



Parasha Vayechi

December 30, 2023

Torah: Genesis 47:28-50:26

Haftarah: 1Kings 2:1-12

Ketuvim Shlichim: John 3:9-18

Talmidim Shel Yeshua 20

Shabbat shalom mishpacha! Our *parasha* this week is *Vayechi*, meaning “And lived,” but often presented as “He lived.” *Vayechi* refers to Jacob, who lived in *Mitzrayim*, the land of Egypt, for 17 years. In this *parasha*, the last one in the Book of *Bereshit*, Genesis, Jacob is nearing the end of his life. Two important passages of Scripture in this *parasha* are his blessing of his grandsons, Joseph’s sons, *Ephrayim* and *Mana’she*, and his prophetic words over his twelve sons. This is also the fourth and last *parasha* telling the story of Joseph, four very powerful prophecies of “the last days.”

We continue today with *Talmidim Shel Yeshua 20*. As we have seen in *Sha’ul’s* words of Romans 10:4, “Messiah is the goal of the *Torah*.” ADONAI pictured His Son Yeshua in many places in the *Torah*, but possibly none quite so powerfully as in *parshiyot Vayeshev, Miketz, Vayigash* and *Vayechi*, the four which tell the story of Joseph. Not only is Yeshua powerfully pictured, but also the whole story of the *acharit hayamim*, “the last days.” The world, this globe of 8 billion living creations of G-d, is now very near the climax of the story pictured in Joseph and his family.

What is the picture which ADONAI is showing us in these four portions about Joseph? In the first *parasha, Vayeshev*, we see *Yosef* pictured as deity when his father, mother and brothers, pictured as the sun, moon and stars, bow down to him, a picture of ADONAI. Looking more closely, we then see Joseph falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife, a picture of Caiaphas the High Priest who falsely accused Yeshua. This accusation resulted in Joseph being imprisoned, a picture of Yeshua’s death and burial. In *Parasha Miketz*, Joseph is brought out of prison by Pharaoh and elevated to the position of acting king of Egypt. This is a picture of ADONAI raising Yeshua from the dead and making Him High Priest of Israel. Judah and nine of Joseph’s brothers appear before him, but don’t recognize him, a picture of those people of Israel who did not recognize Yeshua as *Mashiach*, Messiah of Israel when He lived among them. In *Parasha Vayigash*, Judah pleads for Benjamin’s life, Joseph reveals himself as Joseph and Jacob and all his family go down to Egypt to sojourn. In this regard, Judah is a picture of Yeshua’s Jewish disciples who began at the *Shavuot*, the Pentecost after Yeshua’s ascension, and have continued through the ages to contend for their brother and sister Jew’s salvation.

We have seen ADONAI’s plan for the world pictured in Joseph and his family, a picture and foreshadowing of Yeshua and His family of Israel. This is not a picture recognized by everyone because it has become so distorted by the primary evil spirit that Revelation 12:10 calls the “accuser of the brothers,” the same one that *Shimon Kefa* calls our “adversary.”

(1Peter 5:8). Since being pictured as a serpent in The Garden, *HaSatan* has been the instrument of divisiveness, not only among Yeshua's followers, but also as a catalyst among those who oppose ADONAI. But, our guide, the words in Genesis through Revelation, are not difficult to understand if you begin with the right premise. Our goal is to understand Scripture in the way that ADONAI wishes us. Is ADONAI antinomian? If Yeshua is not antinomian as we have shown numerous times (Matthew 5:17-19), then His Father is not.

