

Messianic Messages IV: God as King

Yahweh went to great lengths to tell us who His Messiah would be. He declared unambiguously that this anointed One would be a descendant of Abraham, an Israelite from the tribe of Judah, and come from the line of King David, though He would also somehow be God incarnate. He narrowed His human lineage to a highly improbable set of circumstances—met in the end by only one man that we know of. He specified three different places, *all of which* the Messiah had to “come from,” one way or another. He defined the nature of His ministry and mandated His age at its commencement. He specified the price of His betrayal, the date of His appearing, and the precise nature of the wounds He would suffer on our behalf (*and* the ones He would not). Then He told us that for “snakebite,”—the death that Satan the dragon would have us all suffer—the cure would be to look in faith to One lifted up on a pole. *That one* narrowed the field a bit.

God even gave us heavy-handed hints about the coming Messiah's personal identity, saying, “**My name is in Him.**” (Exodus 23:21) “*My name?*” That would be Yahweh—the name by which our God identified Himself to Moses at the burning bush, a name He used seven thousand times in the Tanach to identify Himself (and a name we consistently and foolishly edited out of His scriptures, replacing it with a anemic and misleading title: “The Lord.”) Another 49 times the shortened form “Yah” is used (*also* edited out of existence in most versions but correctly rendered in the NKJV in Psalm 86:4). We'll recognize “Yah” as a component of such illustrious biblical names as Nehemiah (meaning “Yahweh has comforted”), Isaiah (“Yahweh has saved”), Jeremiah (“Yahweh establishes”), Obadiah (“servant of Yahweh”), Zephaniah (“hidden of Yahweh”) and Zechariah (“Yahweh remembers”). All those names have been “anglicized,” of course. Yâsha`yah and Yirmâyah (Isaiah's and Jeremiah's *real* names) still sound strange and foreign to most of us.

The New Testament, having been penned in Koine Greek and transmitted to us through Latin, doesn't help us much. We read that Mary was told, “**Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.**” (Luke 1:31) But actually, it wasn't “Jesus” at all. It was the rather common Hebrew name Yâhowshuwa`, which we usually transliterate “Joshua,” but which (since the “J” sound didn't exist in the Hebrew alphabet) I have been consistently transliterating “Yahshua.” This name in turn has two component sources, *yâshuw`ah* (meaning salvation) and Yah. “Joshua” thus means “Yahweh is

salvation.” This, being Jesus’ *real* name, has Yahweh’s name within it—just as indicated in the Torah. But a name (*shem* in Hebrew, *onoma* in Greek) is more than what you call someone; it is also (as far as Biblical names are concerned) meant to convey one’s character, reputation, title or unique personal identity. So the name Jesus or Joshua (Yâhowshuwa`, i.e., Yahshua) indicates not only the fact that Yahweh is salvation, but that the person who bears this name is intended or destined to characterize this concept as a living reality.

It behooves us, then, to track down the “salvation” component of the Messiah’s name, since Yahweh is said to *be* this thing. The word *yâshuw`ah* (pronounced, not coincidentally, the same as “Yahshua”) is used 78 times in the Tanach. It is the passive participle of the Hebrew verb *yasha*: “to save, deliver, rescue, or liberate.” It is usually translated “salvation” or “deliverance” in our English Bible versions. And although this is a perfectly correct rendition, my contention is that Yahweh was also telling us Who His Messiah would be—*by name*: Yahshua.

Here are a few of the more blatant examples from the Torah: **“For Your salvation [yâshuw`ah] I wait, O Yahweh.”** (Genesis 49:18) Jacob was waiting not just for salvation, but *Yahweh’s* salvation: Yahshua. **“Yahweh is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation [yâshuw`ah]; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will extol Him.”** (Exodus 15:2) Note: Yahweh *has become* Yahshua! And He (the personified Salvation—Yahshua) is identified as “my God.” **“But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked—You are grown fat, thick, and sleek—Then he forsook God who made him, and scorned the Rock of his salvation [yâshuw`ah].”** (Deuteronomy. 32:15) Here Yahweh has prophesied Israel’s scornful future mindset against His Messiah.

