail to have the kind of relationships that Yahweh demands of us throughout His Word, we may be personally responsible for some on the outside, or even our own children, rejecting the truths of the Kingdom, and perhaps, becoming embittered against Yahweh to the point of being lost forever! And what did our Teacher say to us in such a case?

Matthew 18:6, But whoever shall offend one of these little ones which believes in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Paul ordered the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 10:32, Stop being stumbling blocks to Jews or Greeks or to the Assembly of [Yahweh].

2 Corinthians 6:3, We do not put an obstacle in anyone's way. Otherwise, fault may be found with our ministry.

Matthew 5:14, You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a lampstand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before people in such a way that they will see your right works and lift up your Father in heaven.

2 Corinthians 8:21, We intend to do what is right, not only in the sight of [the Master], but also in the sight of people.

1 Peter 2:12, Continue to live such upright lives among the Gentiles that, when they slander you as evildoers, they may see your good works and praise [Elohim] when He visits them in judgment.

Hebrews 12:14, Pursue peace with everyone, as well as [kodesh-ness], without which no one will see [the Master].

Notice this scripture:

Matthew 12:35, A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

So then, our relationships are the outward demonstration of our inner spirit.

And finally, consider this scripture:

John 2:10, ...Every man at the beginning sets forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* you have kept the good wine until now.

We of these end times have been raised up to be the good wine—saved by Yahweh for the last! We must live up to that high calling!

3) WHAT PRODUCES BAD RELATIONSHIPS?

We can see from Scripture that, even among Yahshua's closest followers, there were disputes. The record of the events preceding the 1st assembly council at Jerusalem (**Acts 15:36**) indicates that Paul and Barnabas had a serious dispute with each other over how to make use of John/Mark. Paul also had a longstanding dispute with a number of Jewish believers over the question of circumcision. It took the careful review of the question by the entire Jerusalem assembly and the council of elders to resolve the dispute. **Acts 15:4** states that the resolution of the difference in doctrine only occurred after “much debate.” Finally, we read in **1 Corinthians 1:11** that there were quite a number of petty rivalries among the Corinthian assembly members over who their teacher was.

So, disputes, disagreements, and relationship problems will occur, even among Yahweh's people. Knowing that it is our duty and obligation to the great Elohim to have righteous, exemplary relationships between ourselves and before the outside world, what can we find in the Word of Yahweh that explains what causes relationships to go wrong?

Here's a montage of scriptures that I believe will help address this question:

James 4:1-3, Where do those fights and quarrels among you come from? They come from your selfish desires that are at war in your bodies, don't they? You want something but do not get it, so you commit murder. You covet something but cannot obtain it, so you quarrel and fight. You do not get things because you do not ask for them! You ask for something but do not get it because you ask for it for the wrong reason—for your own pleasure.

James 4:6, ...And so he says, “[Yahweh] opposes the arrogant...

Romans 12:16, Live in harmony with each other. Do not be arrogant, but associate with humble people. Do not think that you are wiser than you really are.

Proverbs 13:10, Arrogance produces only quarreling.

Philippians 2:3-5, Do not act out of selfish ambition or conceit, but with humility think of others as being better than yourselves. ...Do not be concerned about your own interests, but also be concerned about the interests of others. Have the same attitude among yourselves that was also in [Messiah Yahshua].

James 3:2, For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

James 3:14-16, But if you have bitter jealousy and rivalry in your hearts, stop boasting and lying against the truth. That kind of wisdom does not come from above. No, it is worldly, self-centered, and demonic. For wherever jealousy and rivalry exist, there is disorder and every kind of evil.

Romans 8:6, To set our minds on the flesh leads to death, but to set our minds on the Spirit leads to life and peace.

Romans 12:17, Do not pay anyone back evil for evil, but focus your thoughts on what is right in the sight of all people.

Romans 12:19, Do not take revenge, dear friends, but leave room for [Elohim's] wrath.

Ephesians 4:31, Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, quarreling, and slander be put away from you, along with all hatred.

Colossians 3:8, But now you must also get rid of anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene language from your mouth, and all such sins. Do not lie to one another.

Ephesians 4:29, Let no filthy talk come out of your mouth...

Colossians 3:21, Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

1Thessalonians 5:15, ...Make sure that no one pays back evil for evil.

1 Peter 3:9, Do not pay others back evil for evil or insult for insult.

Romans 15:1, Now we who are strong ... must stop pleasing ourselves.

Philippians 2:3, Do not act out of selfish ambition or conceit, ...Do not be concerned about your own interests...