The majority of the misunderstanding contributing to the antinomian doctrine in Yeshua's body today comes from a misunderstanding of *Sha'ul's* writings, an understanding put there by the early Church Fathers. Antinomian, meaning "against law," is the theology relating to the view that Christians are released by grace from the obligation of observing the Mosaic Law. This theology had its origin in the early centuries after Yeshua died when Gentiles began to outnumber Jewish followers of Yeshua. *HaSatan* implanted a hatred of Jews in those who are called "the Church fathers" and their anti-Jewish attitudes led to their antinomian theology. This is documented in their own writings for those who care to read them. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* documents those who wrote before 325 CE and *The Post-Nicene Fathers*, those who wrote after. Their hatred of Jews and their opposition to anything Jewish is clearly displayed. The *Beit Shalom* book, *The Relationship of Messianic Judaism and Christianity*, gives some of the details. (chapter 3, "G-d's Plan of Redemption I, The Early Centuries). In it, we read that around 130 CE, a man named Marcion, the son of a bishop in Asia Minor, began to teach. He is now viewed by most as a heretic, but his teachings crept in and remain very much a part of Church doctrine and theology to this day. He taught that the Hebrew Scriptures "have no value or authority for the Church." He believed and taught that the grace of G-d as taught by Paul had replaced the Law. According to him, Paul taught a more excellent way of grace. Even though Marcion was later repudiated as a heretic by the Church for his other teachings, somehow his teachings of the dualistic concept of grace vs. law was accepted as truth by the Church. By the year 350, antisemitism was firmly established. A decree from the Apostolic Canons states: "If any clergyman shall enter into a synagogue of Jews or heretics (Nazarenes) to pray, let him be deposed. If a layman do so, let him be excommunicated... If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any one of the list of clergy keeps fast or festival with the Jews, or receives from them any of the gifts of their festivals, let him be excommunicated... If any Christian brings oil into a temple of the heathen, or into a synagogue of the Jews, or lights lamps, let him be excommunicated." (*Beit Shalom* Red Book). The term heretic is synonymous with the term Nazarene, those Jews who were disciples of Yeshua who followed *Torah*. The Christians of that time considered them heretics. By this time, 350 CE, antinomian doctrine was fully developed and the love that Yeshua commanded between His followers was completely absent.

Most of those who follow an antinomian doctrine today generally have no idea how or why it is what it is or how it started and just continue to follow it because that is what they have been taught. This is not a criticism of them because I believe that most followers of Jesus do so conscientiously and in good faith. But, even if we differ in belief, we wish to be in love and unity of faith with those who disagree with us. We do have unity of faith with regard to the *Besorah*, the Gospel. We believe alike, that salvation is by faith through ADONAI's grace alone. It is after salvation that we differ in our understanding of Scripture.

As Yeshua said: 31, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly My disciples. 32 You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free!" (John 8:31-32 TLV). His Word is where we will find the truth. To find the truth, we have to be honest about our interpretation. The first principle of *PARDES*, the garden of Hebrew interpretation, is the principle of *P'shat*.

The first of four methods of interpretation, the word's actual meaning is "to flatten or to spread out." This is interpreted to mean, to tell the whole story or to express the truth as it was originally intended by the speaker, what it meant when it was spoken.

Those who follow an antinomian theology, a theology which teaches that Law has passed away and has no part with life in Yeshua, can only do so by taking Scripture out of context, changing the *p'shat*. In Acts 10, when *Shimon Kefa* had his vision of the sheet coming down with all kinds of unclean animals on it and ADONAI said: "kill and eat *Kefa*," He was not saying that Peter could now eat snakes, scorpions and ham. Peter understood that and he clearly explained the meaning of his vision to Cornelius and the other Gentiles when he said: 28 ..., "*You yourselves know that it is not permitted for a Jewish man to associate with a non-Jew or to visit him. Yet God has shown me that I should call no one unholy or unclean.*" (Acts 10:28 TLV). Jews not being permitted to associate with Gentiles was a man-made rule present in 1st century Judaism. ADONAI hadn't and didn't change His *Torah*. His *kosher* laws are still *kosher* laws. What G-d revealed as being clean through the vision of the sheet was the Gentiles, who before this time had no access to ADONAI except through conversion to Judaism. They were unclean and Jews were commanded not to even enter their houses. If they became Jewish proselytes and converted to Judaism, they were then considered Jews and not unclean Gentiles. But, when ADONAI showed *Shimon Kefa* that the separation of the Jews from Gentiles was a man-made doctrine of Judaism, it opened the door for the blessing of Abraham for the nations (Genesis 12:1-3), that Gentiles could be grafted into Israel (Galatians 3:13-14). Unless this man-made Jewish doctrine was exposed and changed, ADONAI's plan to graft the Gentiles into Israel would not have happened. As it was, it was seven to ten years after the Holy Spirit was poured out on Jews at *Shavuot* when the Gentiles were declared clean. And, that was most likely ADONAI's plan. Those who interpret this vision as repealing the laws of *kashrut*, the *kosher* laws, are doing so in opposition to the clear teaching of the text (Acts 10:28), ostensibly to uphold an antinomian theology. Without realizing it, by denying the truth revealed through Peter's vision, they are rejecting the very thing which opened the door for Gentiles into the Commonwealth of Israel through the blessing of Abraham and their own salvation. One modern version of the Bible even goes so far as to interpret it this way: ¹⁵ *The voice spoke to him again, "When God says that something can be used for food, don't say it isn't fit to eat."* (Acts 10:15 CEV).