The historical and wisdom books refer to Yahshua as well: **“Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Yahweh, among the nations, and I will sing praises to Your name. He is a tower of deliverance [yâshuw`ah] to His king, and shows lovingkindness to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever.”** (II Samuel 22:50-51) Note that Yahweh was “Yahshua” in the eyes of King David. **“Sing to Yahweh, all the earth; proclaim the good news of His salvation [yâshuw`ah] from day to day.”** (I Chronicles 16:23) Yahshua is Yahweh’s “good news.” We didn’t really have to wait until we got into the “Gospels” to learn that, did we? **“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. He also shall be my salvation [yâshuw`ah], for a hypocrite could not come before Him.”** (Job 13:15-16) Here Yahweh is equated with the One who “shall be” Yahshua. Job has also identified Yahshua as the One who enables us to stand before Yahweh as if we were blameless and holy—for that is what his salvation does for us.

References to God’s salvation, personified in the Messiah, are ubiquitous in the Psalms. **“Many are they who say of me, ‘There is no help [yâshuw`ah] for him in God.’”** (Psalm 3:2) Israel’s denial of their Messiah is once again predicted. **“Have**

mercy on me, O Yahweh! Consider my trouble from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death, that I may tell of all Your praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion. I will rejoice in Your salvation [yâshuw`ah].” (Psalm 9:13-14) **“But I have trusted in Your mercy. My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation [yâshuw`ah].”** (Psalm 13:5) In these two passages, the Psalmist David voices a significant component of the most oft-repeated prophetic theme in all of scripture: that Israel *will* come to recognize that Yahshua is their Messiah. Their national spiritual restoration as predicted in Ezekiel 37:11-14 depends on it. **“Oh, that the salvation [yâshuw`ah] of Israel would come out of Zion! When Yahweh brings back the captivity of His people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.”** (Psalm 14:7, repeated in Psalm 53:6) As Moses said, when the Messiah comes, He will arise from Israel.

Yahshua quoted this Psalm on the cross, applying it to Himself: **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping [yâshuw`ah] Me?”** (Psalm 22:1) The pain of the cross was more than merely physical. As Yahshua “became sin” for us, Yahweh had no choice but to distance Himself from His only begotten Son. **“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help [yâshuw`ah] of His countenance.”** (Psalm 42:5, repeated in both 42:11 and 43:5) We are to praise God for Yahshua because He is literally the countenance, the face, the presence of Yahweh among us. **“Truly my soul silently waits for God. From Him comes my salvation [yâshuw`ah]. He only is my rock and my salvation [yâshuw`ah]. He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved.”** (Psalm 62:1-2) Yahshua comes from God. And oh, by the way, “He alone (i.e., God) *is* Yahshua.” **“God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation [yâshuw`ah] among all nations.”** (Psalm 67:1-2) Yahshua will be known among all nations, and this is equated with “Your (God’s) way being known on earth.” This is a prayer for Yahweh’s mercy and justice to be shown during His Millennial reign, just as Yahshua instructed us to pray: **“Your kingdom come; Your will be done in earth as it is in heaven.”** (Matthew 6:10) Yahweh’s kingdom, and His will, are actually *Yahshua’s* kingdom and will.

“A fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel, because they did not believe in God, and did not trust in His salvation [yâshuw`ah].” (Psalm 78:22) Once again, Yahweh has predicted Israel’s rejection and disbelief—and He says He’s angry. **“O Yahweh, God of my salvation [yâshuw`ah], I have cried out day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You. Incline Your ear to my cry.”** (Psalm 88:1-2) Yahweh is the God of Yahshua. Why would anyone want to be His enemy? **“He [God’s “holy One”] shall cry to Me, ‘You are my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation [yâshuw`ah].’”** (Psalm 89:26) Here God the Father is once again equated with Yahshua. **“Salvation [yâshuw`ah] is far from the wicked, for they do not seek Your statutes.”** (Psalm 119:155) Yahshua is far from the wicked. We should therefore want to be close to Him. **“Yahweh, I hope for Your salvation [yâshuw`ah], and I do Your**

commandments.” (Psalm 119:166) Doing Yahweh’s commandments is equated here with hoping for Yahshua. The whole Torah points toward this one reality.

Of all the prophets, Isaiah saw most clearly the connection between Yahweh and His salvation, personified in Yahshua the Messiah. **“In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: ‘We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation [yâshuw`ah] for walls and bulwarks.’”** (Isaiah 26:1) Yahshua, he says, is appointed by Yahweh to be Israel’s defender. And once again, we are told that Judah *will* in the end recognize Yahshua as its savior. **“Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation [yâshuw`ah] to the ends of the earth.’”** (Isaiah 49:6) Yahshua will be a light to the Gentiles first—Then He will raise up Israel (those who allow themselves to be “preserved”). The same Savior will accomplish both feats: Yahshua. And finally, **“Thus says Yahweh: ‘Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation [yâshuw`ah] is about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed.’”** (Isaiah 56:1) Yes, Yahshua (who is the embodiment of Yahweh’s righteousness) is about to come.