Isaiah 29:20-21, For the ruthless will come to an end and the scorner will be finished; indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off; [those] who cause a person to be indicted by a word, and ensnare him who judges at the gate, and defraud the one in the right with meaningless arguments.

Proverbs 22:10, Cast out the scorner [one who makes fun of others], and contention shall end; yes, strife and reproach shall cease.

Proverbs 26:21, As charcoal fuels burning coals and wood fuels fire, so a quarrelsome person fuels a dispute.

Proverbs 23:29-30, Who is always in trouble? Who argues and fights? Who has cuts and bruises? Whose eyes are red? Everyone who stays up late, having just one more drink.

Or, as another translation puts it:

Proverbs 23:29-30, Who are the people who are always crying the blues? Who do you know who reeks of self-pity? Who keeps getting beat up for no reason at all? Whose eyes are bleary and bloodshot? It's those who spend the night with a bottle, for whom drinking is serious business.

And finally, here's an interesting rendition of Paul's advice from "The Message" translation of the Scriptures, on the subject of what causes bad relationships:

Galatians 5:19-21, It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket Elohim; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; and ugly parodies of community [Assembly!]. I could go on. This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit Elohim's Kingdom.

WHAT PRODUCES RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS?

So then, now that we've gained knowledge from Yahweh's Word on what leads to bad, broken relationships, what can we find in the Scriptures that will guide us in the development of right, wholesome relationships?

James 3:17-18, ...However, the wisdom that comes from above is first of all pure, then peace-loving, gentle, willing to yield, full of compassion and good fruits, and without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is grown from the seed of peace planted by peacemakers.

Romans 14:19, Therefore, let us keep on pursuing those things that bring peace and that lead to building one another up.

1 Corinthians 10:33, ...just as I myself try to please everybody in every way, not looking for my own advantage but for that of many people, so that they might be saved.

Matthew 5:5, How blessed are those who are humble, for it is they who will inherit the earth!

Matthew 5:7, How blessed are those who are merciful, for it is they who will receive mercy!

Matthew 5:8, How blessed are those who are pure in heart, for it is they who will see [Elohim]!

Matthew 5:9, How blessed are those who make peace, for it is they who will be called [Elohim's] children!

John 14:27, I am leaving peace with you. I am giving you My own peace...

Romans 2:10, But there will be glory, honor, and peace for everyone who practices doing good.

Romans 8:6, ...but to set our minds on the Spirit leads to life and peace.

Proverbs 16:7, When a man's ways are pleasing to [Yahweh], He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Romans 12:10, Be devoted to each other with mutual affection. Excel in showing respect for each other.

Romans 12:14, Bless those who persecute you. Keep on blessing them, and never curse them.

Romans 14:17-19, For [Elohim's] Kingdom does not consist of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace, and joy produced by the [kodesh] Spirit. For the person who serves [Messiah] in this way is pleasing to [Elohim] and approved by people. Therefore, let us keep on pursuing those things that bring peace and that lead to building one another up.

Ephesians 4:2-3, ...with all humility and gentleness, along with patience, accepting one another in love. Do your best to maintain the unity of the Spirit by means of the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:32, ...And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another just as [Elohim] has forgiven you in [Messiah].

Colossians 3:12-14, Therefore, as [Elohim's] chosen ones, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Put up with one another and forgive each other if anyone has a complaint against another. ...Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which ties everything together in unity.

1 Thessalonians 5:13, Live in peace with each other. We urge you, brothers, to instruct those who are idle, cheer up those who are discouraged, and help those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. ...always pursue what is good for each other and for everyone else.

Hebrews 12:11, No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, for those who have been trained by it, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace.

1 Peter 3:11, He must turn away from evil and do good. He must seek peace and pursue it.

Psalms 34:14, Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

Romans 15:2, Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building him up.

Romans 15:7, Therefore, accept one another, just as [Messiah] accepted you, for the [majesty] of [Elohim].

1 Corinthians 14:26, What, then, does this mean, brothers? When you gather, everyone has a psalm, teaching, revelation, tongue, or interpretation. Everything must be done for upbuilding.

1 Thessalonians 5:11, So then, encourage one another and build each other up, as you are doing.

Ephesians 5:21, And you will submit yourselves to one another out of reverence for [Messiah].

Psalms 119:165, Those who love Your law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble.

Romans 14:21, The right thing to do is to avoid eating meat, drinking wine, or doing anything else that makes your brother stumble, become upset or weak.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Love is always patient, love is always kind, love is never envious or vaunted up with pride; nor is she conceited, and never is she rude, never does she think of self or ever get annoyed. She never is resentful, is never glad with sin, but always glad to side with truth. She bears up under everything, believes the best in all, there is no limit to her hope, and never will she fall.