Through *Kefa's* vision, ADONAI was showing Yeshua's disciples that He wanted the Gentiles to have an opportunity to be a part of what He was doing through the New Covenant. Just how this was to be applied came up again not too long after Peter's vision. It's found in Acts 15 and referred to in many Bibles as "The Jerusalem Council." Antinomian theology erroneously concludes that this council, made up of Yeshua's brother *Ya'akov*, the *nasi*, the leader of the Jerusalem congregation, along with *Shimon Kefa*, *Sha'ul* and other apostles and elders, ruled that Gentiles did not have to keep the *Torah*, the Law. But, it was much more complicated than that. It all came about because some Jews who had trusted in Yeshua and were a part of the party of the Pharisees went down to Antioch and were teaching that the Gentiles coming to faith in Yeshua could not be saved unless they were circumcised "according to the *Torah* of Moses." *1 Now some men coming down from Judea were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."* (Acts 15:1 TLV). This raises the question: how is one circumcised according to Moses? As you well know, ADONAI gave circumcision through Abraham. But, these Pharisees were talking about something else, specifically, the circumcision commanded by ADONAI through Moses in Exodus 12 in order for Gentiles to eat the Passover. The Messianic Pharisees posed their question about being circumcised according to Moses first, but then went further: *5 But*

some belonging to the party of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the Torah of Moses.” (Acts 15:5 TLV). Essentially what these Messianic Pharisees believed is that Gentiles who accepted Yeshua had to become Jewish proselytes just as the custom had been for several centuries. Circumcision and keeping *Torah* were a requirement for conversion to Judaism. *Sha’ul* and *Barnaba* did not agree with them that Gentiles should be made Jewish proselytes and brought that question to the Jerusalem group which they believed had the authority to deal with it, the Apostles and elders. 7 After much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God chose from among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the message of the Good News and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, testified to them by giving them the *Ruach ha-Kodesh*—just as He also did for us. 9 He made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts through faith. (Acts 15:7-9 TLV). Peter had not long before been given the vision of the sheet to show that ADONAI wanted Gentiles to hear the Good News of Yeshua. And, when he went to Cornelius’ house, the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit, fell on the Gentiles just as He had on the Jews on *Shavuot*, the Pentecost, which occurred 50 days after Yeshua’ death on the cross. What Peter said was that G-d caused this to happen to Cornelius and the members of his household without circumcision or any formal conversion. And, they were both saved and filled with the Holy Spirit.

The next verse is the one that most who hold to an antinomian theology choose as the definitive evidence that Gentiles are not to follow *Torah*. *Kefa* asked: 10 Why then do you put God to the test by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples—which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11 But instead, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Yeshua, in the same way as they are.” (Acts 15:10-11 TLV). Just like the Gentiles, *Kefa* was saved by the grace of Yeshua, but he was already keeping the commandments at that time and as shown by the vision of the sheet, he did not stop obeying *Torah*. The question was, do Gentiles have to be commanded to keep *Torah* in order to be saved. Peter said no, salvation is only through grace. But, he also brought up something which he called a yoke that the Jews themselves had had difficulty with for centuries.

What is that yoke? Is it following *Torah*, obeying the Law? We’ve established in our past messages that *Torah* was something which ADONAI established, not something man-made, something which *Kefa* and *Sha’ul* and the others upheld. We saw it in *Sha’ul*’s teaching about *Torah* in his letter to the Romans and in his offering of sacrifices at the Temple for a Nazirite vow later on in the Book of Acts (Acts 21). We also saw it in Peter’s refusal to eat anything unclean when he had the vision of the sheet. *Torah* is indeed of G-d, but not as a requirement for salvation. After trusting Yeshua, following *Torah*, being obedient to ADONAI’s commands, is the reasonable service of a grateful member of ADONAI’s family. The yoke Peter spoke about has nothing to do with the written *Torah*. The disciples loved ADONAI’s *Torah* and keeping His commandments was not a burden for them. The Psalmist wrote: 97 O how I love Your Torah! It is my meditation all day. 98 Your mitzvot make me wiser than my enemies—for they are mine forever. (Psalms 119:97-98 TLV). This was a general theme of many Psalms and Proverbs. The “yoke” was not the *Torah* given by ADONAI. The yoke *Kefa* spoke of is another kind of yoke, a requirement placed on Israel by the Pharisees and not by ADONAI.