The evidence is overwhelming: Yahweh told us time and again who His anointed one would be—*by name*: Yahshua. And His name reveals His character, His function, and His role: He would be Yahweh in the flesh, our deliverer and our salvation from the curse of sin.

MESSIANIC FINGERPRINTS

(983) *The Messiah will perform His service between the ages of twenty-five and fifty, officially entering His ministry at the age of thirty.* **“Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘This is what pertains to the Levites: From twenty-five years old and above one may enter to perform service in the work of the tabernacle of meeting; and at the age of fifty years they must cease performing this work, and shall work no more.’”** (Numbers 8:23-25) **“From thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, you shall number them, everyone who enters the service to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting.”** (Numbers 4:30) God is not a control freak. When He says to the Levites “your career in My service will take place between your twenty-fifth and fiftieth years, but you will begin your service *in an official capacity* at thirty years of age, we can be reasonably certain there’s more to this than “human resources” issues for one tribe in Israel. This is a prophecy of the Messiah’s tenure of service as a mortal man: He must not begin “working” before His twenty-fifth year, and He will have finished His mission prior to His fiftieth birthday. Moreover, He must be officially inaugurated or ordained in some fashion when He is thirty years old.

So how does this line up with the Gospel narratives? Perfectly. **“Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age.”** (Luke 3:23) Though there can be no doubt that His Messianic Self-awareness had crystallized years prior to this, Yahshua—obedient to the Torah—waited until He was thirty to “officially” begin to show the world who He was. What was the occasion? It’s stated in the previous verses: **“Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, ‘You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.’”** (Luke 3:21-22)

And how old was He when He declared, “It is finished”? His earthly ministry spanned only about three and a half years. He was born at the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall of 2 B.C., placing His baptism, at “about thirty,” sometime near the autumn of 29 A.D. The crucifixion took place in the spring of 33, making Him about thirty-three and a half at His death, well short of the fifty-year “forced retirement” cutoff date. This was verified in general terms by the observations of the very men who would condemn Him: **“Then the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’”** (John 8:57) Once again, Yahshua had precisely fulfilled the requirements of the Torah, and His detractors had unwittingly confirmed it.

- (984) *Someone from the tribe of Judah shall lead Israel.* **“And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran. So they started out for the first time according to the command of Yahweh by the hand of Moses. The standard of the camp of the children of Judah set out first according to their armies; over their army was Nahshon the son of Amminadab.”** (Numbers 10:12-14) If *men* had been leading Israel, I can guarantee that the Levites would have placed themselves firmly in the position of leadership at every level. After all, although the nation at this point had no formal king, Moses (a Levite) was clearly the chief, and his brother Aaron had been designated High Priest, a position of inestimable national significance. From a human point of view, the Levites were in a class by themselves in Israel. So it is something of a shock to find the tribe of Judah placed first in line, preeminent in the order of travel. Other tribes followed as family units, but Levi didn’t even travel as a complete tribe. They were broken up in sub-units, the clans of Gershon and Merari following Zebulun, but the Kohathites (Moses’ and Aaron’s clan—the priests) following three tribes later, buried inconspicuously somewhere in the middle of the parade (but perhaps we should read that, “placed in the very center, at the heart of Israel”).

This wasn't the only place where Judah was given a leadership role, either. **"Now the leaders offered the dedication offering for the altar when it was anointed; so the leaders offered their offering before the altar. For Yahweh said to Moses, 'They shall offer their offering, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar.' And the one who offered his offering on the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah."** (Numbers 7:10-12) Judah was also listed first among the tribes in the wilderness camping arrangement, being assigned to the prime spot, immediately east of the tabernacle of meeting (that is, closest to the only entrance—see Numbers 2:3).

We should ask ourselves why this was so. Why was Judah, and not Levi or some other tribe, given the preeminent position as the leading tribe of Israel? Judah wasn't the firstborn: that distinction fell upon Reuben. Nor was he the son of the wife Jacob loved, Rachel; he was the fourth son of the unloved wife, Leah (see Genesis 29 for that whole strange tale). Was he particularly well behaved? No, he got into as much trouble as the next guy, even fathering his own twin grandchildren. We get our first glimmer of Judah's preeminent role in the prophetic blessing given by his father Jacob: **"Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise."** Actually, the name Judah *means* praise. **"Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's children shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh [that is, 'he to whom it belongs'] comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people."** (Genesis 49:8-10) Jacob has thereby specified that Israel's royal line would come through Judah, and that includes the ultimate King, the Messiah—the anointed One.