1 Corinthians 4:12, We wear ourselves out from working with our own hands. When insulted, we bless. When persecuted, we endure. When slandered, we answer with kind words.

Philippians 2:3-4, ...with humility think of others as being better than yourselves. ...be concerned about the interests of others.

Psalm 119:165, **Great peace have they which love your law: and nothing shall offend them.**

Ecclesiastes 10:4, **If a ruler loses his temper against you, don't panic; a calm disposition quiets intemperate rage.**

Philippians 2:14, **Do everything without complaining or arguing.**

Proverbs 18:18, **The lot puts an end to quarrels and decides between powerful contenders.**

Hebrews 13:5, **Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for [Elohim] has said, "I will never leave you or abandon you."**

1 Timothy 6:6-8, **And to be [Elohim-like] is gain, when associated with contentment; ...For we brought nothing into the world, *and it is* clear that we can carry nothing out. But having food and clothing, we will be content.**

Philippians 4:11, **Not that I speak according to need, for I have learned to be content in whatever state I am.**

2 Corinthians 13:11, **Finally, my brothers, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the [Elohim] of love and peace shall be with you.**

Once again, this translation from "*The Message*" helps bring it all into focus to our modern ears:

Galatians 5:22, **But what happens when we live [Elohim's] way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard--things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic [kodesh-ness] permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.**

It is Yahweh's wish for us to live in peace, with loving, wholesome relationships. To that end, His scriptures provide an abundance of pointers and commands. Perhaps to summarize it all, remember: don't be offended, and don't offend others. We can control what we feel, and we can control what we do. Others are beyond our control. Let

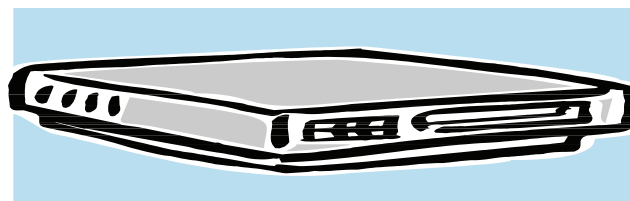
Yahweh work with them, just as He has, and is, working with us. Praise to the Elohim of peace, and right relationships.



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Dress Before Yahweh

By Jake C. Meyer

When the freedom of individuals begins to encroach on the conscience of others, we, as believers, must work to build and develop the body of Yahshua. We should establish a consistent path upon which we can all walk, one that is straight, one that is in accord with Scripture, and one that is going to be a credit to Yahweh.

In **1 Peter 3:1**, a description of wives and husbands is found: **Wives, in the same way, be submissive to your husbands so that if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.** Conduct means something. It starts with the treatment of our mate. Peter says this conduct is so critical that we, as a believer married to an unbeliever, can win our mate over by our behavior. They can be won over without words when they see the purity and reverence in our lives.

Verse 3 is generally where people start when they read this passage. The first two verses often get overlooked or ignored because they mean we have to deal with ourselves; it becomes necessary to work on our own shortcomings. **Verse 3** says, **Your beauty should not come from outward adornment such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes.** This is not a license to slovenliness. Because it says, **Your beauty should not come from outward adornment**, some people actually make a physical, concerted effort to look anything but beautiful. Peter further states, **...braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in Yahweh's sight.**

There is something to the external of which we need to be aware. It does make an impression. When Peter is saying that your beauty should not come from outward adornment, does that mean that you should not take care of yourself? Is that the point of what he is saying? No, he emphasizes that, while the external is not your primary focus, the emphasis has to be internal because this is of great worth in Yahweh's sight. **For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in Yahweh used to make themselves beautiful.**

We can look in Scripture and find examples of women who are described as beautiful. Sarah is one that comes quickly to mind; Esther is another. These were women

whose beauty came from within. Have you ever met a plain-featured woman who is a beautiful woman because of her countenance? Her beauty is manifested through her attitude as expressed toward others. There is nothing wrong with a woman looking beautiful—guys can't do it. A woman is and can be a beautiful creature. Peter stresses that the external isn't the focus. He makes clear beauty must start from within, the source of true beauty.

Peter continues by saying, **These women of old were submissive to their husbands.** He references Sarah, **...who obeyed Abraham and called him her Master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.** Now, these women did wear jewelry. They did make themselves look attractive. But, Peter's point is that this starts from within. Choose the eternal source of a beautiful attitude!