The overall question being dealt with by the Jerusalem Council was “should Gentiles who have trusted Yeshua be required to become Jewish proselytes?” That’s what it boiled down to. But, there was a part of the conversion requirements to Judaism that was the yoke

to which Peter objected. In Yeshua's day, there were two *Torahs* of Moses. The Law of Moses given by ADONAI through Moses was called the *Torah Shebiktav*, meaning written *Torah*. This was the *Torah* that *Kefa* and *Ya'akov* and *Sha'ul* and the others readily followed. The second *torah* was called the *Torah She'b'al Peh*, the *torah* of the mouth, the "oral law." This *torah* was "supposedly" passed down from Moses orally and was commanded to be followed by the Pharisees of Yeshua's day and continues to be followed by the more orthodox in rabbinic Judaism today. The *oral torah* of the 1st century was eventually written down in about 200 CE and became known as the *Mishnah*, the foundational part of the *Talmuds*. Simon Peter did not believe it then and most in Messianic Judaism don't believe it today. In fact, we reject any source other than ADONAI's written Word, Genesis to Revelation, His *Torah Shebiktav*, as being authoritative for us. We believe in *sola scriptura*, by Scripture alone. The *oral torah* of the Pharisees was the yoke which neither Peter nor the fathers could bear. It contained such things as requiring the ritual washing of hands up to the wrist before partaking of any food. Yeshua condemned this practice in Mark 7. The *oral torah* was a yoke placed by the Pharisees sometime after returning from Babylonian captivity and it continues to be rejected by Messianic Jews today.

Here is another difficult to understand statement from *Sha'ul*: 1 "Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of disputes about opinions." (Romans 14:1 TLV). Who is the one weak in faith? *Sha'ul* never visited the Roman congregation before he wrote this letter, but he seems to know something about them. Priscilla and Aquilla had been members of that congregation before they met him and most likely shared information with him. They were in a group of Jews who were expelled from Rome in the year 49 by the Emperor Claudius (reported by the Roman historian Suetonius). To understand whom *Sha'ul* refers to as the weak, we have to know the make-up of the congregation. We think of a congregation as being one group gathered together such as we are here, but the congregation at Rome is thought to have been a number of separate groups in the Rome area, small congregations made up of both Jews and Gentiles. *Sha'ul's* letter would have been passed around and read in each of their groups, which in totality was the overall congregation at Rome. They most likely met in homes and in synagogues with many Gentiles in the different groups. From *Sha'ul's* words in Romans 2:17, we know that there were Jews in the groups. The verses following, 18-25, lead us to believe that some of these Jewish persons might not have known Yeshua. This would mean that the combined congregations of Rome contained believing Jews, non-believing Jews, believing Gentiles and possibly non-believing Gentiles.

Regarding this mixed group, *Sha'ul* wrote: 2 "One person has faith to eat anything, but the weak eats only vegetables." 3 "Don't let the one who eats disparage the one who does not eat, and don't let the one who does not eat judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him." (Romans 14:2-3 TLV). Tim Hegg in his book, *Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Volume 2*, gives insight regarding these verses. He believes that rather than a kosher versus non-kosher argument, this seems to be between vegetarianism and those who also eat meat. The problem with meat for some was whether or not it had been offered to idols and also possibly whether or not the animal had been slaughtered in the prescribed Jewish way and having its blood drained. In the Roman common meat market, meat was not slaughtered according to the Jewish kosher way. There was also meat slaughtered in the Jewish manner locally available if a person preferred, but apparently, some believers bought their meat from the common meat market. Regarding meat offered to idols, *Sha'ul* had written three or four years earlier: 13 "For this reason, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I do not cause my brother to stumble." (1Corinthians 8:13). His message to the Corinthians (8:1-13) was that it is all right to eat meat offered to idols. Idols are nothing, but don't eat