The leader of the tribe of Judah, mentioned several times in our passage, was a man named Nahshon. He was Aaron's brother-in-law, and he shows up in Yahshua's family tree (see Luke 3:32) as the great-great-great grandfather of King David. But his name comes as something of a shock. It means "enchanter," or "charmer," something patently antithetical to the set-apart nature of the newly liberated Israel under Yahweh. Nahshon's name (also spelled Nachshown) is based on a root verb (*nachash*) from which we get several concepts: serpent, divination, and bronze or copper. This verb actually means to learn by experience, to observe, take as an omen—hence the derivative: to practice divination. But of course, one need not embrace occultism to observe and learn from experience, and you don't have to be a sorcerer to "read the writing on the wall," which I think is what Yahweh is showing us here. By selecting a man named Nahshon as Judah's leader, Yahweh is subtly saying (as I will explore further in Precept #987), *Observe and learn, O Israel; take this as*

an omen. Soon you will rebel against Me, and I will chasten you with poisonous serpents. I will direct my servant Moses to erect a pole with a bronze serpent upon it as a sign to you. If you look upon it in faith, you will live. Let this bronze serpent (nachosheth nachash) remind you of Nachshown's name, for My Anointed One, who will come from the royal line of the tribe of Judah now being led by Nachshown, shall also be lifted up upon a pole, and whoever trusts in Him will not perish, for I will give him eternal life.

REVERENCE FOR YAHWEH'S MESSIAH

(985) *“Cursing” and “blaspheming” Yahweh carry separate penalties. “Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. And whoever blasphemes the name of Yahweh shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of Yahweh, he shall be put to death.”* (Leviticus 24:15-16) We’ve seen this concept before, but it bears repeating. There are two contrasting sins in view here, carrying two distinct consequences. First is “cursing” God. That translation is off the mark a bit: the word (*qalal*) actually means to esteem lightly, to consider insignificant, to treat with contempt or dishonor. There are many who, whether through superstition or politeness, would never “curse” God; yet they don’t pay Him any attention, either. They go about their lives as if He didn’t exist, or as though if He *did* exist, He wouldn’t or couldn’t do anything to personally help or harm them. *Qalal* is kind of like the relationship we usually have with our elected politicians. On a day-to-day basis, we don’t “curse” them so much as we merely ignore them. And what is the penalty for taking God lightly? We will “bear our sin.” That is, we will carry the weight of our own error. That may not sound too bad until we realize that it’s tantamount to remaining forever unforgiven for our sin. Yahshua’s entire Messianic mission was to provide this forgiveness, atonement, and reconciliation with God to anyone who would place their faith in Him. But since He is Yahweh incarnate—God in the form of a man—taking God lightly would include taking *Yahshua* lightly. Forgiveness will not be forthcoming to one who treats His sacrifice with contempt or indifference.

To “blaspheme the name of Yahweh” is a different matter, and it carries with it an entirely different—and more serious—penalty: *death*. “Blaspheme” is the Hebrew verb *naqab*, meaning literally, to bore, to pierce, or to designate or specify by name—in modern parlance, we might say it means to focus on something in a negative or destructive way, to attack, molest, or assault it. Whereas *qalal* was a passive concept—

“merely” failing to take God seriously—*naqab* implies a proactive hatred of its object, in this case, Yahweh Himself. It speaks of purposely going out of one’s way to harm the name (*shem*: the reputation—how one is known) of God. (Note: you can’t hurt Yahweh in any physical sense, no matter how much you hate Him. Attacking His *shem* is the closest one can get to waging war against God. So the pain of an attack on God is felt by those He loves.) The consequence of *naqab* is therefore of the same nature—active, purposeful, and personal: the penalty is death.

Once again we see that Yahweh draws a distinction between those who simply fail to reciprocate His love and those who purposely choose to defy Him. We discussed this at length in *Future History*, Chapter 29: “The Three Doors,” where the scriptural position on eternal destiny was explored. Careful exegesis revealed that, as one might expect with a loving God, Yahweh does not damn people to an eternity of hellish torments simply because they weren’t smart enough or lucky enough to be in a position to see and respond to His grace. As the Messiah told Nicodemus in John 3, “You must be born from above”—that is, you must *choose* to be adopted into a familial relationship with God—in order to receive everlasting life. In the same way, you won’t suffer eternal damnation—defined as having formed a similar relationship with the adversary, Satan—unless you *choose* that fate. This is characterized here in Leviticus 24 as “blaspheming (*naqab*) the name of Yahweh,” that is, pointedly attacking His *shem*, His name and reputation, especially with the purpose of preventing others from choosing to reciprocate His love.