This topic is being addressed because we are to present Yahweh, not only to one another, but also to present Yahweh to the world. Now, there are things we are called to present to the world and that something must be Yahweh. It must be accomplished effectively. As things develop prophetically, we're going to be affecting literally thousands of people. Are you reading this article with the expectation of Yahweh's Assembly becoming something in your image? Is it your intent to alter the Body of the Messiah to your own advantage? Or, are you here to work together for Yahweh's honor and glory?

Part of that expectation has to be the way we dress. It does make an impact, especially when people initially contact us. Your dress and demeanor tell things about you. I am not focusing on the external; this is about as close as I come to stressing external things. That's not where I like to spend my time. The emphasis must remain on developing the internal—the spiritual. Peter says the external, while not being your primary focus, is not something you go the opposite extreme and reject. We are to present Yahweh to the world. It says in **verse 7**, **Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect.** Many men often forget the first part of this verse. They don't factor respect into the picture, but will really make an issue of the second part, **the weaker partner.** The intimation becomes, "I am superior, I am the stronger partner." Well, if that's the case, there are some pretty serious requirements.

First of all, he says “be considerate” as you live with your wives. It is a commandment that we men be considerate. It’s a challenge for most men to develop this characteristic because many do not have a highly-developed sensitivity for the feelings of their mates. I didn’t realize this could be a problem until my own insensitivity began causing problems. It is something men must work on. It’s not something easy.

Be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as the weaker partner, and as heirs with you. Once again, we are co-heirs with this salvation message. We are co-heirs of the gracious gift of life so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

We exist to live a life in harmony with one another. Harmony begins at home. We have to dress in a way that is first, attractive to our mates and then, secondly, as a presentation of Yahweh to the world.

Let’s go to the Book of **James (Jacob) chapter 2**, because we have to reconcile what Peter just said with what James (Jacob) said. **James 2:1, My brothers, as believers in our glorious Master Yahshua the Messiah, don’t show favoritism.**

We cannot treat you any differently regardless of how you dress. We cannot show favoritism according to what our brothers and sisters wear.

Let us continue, **Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “you stand there or you go sit on the floor by my feet,” haven’t you discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers, has not Yahweh chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the Kingdom He promised to those who love Him?** We cannot judge by externals; we cannot show favoritism, but there is something we need to consider.

First of all, why do we attend services? We assemble to worship. Are we worshipping one another? No. We come to worship Yahweh. He has given us everything we have. It doesn’t matter what you have on as long as it’s the best you have with which to appear and worship Him. We are coming before the great Yahweh.

What kind of a picture do you get in your mind when you go to services? Let me relate to you the picture that comes to mind for me. I have a mental picture of a huge throne far above us, up in the heavens, with Yahweh and Yahshua seated upon it. They are looking down on our service. That’s the picture I’ve had since I was ordained. What do they see? Do they see us coming in a reverent, respectful, submissive way before them? Or, do they just see us like I was described at one time, looking like I was

dressed with an eggbeater? You know, that statement cut me to the quick and I did make a serious effort after that to look a little better than I normally did when attending services.

We exist to worship Yahweh. We attend services to show our love toward Yahweh; and, simultaneously toward one another. Let’s return to what James speaks about. He says we are not supposed to respect somebody who comes in dressed to the hilt. The distinguishing point is this: It’s not what you have on, but when you do appear, shouldn’t it be with the best you have? James states in **verse 5, Listen, dear brothers, hasn’t Yahweh chosen the poor to be rich in faith?** This is what it is all about. We are called to inherit a Kingdom. He says in **verse 6, You’ve insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?**

Now, put this into the context of the apostolic assembly. Do you realize that the poorest assembly of the apostolic assemblies was the one over which James presided as the Elder? It was the congregation in Jerusalem! Jerusalem continually needed offerings brought from rich assemblies like Corinth, Philippi or Ephesus to sustain them. That is the context of what James was saying. So the Jerusalem brothers were caught in the middle. You had wealthy individuals who were not in the Assembly, but would visit. You then had the poor in attendance which, for the most part, was the membership of the Jerusalem Assembly. So, James came from that perspective—his primary membership was poor. If a rich Jew—let’s say one of the ruling Jews from the Temple—comes to visit, are you going to say to him—because he does have fine linen on, purple threads in his robe, a gold ring on his finger—“come and sit up here in the seat of honor, at the expense of the poor brother?” He says that is not the way it is supposed to be. There has to be consistency. You cannot have favoritism and you certainly don’t look on the external to find who is the more righteous or converted individual. Earthly wealth does not define us as true believers.