meat offered to them if it would cause your brother to stumble or cause his faith to be affected. This “weak” one may have rejected meat from the common meat market because of the possibility that it may have been offered to idols or because it had not been slaughtered in the Jewish way. Because his faith was “weak” in this regard, this person ate only vegetables at a common meal. We see that today with those who have chosen not to eat meat for whatever their reasons. We come together for a covered dish meal and some eat meat while others don’t. The others in Rome, those who ate the meats offered without question, were not to judge whether a person was correct in his decision to not eat meat and to eat only vegetables. The point *Sha’ul* was making was for one group not to judge the other and not whether eating or not eating meat was correct.

Sha’ul continued: 5 “One person esteems one day over another while another judges every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 The one who observes that day does so to the Lord. The one who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and the one who abstains, abstains to the Lord, and he gives thanks to God.” (Romans 14:5-6 TLV). At first glance, this may appear to be a discussion about whether or not to observe the seventh day as the Sabbath, but as we know, *Sha’ul* has made it clear that he follows *Torah*, which includes the keeping of *Shabbat*. It has to be something else. The second verse gives the clue. The most likely possibility is that this discussion is related to fast days, something which was very much a part of Jewish faith in the 1st century and about which Yeshua spoke in His Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 6:16-18). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* explains that “the close contextual association with eating suggests that Paul has in mind a special day set apart for observance as a time for feasting or as a time for fasting” (Everett Harrison, 1976, Vol. 10, p. 146). It is apparent that Paul wasn't discussing the Sabbath, but rather other days during which fasting or abstaining from certain foods was practiced. Here is Hegg’s interpretation of these verses: 5 “One person esteems one (**fast**) day over another (**fast**) day while another judges every (**fast**) day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 The one who observes that (**fast**) day does so to the Lord. The one who eats (**chooses not to fast**), eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and the one who abstains (**fasts**), abstains (**fasts**) to the Lord, and he gives thanks to God.” (Romans 14:5-6). I believe that this is correct. The point in these verses is, don’t judge each other regarding when or if you fast. It’s a personal decision is not based upon Scripture.

Sha’ul continued: 14 “I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Yeshua, that nothing is unholy in itself; but it is unholy for the one who considers it unholy. 15 For if your brother is grieved on account of food, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy by your food the one for whom Messiah died.” (Romans 14:14-15 TLV). *Koinos*, the Greek word used here can mean unholy, common or unclean. The context is given in verse 15, the words “on account of food.” This continues to be about “not causing your brother to stumble” with regard to what you eat or how you speak to another about what he eats. *Sha’ul* is saying here, “meat or other food which is clean according to *Torah* requirements is not unclean in itself, but if one considers it unclean, then to him it is unclean. Don’t grieve your brother because of your liberty to eat food approved by *Torah* as you please. This would include meat offered to idols and other meat not slaughtered in the prescribed Jewish way. But, the food was not itself unclean according to *Torah*. *Sha’ul* would not advocate the eating of non-kosher foods. Ritual slaughter is described in Tractate *Chulin* of the *Mishnah*. By eating meat offered to idols himself, *Sha’ul* demonstrated that he did not follow the requirement of ritual slaughter in Oral *Torah*, but based his belief about meats only on the written *Torah*

Shimon Kefa, in concluding his second letter, wrote: *15 Bear in mind that the patience of our Lord means salvation—just as our dearly loved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom given to him. 16 He speaks about these matters in all of his letters. Some things in them are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist (as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures)—to their own destruction.* (2Peter 3:15-16 TLV). A number of *Sha’ul’s* teachings are very difficult to understand. But, there is an explanation for each one. *Kefa’s* point is clear about some twisting the Scriptures. He is saying that some twist the Scriptures purposefully. Some may innocently incorrectly interpret Scripture, but those who do so with the intent of justifying their own understanding, do so at their own peril. His next statement lets us know that we are on the right track: *17 Since you already know all this, loved ones, be on your guard so that you are not led astray by the error of the lawless and lose your sure footing.* (2Peter 3:17 TLV). Who are the lawless? They are those whom *Yochanan*, John, also wrote about: *4 Everyone practicing sin also practices lawlessness—indeed, sin is lawlessness.* (1John 3:4 TLV). The word “lawlessness” is translated from *anomia* from *anomia*, meaning lawlessness or “against Law.”