But what of those who choose neither God nor the devil, who seek to form no spiritual relationship at all (in a word, *qalal*), whether out of ignorance, apathy, or lack of opportunity? These will simply “bear their sin.” Yahweh won’t punish them, but He won’t forgive them, either. Their souls will simply cease to exist when they die. Looking at this from the viewpoint of hell, it might seem like the most tender of mercies—and it is. But looking at it from heaven, it is a tragedy of immense proportions, a horrible waste of precious life and potential.

- (986) *The punishment must fit the crime.* “If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him—fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him.” (Leviticus 24:19-20) This sort of thing is called “cruel and unusual” by most people today. I’ll grant you, it *is* unusual—nothing in western jurisprudence today is this logical, this sensible, this *fair*. We habitually substitute anemic and pointless punishments for infractions of law, typically incarceration or fines, that have neither any direct bearing

on the problem, nor deterrent value, nor redress for the injured party. I submit to you, however, that direct and equivalent response is anything but cruel. It is merely the logical, practical application of the golden rule.

Note that intent is beside the point in this precept. Malice and negligence are treated the same way if they result in the same injury. The guy whose leg you broke when you ran over him in your car doesn't much care if you aimed at him on purpose, couldn't control your vehicle because you were drunk, or were simply too irresponsible to watch where you were going. If you fire a gun randomly into the air and hit somebody three blocks away having a backyard barbecue, you're no less guilty than if you had been purposely aiming at him. Would we do the things we do if we *knew* that the same pain we had caused would be inflicted in turn upon us? I doubt it. Everything we do in this life should be calculated to show mercy and kindness to our fellow man—to be as harmless as possible in every situation.

But be aware also that the “disfigurement” that our precept addresses need not be physical. It can also be psychological or spiritual. The hurtful or misleading things we say and do can leave deep emotional scars; our attitudes and words can result in the spiritual blindness of the people we meet. We need to be careful. We need to be vigilant. On the other side of this coin, we must not fail to warn people of their impending doom, whether out of our laziness, apathy, or a misplaced sense of political correctness: to do so is criminal negligence. I'm not talking about forcing people to submit to our own moral or ethical code, or to toe our religious or cultural line, since “good” behavior won't in itself save anyone. I'm merely saying that if we see them in danger of hurting themselves, we *owe them* a word of caution.

The ultimate example of “disfigurement” at the hands of others, in my opinion, is that of Yahshua at His crucifixion. Isaiah had predicted that He would have “**no beauty, that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men.... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.**” (Isaiah 53:2, 4-5) The gospels report that Yahshua was subjected to scourging with a Roman flagrum, whose leather whips were embedded with sharp pieces of bone or metal. The procedure was often fatal in itself. He was beaten on the head with a rod, struck with fists, mocked, spat upon, had a crown of cruel thorns jammed down upon his brow, and was then forced to carry a heavy wooden *stauros*, a pole or stake, to the place of execution. There He was stripped naked and offered a drug to deaden the pain—which He refused. His outstretched hands were nailed (between

the wrist bones) with long iron spikes to the *patibulum* or cross piece that was then hoisted to rest atop the *stauros*. Once in place, the weight of His body would have caused his shoulders to dislocate from their sockets. His feet were then nailed to the *stauros*, for if He had been allowed to hang freely from his wrists, He would have been unable to fill His lungs with air and would have died within minutes—spoiling the gruesome spectacle. It was the intention of the chief priests to have His legs broken so He would die before the religious holiday began, but He expired before the soldiers had a chance to do it.

My point is that all this “disfigurement” was *caused* by somebody—and not just the four Roman soldiers assigned to do the deed. The guilt can’t even be confined to the political and religious elite who engineered Yahshua’s execution, or even to the Jews in Jerusalem for the Passover festival on the day it happened. No, the guilty parties are those for whose sins Yahshua’s sacrifice was designed to atone: *all of us*. It matters not if we meant to do it, or if we were merely criminally negligent. The sentence of the Torah is: “so it shall be done to him.” There is a debt to be paid.