James says in **verse 7**, speaking of the rich, **Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble Name of Him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, love your neighbor as yourself, you’re doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin.** Now, how many of us chalk up favoritism as a sin? Favoritism is sin. This is precisely what James is saying. If you show favoritism, you sin and you are convicted by the law as a lawbreaker.

Let us also introduce **Exodus 28** into the equation of balancing internal and external dress before Yahweh. The first thing to recognize from **Exodus 28** is that this is a discussion of priestly garments. Clothing means something to Yahweh. Are we not called to be a Kingdom of

priests and kings before our Heavenly Father? He devotes an entire chapter to priestly attire. **Exodus 28:1, Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve Me as priests. Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him dignity and honor. Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve Me as priest.** Sacred garments are important. It says, **These are the garments they are to make: a breast piece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash.**

I focus on the internal—the heart. It is all about people getting their attitude and thinking correct. However, Yahweh commanded Aaron to dress a certain way to create an impression of dignity for the priestly office.

I also recognize there has to be consideration of others—consideration for the way we do look. And, I find that those people who want to enforce and impose the externals of Yahweh's law on others will tend to push this message aside, and say, "No, spiritual garments is what this really means." Why? Because they have no desire to make the effort to look decent and presentable. That reveals a serious internal, spiritual problem. We are here to worship Yahweh. That is the bottom line. The whole point of working out our salvation here on this earth is to someday be able to stand in His presence.

Exodus 28 states these garments are to be made for Aaron and his sons so they may serve as priests. **Have them use gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen.** Yahweh required the best available for the garments of the priesthood. Now, some people will go to **Revelation 7** and the discussion of the "white" garments and they will claim we should all wear white to worship. That's not what this passage represents. **Revelation 7:14** tells the meaning of the white robes.

Let me make this clear: our purpose is not to set policy and tell people how to dress. The thrust of this article is to emphasize—give your best to Yahweh in presenting yourself before Him when you go to services. Coming from different walks of life, we all have different perceptions as to what our "best" is. The rule must be our best, modest attire. The issue among Yahweh's people cannot be favoritism. The impression we give seekers of salvation will intuitively reveal to them an inner concern for the garments of salvation.

There was gold and blue, purple and scarlet yarn used, along with the fine linen to make these garments in **Exodus 28**. The items used all have spiritual significance. Nevertheless, these were things critical in Yahweh's sight.

Make the ephod of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen—the work of a skilled craftsman. It is to have two shoulder pieces attached to two of its corners, so it can be fastened. Its skillfully woven waistband is to be like it—of one piece with the ephod and made with gold, blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and with finely twisted linen. "Take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel in the order of their birth—six names on one stone and the remaining six on the other" (Exodus 28:6-10).

Two stones also had to be there. **Verses 11-14: Engrave the names of the sons of Israel on the two stones the way a gem cutter engraves a seal. Then mount the stones in gold filigree settings and fasten them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. Aaron is to bear the names on his shoulders as a memorial before Yahweh. Make gold filigree settings and two braided chains of pure gold, like a rope, and attach the chains to the settings...**

These are very specific instructions; the best available was to be used. You can study the breastplate as described, then notice the breast piece. **Verses 31-32, Make the robe of the ephod entirely of blue cloth, with an opening for the head in its center. There shall be a woven edge like a collar around this opening, so that it will not tear.**

If we are planning to influence literally thousands and millions of people for Almighty Yahweh, then we must also acknowledge there must be consideration for cultural differentiation. Our requirement is not that we all dress in uniform. However, I do believe we are required to use the best available to present ourselves before Yahweh. Yahweh asks no less. He did not tell anyone that if they are poor, to take a diseased animal that is about to die and present as an offering. Yahweh said you bring the best—whether rich or poor—the best you have to be presented as an offering.

How are we to dress before Yahweh and why should we look our best? This article is not written to legislate colors or types of clothes. That's not what we are here to do. Whatever background you come from, whatever you are culturally comfortable with—you should come and present yourself before Yahweh with the best you have to offer.

We live in a culture and society today where we have plenty of everything. Next time you attend services, go into your closet, spend a little time and ask the question: "I want to present myself to Yahweh today What do I think He would like?" What are clothes when it comes right down to it? They are articles of dress to cover our bodies.

If you go down to the end of **Exodus 28**, it states they are supposed to have these various garments to be worn. **Exodus 28:42, Make linen undergarments as a covering for the body.** This describes what clothes are all about. This chapter deals with the topic in all its different respects. Aaron and his sons has to wear them whenever they entered the Tent of Meeting or approached the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they would not incur guilt and die.