Today, we discussed Acts 10, Acts 15, and Romans 14. Last *Shabbat*, we discussed Ephesians 2. These four subjects, along with Colossians 2, are some of the most difficult to understand. We did not have time for Colossians 2 and it is included as Addendum A to this message. But, to us, the message is clear. To us, the message is clear. The Bible is not antinomian and *Torah* is for us today. But, we don’t judge others and their interpretation of Scripture. *Yeshua* is the judge who will judge us all. We are not stupid enough to believe that we know everything or that we have correctly interpreted everything. We will have to answer for our own errors just as will every other person who calls on the name of *Yeshua*.

Since we don’t judge others, what should our prayer be? I believe that it should be for revival, but not only for heart changes. *Yeshua* has shown me by His *Ruach* that we are to pray for a “revival of truth” along with a revival of hearts, repentance. *Yeshua* said to the Jews who had trusted in Him: *31 ... , “If you abide in My word, then you are truly My disciples.”* (John 8:31 TLV). Word is translated from the Greek *logo*. *Logo* or *logos* in the Septuagint, the Greek language translation of the Hebrew *Tanakh*, is frequently translated from the Hebrew *d’var*. What is *Yeshua’s d’var* (דבר)? That is a question with which we are faced. We in Messianic Judaism believe that *Yeshua’s Word*, *d’var ADONAI* (דבר יהוה), is all of *ADONAI’s* commands while others understand *Yeshua’s* commands to only be those things which He directly commanded in the Gospels. In order to promote peace and love, we choose not to judge others’ interpretation of Scripture. But, there is truth, absolute truth, in *ADONAI’s* Word and we are to seek it. We have the Spirit of Truth living in our hearts. *Yeshua* said: *13 “But when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on His own; but whatever He hears, He will tell you. And He will declare to you the things that are to come.”* (John 16:13 TLV). But, we have to ask and to seek for answers from the *Ruach*. We can do it now. *Yeshua* said: “Seek and you shall find.” (Matthew 7:7b). But, the time is coming, the revival, in which *ADONAI* will cause those who are *Yeshua’s* to have the desire to seek truth. We cannot endure as a body of believers so widely separated by our beliefs as we are now. But, I believe that this coming seeking for truth will be supernatural and it is *ADONAI* who will lead us into His ultimate truth.

We saw in the four *parshiyot* about Joseph a foreshadowing of *Yeshua* and the tribes of Israel. What does Benjamin, the son who was not present when Joseph, *Yeshua*, was revealed, represent? He represents Messianic Judaism, which appeared just as soon as Jews began to trust in *Yeshua* after His death. *ADONAI* restored Messianic Judaism after almost

two thousand years in order to restore His truth to Yeshua's body and to be a catalyst in the salvation of all Israel. Why do we keep hammering away to understand the Scriptures? Why, week after week, do we seek to understand what we as Yeshua's disciples, have been called to do. We do it because we are already saved. We don't have to keep focusing on that, but on how we are to walk after salvation. We focus on truth because Yeshua told us to do it: 31 ..., "If you abide in My word, then you are truly My disciples. 32 You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free!" (John 8:31-32 TLV). We must desire to abide in His Word. We must desire to seek the truth. We will not know it fully until Yeshua comes back and reveals it to us. But, I believe that in the coming revival that there will be a thirst for truth along with sincere repentance and turning back to our "first love," Yeshua. It will be implanted there by ADONAI. Don't wait for the revival. Seek truth now! May He who creates *shalom* in the high heavens, bring peace upon us and all Israel! *Shabbat shalom!*

Addendum A: Colossians 2

Colossians chapter 2 presents four more challenges to understanding *Sha'ul*. In verse 8, he writes: 8 *See that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men and the basic principles of the world rather than Messiah.* (Colossians 2:8 TLV). This is straight-forward and understandable without advanced interpretation. Philosophy is translated from *philosophia* meaning, the love or pursuit of wisdom. Since *Sha'ul* has clearly shown that he derives his understanding from *Torah* and the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible of his day, he can only be referring to human wisdom, that devised by the mind of man. Empty deception, translated from *kenēs apatēs*, is a caution against the worthlessness of something promoted by trickery or fraud. The traditions of men could relate to pagan beliefs promoted in idol worship. Basic principles of the world is translated from *stoicheia kosmou*, meaning the basic elements of worldly knowledge rather than the truth of Messiah's death as payment for our sins. *Sha'ul* was speaking against worldly knowledge as a substitute for scriptural knowledge and belief.