But who will pay it? If we read further from the Isaiah passage we just visited, we find this: **“He [Yahweh] shall see the travail of His [Yahshua’s] soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He will bear their iniquities.”** (Isaiah 53:11) The very act that defined our guilt can also pay our debt. If we will but accept the fact of our freedom, we can walk out of court as free men. Hallelujah!

- (987) *The cure for sin is to perceive in faith what is set upon the pole. “Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, ‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against Yahweh and against you; pray to Yahweh that He take away the serpents from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. Then Yahweh said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.’ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.”* (Numbers 21:7-9) From Genesis 3 to Revelation 20, evil is personified as a serpent. Satan visited Eve in Eden disguised as a snake, and we see his Millennial incarceration in the same terms: **“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.”** (Revelation 20:1-3) So it can be surprising at first to see *the serpent* being displayed on a pole

to serve as the focal point for faith in God's cure for the poisonous snake bites that were tormenting the Israelites.

Some of our confusion is dissipated when we realize that the "fiery serpent" Yahweh instructed Moses to make, and the "bronze serpent" he placed on the pole, are two different words in Hebrew. "Fiery serpent" is from *sarap*, a verb that means, "to burn," which becomes the basis for two nouns that mean radically different things. One is a venomous serpent, whose bite inflicts burning pain. The other is the transliterated designation "seraph" (the plural of which is the more familiar seraphim), the fiery six-winged angelic beings mentioned only in Isaiah 6. The "bronze serpent," on the other hand, is *nachosheth* (bronze, brass, or copper) *nachash* (the ordinary word for snake or serpent).

The real answer begins to emerge in Yahshua's after-hours discussion with Nicodemus. **"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."** (John 3:14-15) Yahshua is pointedly declaring that the whole "snakes-in-the-wilderness" scenario was but a prophetic dress rehearsal for His own crucifixion, and the outcome is identical: **"And it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."** We've all been bitten, for we have all sinned. The cure for the snakebite of sin has not changed: we must still look with faith upon what was set upon the pole—in the end, Yahshua the Messiah. So why was Moses told to put a symbol for sin—the snake—on the pole? Because that's where our sin would end up, *literally*: **"Be reconciled to God, for He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."** (II Corinthians 5:20-21) The sinless Messiah *became* sin for our sakes. How is that possible? I haven't got a clue, any more than I understand how we can *become* the very righteousness of God. But I'm willing (and thankful) to take it on faith.

There's one more word we need to run down. The "pole" Moses was instructed to erect is the Hebrew noun *nes*, meaning something lifted up, a standard, signal, pole, ensign, banner, sign, sail, or rallying point. It's significance has far more to do with its psychological function than its physical form. And as implied in John 3:14, the "cross" upon which Yahshua would be "lifted up" is equivalent to the *nes* of Numbers 21. As we have seen, the Greek word for "cross" is *stauros*, which actually means an upright stake, a pole or post—making it quite similar in meaning to the Hebrew *nes*.

In a passage that I am convinced prophesies America's fate in the Last Days, Isaiah reports (literally translated), **"Go, swift messengers, to a nation**

spread out and independent, to a people feared and respected from their beginning onward, a nation powerful and measured out, whose land the rivers cut through. All inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth: When He [Yahweh] lifts up a standard [*nes*] on the mountains, you [America, if the description means what it seems to] see it; and when He blows a trumpet [the *shofar*], you give heed to it." (Isaiah 18:2-3) The prophet, I believe, is saying that America will see and rally to the "banner" of Yahweh—the "cross" of Christ. And America *has* done this, more than any other nation on the face of the planet, though it's far from being a universal phenomenon. Note that we Americans will also "hear the trumpet" (this, I'm convinced, means the "catching up" at the last trumpet—the rapture of the Church). And "all inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth" are commanded to take note of this. I wonder if they will.

- (988) *Murderers will suffer the death penalty. "These things shall be a statute of judgment to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty. Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death."* (Numbers 35:29-31) The death penalty for murderers is the unequivocal commandment of God. Those who would do away with it are stuck in the unenviable position of contradicting Yahweh—a place that ought to make them extremely uncomfortable, but apparently doesn't. There are safeguards against false accusations, of course—as you'd expect to see from a God of Justice: at least two witnesses (one of which, I take it, could be forensic evidence) are required to convict someone. And note that, as we saw elsewhere, manslaughter—unintentional or accidental homicide—was dealt with through what amounted to "house arrest." The person responsible for another's death, but not by intentional murder, was required to remain within one of six "cities of refuge" until the death of the High Priest—a thinly disguised metaphor for being indemnified by the sacrifice of Yahshua the Messiah. Note also that "plea bargains" are illegal under God's law: no ransom, whether money, inside information, or sworn testimony against other guilty parties, was to be accepted. The Torah doesn't allow the old Mafia two-step, where a thug kills his way to the top and then "retires" to a light jail term or witness protection in exchange for what he knows about his cohorts in crime when the police start closing in.