If we try to look nice, not as an exercise demonstrating our superior class, but as a token of appreciation for the standards Yahweh has set in our lives, we will feel better about our worship as well. It's more important to get the inside right—that's the focus of Scripture. But it also does mention clothing many times. Like I said earlier, I should never treat you differently according to how you dress. This is not about pleasing man. It's a measure of respect to Yahweh and Yahshua.

Isaiah 61:10 tells why we should appear with our best before our Heavenly Father, **I delight greatly in Yahweh; my soul rejoices in my Elohim. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Yahweh will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.**

I want to be an active part of Yahshua's Body and the commission given it in **Matthew 28:19-20**. I wish to participate as it says in **verse 11**, helping the soil so it can make the sprout come up. If we are to attract new people, they don't just hear the message. And that's what Peter's point was in **1 Peter 3**. They're going to follow your example, and if you have an attitude of entitlement to look like anything less than a representative of Yahweh, they themselves may become just the same.

What are we going to present? It's time we begin to be proactive in our thinking instead of reactive, after the fact, trying to clean up the messes. Let us think in advance what we're doing and why we're here. These things mean something to Yahweh so they should be important to us as well. Scripture states, **He has clothed me with the garments of salvation.**

According to Isaiah, we are to rejoice before Him, because He has clothed us with the garments of salva-

tion and arrayed us in a robe of righteousness. This is the true joy that comes from within us. It is evident how clothing can have a spiritual application. We just read about the robe of righteousness and garments of salvation (**Isaiah 61**).

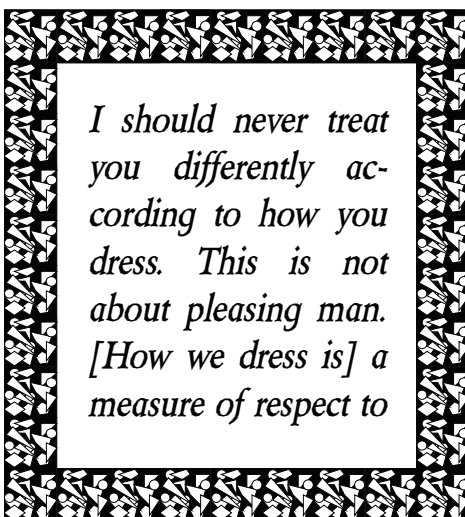
Galatians 3:26-27: You are all sons of Yahweh through faith in Yahshua the Messiah, for all of you who were baptized into the Messiah have clothed yourselves with the Messiah. Now does that mean you come before Him in filthy rags? While our righteousness is such, we do not live to display our righteousness, do we? **Verse 29, If you belong to the Messiah, then you are Abraham's seed.** Once again, if we are Abraham's seed, who is our mother? Sarah. What was Sarah's dress? She was a beautiful woman, a woman whose beauty started from within. I don't want us to forget about the inside. The external must be an expression of the internal. We have to keep the horse in front of the cart.

This is about as close to "policy" as we can set. It is simply this: when you're coming to worship Yahweh, come before Him with the best you have. Present yourself before Him. This is not as Laodicea, who was lukewarm—neither hot nor cold (**Revelation 3:17**). We must develop the realization that we are going to be affecting literally thousands of people just by the way we dress, the way we talk and the way we conduct ourselves. We cannot afford to be lukewarm. Yahshua says, **I wish you were either one or the other; because you are lukewarm, I'm about to spit you out of My mouth.** Let's

either be hot or cold.

Revelation 3:17-19, You say, "I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing." But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

2 Corinthians 5:1-3, Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from Yahweh, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.



There is a lot of symbolism in Yahweh's worship. What do we do with that symbolism? Do we take it as Yahweh intends, as reinforcement, as a lesson to hone our spiritual shortcomings so we can become complete in Yahshua the Messiah? The earthly tent that we live in is destroyed. But, we have a building from Yahweh, an eternal house in heaven not built by human hands. This body is going to disappear soon enough; it's going to decay and return to the dust. What do you do with its covering while it is your temporary home? Paul says in **verse 2, Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling.** We desire eternity. That's why we worship Yahweh. We are in this tent, this temporary body of flesh, groaning in our burdens. We do not wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. It is my hope this is the desire of all who read this. We are in this life preparing for that time when we shall be clothed with our heavenly dwelling.

Zechariah 3:1-5, Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of Yahweh, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. Yahweh said to Satan, "Yahweh rebuke you, O Satan! Yahweh, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the Angel. The Angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you." Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the Angel of Yahweh stood by.