In the next verses (9-13) *Sha'ul* continues to tell of what Messiah Yeshua provided for us and includes this statement: 14 *He wiped out the handwritten record of debts with the decrees against us, which was hostile to us. He took it away by nailing it to the cross.* (Colossians 2:14 TLV). Some say that this is the *Torah*, that it was nailed to the cross, thereby eliminating it. The Greek *cheirographon* (khi-rog'-raf-on) means "a legal document," referring to a legal bill of charges detailing our sins, sins which condemned us. *Doqmasin* refers to a decree declaring us guilty of our sins. What did Yeshua nail to the cross? He nailed the list of our sins to it, thereby removing our guilt through His sacrifice. As we have shown, the *Torah* remains in effect and is the instrument which identifies any re-established guilt which we may incur after our initial declaration of innocence by Yeshua.

After explaining that Yeshua has wiped out the bill of charges of our sins, *Sha'ul* then says "therefore:" 16 *Therefore, do not let anyone pass judgment on you in matters of food or drink, or in respect to a festival or new moon or Shabbat.* (Colossians 2:16 TLV). The Greek words *brōsei* and *posei* mean just that, the food that you eat or the liquid that you drink. *Heorté* means either feast or festival. *Neomēnias* (noo-may-nee'-as) means "new moon," referring to a ceremony in relation to the time of the first of a new month. Lastly, *sabbatōn* (sab'-bat-on) refers to the Hebrew Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Those who approach this from an antinomian position assume that *Sha'ul* is telling the Colossians not to let Judaizers convince them that they should obey *Torah*. But, it is the reverse which is true.

Sha'ul is not antinomian and is telling the Colossians not to let antinomians judge their practice of following *Torah* by 1) obeying the kosher laws (Leviticus 11), 2) by observing the Festivals of ADONAI (Leviticus 23), 3) by following *Torah* with regard to the New Moon (Numbers 10 and 28) or by 4) observing ADONAI's *Shabbat* (Exodus 20:8-11).

Colossians was probably written around 62 CE during the time that *Sha'ul* was in prison in Rome. This relates in part to our earlier discussion of Hebrews 8:13 with regard to the fading and eventual passing away of the Levitical priesthood, the necessary element needed to observe both New Moons and Festivals with their required sacrifices. *Sha'ul's* statement meant: "Don't let antinomians judge you with regard to your obedience to "ADONAI's *Torah*." Some believe that this refers to the practices of Gnostics, those holding to Greek forms of thought and mysticism. This is a possibility, but the belief that *Sha'ul* commanded the Colossians to not follow *Torah* is an impossibility. To the Roman governor Felix, he said: 14 *"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way (which they call a sect), I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything written in the Torah and the Prophets."* (Acts 24:14 TLV). To the Philippians, he had written: 6 ...; *as for Torah righteousness, found blameless.* (Philippians 3:b TLV). *Sha'ul's* testimony was that he was obedient to ADONAI's *Torah*.

Then he wrote: 17 *These are a foreshadowing of things to come, but the reality is Messiah.* (Colossians 2:17 TLV). What is a foreshadowing of things to come? One example is the Egyptian Passover. It foreshadowed Yeshua's fulfilment of Passover by His death as our Passover lamb. *Shavuot*, the Pentecost of *Torah* was a foreshadowing of the *Shavuot* following Yeshua's death on the cross during which the *Torah* earlier written on stone was written on hearts by the *Ruach Kodesh*. What we eat or drink is fulfilled in Yeshua, the Bread of Life, as are the New Moon and Festivals. Yeshua is the fulfillment of *Shabbat* by the eternal Sabbath rest we receive when we trust in Him. We continue to obey the kosher laws and to keep *Shabbat*, but the New Moon and Festivals with sacrifices can no longer be observed. There is no Levitical priesthood or Temple in which to carry them out. As we have observed, ADONAI has put on hold all those commands requiring either Levitical priesthood or Temple to carry them out. Those that remain, the kosher laws, *Shabbat* and many other commands, are still in effect and are the judgment of sin. (1John 3:4).