If filthy rags are defined as sin, then this illustration should reinforce our desire to present ourselves with our best before Yahweh when we come to worship Him. Notice it says, **I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.** Verse 6-8, **The Angel of Yahweh gave this charge to Joshua: "This is what Yahweh El Shaddai says: 'If you will walk in My ways and keep My requirements, then you will govern My house...and I will give you a place among these standing here. Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come...'"**

Remember, symbolism is important in Yahweh's worship. These men who were standing before the Angel of Yahweh were symbols of things to come. **I am going to bring My Servant, the Branch. See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it, says Yahweh Almighty, and I will remove the sin of this land (the filthy garments?) in a single day (Zechariah 3:8-9).**

Do you want to walk in Yahweh's ways? Is your life filled with scriptural symbolism in living for Yahweh? Do you really want to present the picture you now do, to those you contact? Are they repelled by your presentation or do they want to know more? We are here to worship the King of Kings. We are here to worship the One who has extended salvation freely to us. My desire is simply to see that we draw people with who we are; with what we are. Modesty is a necessity, but our very best is also necessary. We all have different perceptions of our best, but remember, this is not about pleasing men—it's about coming before Yahweh. It's about His worship and being a witness for Him.

These are things each of us must reconcile in our own minds. How much does clothing mean to us? Look to Yahweh's Word, see what it means to Him and let your conscience lead you into being a yielded child of Yahweh, one who is a living witness for Him. Let us become well-pleasing before Yahweh, so on that day, when He gives out the eternal garments, may we get the real ones!

In conclusion, remember that we are called to be living witnesses of eternal, timeless truths. While the cloth garments that currently cover our fleshly bodies are not going to save us, in Yahweh's sight, they can be an important indicator of our regard for the true garments, the clothes of salvation. Continue to grow in grace and the knowledge of Him, yielding to His Holy Spirit so as to receive the eternal blessing of robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb!



YAHWEH'S CHILDREN

Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah and Yahweh's Frystown Assembly have developed a new Children's Website which is now up and running. We plan to include things "By Kids for Kids."

If your son or daughter has something they would like to submit, such as a story, puzzle, maze, etc., please e-mail to kids@yaim.org or mail it to the office. All submittals must be approved and be in accord with Scripture.

CHECK IT OUT

at

www.yahwehschildren.org

THE FULLNESS OF MEDITATION

By Eric Gentile

As we seek growth in spiritual understanding, what is the best way to learn of any matter of faith? As usual, our Father's Word is most instructive and pertinent. See **Joshua 1:8, This Book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night....** Notice that our Father does not say to "read" His Book, but rather to *meditate* in it day and night. The word meditate is *Strong's* Heb #1897, to murmur; by impl. to ponder; Gr #3191, to take care of, revolve in the mind. Noah Webster illustrates this so well in the first *American Dictionary of the English Language*:

Meditate, v.i. [L. *meditor*; Sp. *meditar*; Fr. *mediter*.]

1. To dwell on anything in thought; to contemplate; to study; to turn or revolve any subject in the mind; appropriately but not exclusively used of pious contemplation, or a consideration of the great truths of religion. **His delight is in the law of [Yahweh], and in His law doth he meditate day and night, Psalm 1:2.**

As for Webster's cite of **Psalm 1:2**, we see a reverent person delights to meditate in Yahweh's Word. What new insight is given here to righteous character! Webster edifies:

Delight, n. *delite*, connected with *delector*...

1. A high degree of pleasure, or satisfaction of mind; joy.
2. That which gives great pleasure; that which affords delight.

I was daily His delight, Prov. 8:30.

Delight is a more permanent pleasure than joy, and not dependent on sudden excitement.

Obviously, to delight in meditation in our Father's Word involves much more than a mere academic, casual or occasional reading. This is enhanced by Bullinger's notes in the *Companion Bible* at **Joshua 1:8**.

"meditate=talk to thyself. Cp. **Psalm 1:2=audible musing**."

Plainly, "meditate" or "talk to thyself" is done *not* in the full tones of social intercourse, but in the gentler or softer tones of pious privacy, *barely above a whisper*. This is also what is meant by "audible musing." Audible is that which is perceivable or perceived by the sense of hearing. But what of "musing?" Again, Webster edifies:

"...To be so occupied in study or contemplation, as *not* to observe passing scenes or things present."

Corresponding with this, the *Ryrie Study Bible* footnote, also at **Joshua 1:8**, provides:

To ponder, muse, involving half-aloud reading and rereading of the Word (Psalm 1:2) [emphasis mine].

Truly, "audible musing" occurs when one is so intently focused on softly reading, rereading and probing into the Word of Yahweh that all else goes unnoticed.

Finally, the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* more expansively provides:

"...Meditation seems to have been more a Hebrew, than Christian practice. It is a most rewarding act of worship, of spiritual renewal, of mental refreshing, and of divine communion (see **Job 15:4; Ps. 77:3, 6**)."

So now we see conclusively that *meditation* on Yahweh's Word involves the whole person delightedly and intently focused on discovering the deep truth thereof—truth not available to the casual reader. Think about this! In casual reading, the mind is only casually engaged, by one of our physical senses, *i.e.*, sight. But, in meditation, softly reciting the Scripture at hand and musing on (rolling over in one's mind) the meaning of every key word, our mental faculties are intently engaged by three of the physical senses, *i.e.*, sight, speech and hearing. How appropriate a degree of engagement, given the Author of the text! Yet, if delight and meditation alone were adequate for growth in the spiritual understanding of Yahweh's Way/Word, why would His Word continue?

...that you may know how to do all things that are written in it; then shall you prosper, and make your ways prosperous, and then shall you be wise (idiom for a man who understands those things which pertain to salvation).

And why would a prophet warn?

The seducible trusts every word; but the prudent man exercises persistent diligence in his conversation (manners; behavior; deportment; [adhering to Yahweh's moral Laws] (**Proverbs 14:15**).

And why would the apostle likewise exhort?

Diligently endeavor to show yourself approved... (2 Timothy 2:15).

To "meditation" we must add discernment and prudence, which further necessitate persistent diligence, so that one's conversation is true to the Way/Word of Yahweh. Indeed, such diligence will be manifested in your progress along that

Way/Word and the development of son-like character. Here is where the wheat is separated from the chaff. As the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* puts it:

From a number of instances, insight or moral understanding is a gift from [Yahweh] (**Daniel 2:21**) and is not the fruit of empiricism. It is ethical discernment. A person prays for it (**Psalms 119:34**) and since this insight is uniquely [Yahweh's], He can reveal or conceal it (**Isaiah 29:14**). The seat of insight is the heart and it is the heart which discerns the works of [Yahweh] (**Psalms 28:5**), the fear of [Yahweh] (**Proverbs 2:5**), righteousness and justice (**Proverbs 2:9**), and His will, as His Word, is obeyed (**Psalms 11:7**).

While understanding is a gift of [Yahweh], it does not come automatically. The possession of it requires a persistent diligence. It is more than IQ; it connotes character. One is at fault if he doesn't have it and, in fact, not to pursue it will incur [Yahweh's] punishment (**Proverb 2:11; Ruth 1:21**). When one acts on the objective presentation of [Yahweh's] revelation, he will attain the ideal of the significance of understanding.

So, then, as one's meditation is rewarded by Yahweh with the gift of understanding, one will naturally do His will. Truly, delighting in meditation brings understanding, and understanding brings responsibility beyond the letter of the Word. So, in vain some think that by limiting their meditation in the Way/Word of Yahweh, they limit their responsibility to abide therein. Is this not willful ignorance, which is death not bliss—chaff not wheat? Are we called to remain immature, or are we to grow to the fullness of the

stature of the Anointed One (**Ephesians 4:13**)? **Brethren, be not children in understanding ...but in understanding be manly (1 Corinthians 14:20).**

Please note, in *Strong's Concordance*, 'manly' is #5046, or the Koine Greek 'teleios' and refers to much more than a "full-grown" man. Indeed, as used here, 'teleios' connotes a particular state of moral character, maturity, or manhood, i.e., inherently complete and perfect. The *Zondervan Lexicon of the New Testament* (1982) amplifies this (p. 618), noting 'teleios' denotes "consummate human integrity and virtue as in the perfect state of things, to be ushered in by the return of the Anointed One." Similarly, the *Hendrickson Analytical Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (1983) states on page 400: "fully accomplished in [Anointed] enlightenment." So, to be "manly" is to be of consummate integrity and virtue, fully accomplished in Anointed enlightenment (or *precise and correct knowledge*). Yes, one who truly reveres Yahweh will delight in, rather than limit his meditation, and will delight and persist in giving full diligence to conform every facet of his life to that Word/Way, thus manifesting the character of a true son of Yahweh. Yes, dear one, the called-out ones are called in their natural state. Yet, that calling has a greater object, i.e., that the called be welcomed into fellowship with those whose *delight* is to *meditate* on the Word of their Caller, to avoid falling as Adam and Eve; so that, finally, each might obtain the fullness of meditation—son-like character—and be welcomed into the age-enduring Kingdom of Yahweh.



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