I fully realize that our convoluted system of jurisprudence is designed with the best of intentions. It's engineered to deliver justice in an imperfect world. But because perfect wisdom is required to follow Yahweh's model—justice tempered with mercy—we settle for justice

tempered by the law of averages: what seems to work under the most common circumstances. Bottom line: most people who are tasked with making the judgment call are pathologically terrified of executing the wrong man, as well they should be. But at its core, this terror is based on the erroneous assumption that there is no possibility of life after death: that if we punish the wrong man for capital murder, there will be no recourse for him in a higher court—a heavenly court. The fact, however, is that what happens to a man’s body in this life has no bearing on his eternal destiny. None of us get out of here alive, and most of us never learn the hour of our departure ahead of time. The guilty man set free is just as sure to die as the innocent man sent to the gallows.

Alexander Solshenitzin, who spent years unjustly incarcerated in Soviet political prisons, observed that he really had no right to complain, for we’re all guilty of something—whether or not that’s what we’re being punished for at the moment. In point of fact, we’re all guilty of the death of Yahshua the Messiah. Though Yahshua has provided a mechanism for our salvation and vindication—the “death of the High Priest” (Himself) that sets us free from condemnation within the city of refuge (our mortal lives)—some are guilty not of Son-of-Manslaughter, but of murder, intentional and malicious. They have not only declared themselves enemies of God, they have tried to stop others from entering into a relationship with Him through Yahshua the Messiah. The eternal living-death penalty awaits the one who hinders his brother from seeking eternal life, for the purposeful prevention of life is murder.

- (989) *Obey the voice of Yahweh’s Messenger.* **“Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions, for My name is in Him. But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.”** (Exodus 23:20-22) Was God talking about an *angel* here—a spirit messenger being tasked with carrying out His orders—or was He talking about the coming Messiah? The answer is *Yes*—both of these things. The verses following these make it plain that Israel’s near-term battles were in view, and that Yahweh’s angel would lead them against such real-world foes as the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites. But the verses immediately preceding this passage speak of keeping the Sabbath, the Sabbatical year, and meeting three times a year to celebrate Yahweh’s appointments—all things that prophesy Yahweh’s plan of redemption through His Messiah. The word translated “angel” (*malak*) really just means a messenger or representative, one dispatched as a deputy. We should not dismiss the big picture simply

because the small one is so easy to see. The “angel” we need to recognize in these verses is none other than Yahshua. This is a Messianic Message.

Note that the *Malak* is sent by Yahweh to do two things. First, He will “keep you in the way.” That is, He will guard, watch over, restrain, and protect the people of God in the path we have chosen, the journey in holiness we endeavor to take through this life, our manner of conduct and belief. It is no coincidence that the early *ekklesia* was called “the Way,” or that in a very real sense, the *Malak* that indwells us is Yahshua Himself, in the form of the “Spirit of Truth.” (See John 14:17) Second, the *Malak* will “bring you into the place which I have prepared.” You’d have to be blind not to see the connection between this and the promise Yahshua made: “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:1-3)

Next we see a warning, one that can be a bit shocking if we’re used to marshmallow Christianity (you know: soft, sweet, and totally lacking in nutritional value). He says that there are conditions under which the *Malak* will *not* “pardon your transgressions,” literally, “bear your rebellion” (that’s *pesa*: revolt, rebellion, defiance to authority, crime or fault, that which is purposely contrary to God’s standard). We are warned not to “provoke” Him. That’s the Hebrew verb *Marah*, which means to defy, to rebel, to be openly hostile and defiant against authority. The root of this behavior is bitterness, a state of misery, mental distress and anguish. We’re not talking about making mistakes or falling short of perfection here; we’re talking about open mutiny against Yahweh. Don’t expect the Messiah to sweep it all under the rug for you. Why? Because “My name is in Him.” That is, Yahweh’s *shem*, His name, reputation, and character, are *in* the *Malak*—whose name, by the way, is Yahshua: “Yahweh is Salvation.”

Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu wrote in *The Art of War* that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” While that’s not necessarily true in any causal sense (as demonstrated by decades of disastrous U.S. foreign policy) it is certainly true here. “If you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.” But what does it mean to “obey His voice?” The short answer is related by James: “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God.” (James 2:23) One could do worse, I’m thinking.

(990) *Israel’s King will someday rule the earth. “The utterance of him who hears the words of God, and has the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the*

Almighty, who falls down, with eyes wide open: 'I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near. A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult. And Edom shall be a possession; Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession, while Israel does valiantly. Out of Jacob One shall have dominion, and destroy the remains of the city.'" (Numbers 24:16-19) Sometimes a prophecy is as remarkable for the circumstances in which it was given as for its content. When we search the Tanach, we'll see a fair amount of this sort of thing—predictions of a future Jewish King destined to set everything right in the world, a Messiah reigning with a rod of iron. They are invariably delivered by Jewish prophets—men whom the world usually shrugs off as being a bit too enthusiastic in their patriotism and religious fervor. But this prophecy, one of the earliest and most sweeping of its type, is nothing of the sort. It wasn't delivered by an Israelite, but by a gentile who was being paid handsomely (by a *Moabite* king, no less) to curse them: a prophet-for-hire named Balaam.

God is not restricted as to whom He can use to declare His glory and purpose. He doesn't have to use perfect people (if He had, the Bible would have been one *skinny* volume). He doesn't have to use sons of Israel. He doesn't even have to use His friends. It seems strange, but pronouncing God's truth is no particular guarantee of one's relationship with Him. Yahshua explained, **"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"** (Matthew 7:21-23) The criteria for entrance into the Kingdom is not doing great things for God or even worshipping Him (for in the end, *every* knee will bow—whether they want to or not). It's merely being "known" by Him. *That* is what it is to "do the will of the Father."

Paul put it like this: **"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing."** (I Corinthians 13:1-3) Balaam did indeed "have the gift of prophecy," but it "profited him nothing," because he used his gift not for love, but for money. Balaam may have "feared" Yahweh, but he did not revere or respect Him: he didn't want to "know" Him. If love is what drives us, it is because *we are known by God*, for God is love: **"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then**

face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.” (I Corinthians 13:12)

But Balaam’s lack of reverence for Yahweh, as strange as it sounds, does not negate his prophetic gift—which after all, was not given to him for *his* benefit, but for ours. Boiled down to its essentials, the prophecy states that sometime in the unforeseeable future (from the prophet’s perspective—about 3,500 years before our time), one shall arise from the family of Israel who shall be both (1) a star (*kowkab*—a star or its light, or figuratively, a king wielding heavenly power); and (2) a scepter (*shebet*—a rod or club used to control sheep or people, hence a scepter of royal authority or the one who wields it). This ruler, it is said, will possess Edom and Mt. Seir (in today’s southern Jordan) and will “**batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult.**” Moab too is in modern Jordan. “Tumult” is the Hebrew *Sheth*, which can mean any (or all) of several things: rebellion or defiance; a group of nomadic tribes in southern Jordan (today, the home of the world’s largest population of “Palestinian” Arabs); or basic principles, that is, the foundations of society. The word also denotes “buttocks,” the foundation, as it were, of a seated man. Did Balaam just inform us that the Jewish Messiah will someday destroy all the Palestinian buttheads? Or am I reading too much into this?

(991) *Do not take Yahweh’s presence lightly.* “**So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. And you said: ‘Surely Yahweh our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he still lives. Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of Yahweh our God anymore, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?’**” (Deuteronomy 5:23-26) Here’s the scene: three months after the Israelite hordes had left Egypt, they arrived at Mount Sinai, near the northwest corner of modern day Saudi Arabia, having endured several tests of their faith and obedience. Yahweh told Moses to have the people sanctify and prepare themselves for three days. Something big was about to happen.

What they experienced then was beyond anything they had ever imagined. “**It came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because**

Yahweh descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Then Yahweh came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And Yahweh called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.” (Exodus 19:16-20) There, Moses received the Ten Commandments—the heart and summary of the Torah, followed later, apparently, by the rest of it. Yahweh was faced with a bit of a logistics problem here, a balancing act. He wished to demonstrate His power to the people of Israel, so they’d know beyond a shadow of a doubt that He was the One True God. Yes, He’d done that in a score of ways great and small in the past few months, but this time He wanted to make His authority unambiguous, His glory unmistakable—with no “practical” object (like feeding the multitude or destroying the Egyptian armies) in view other than revealing His majesty. The problem was going to be doing this without killing folks—without turning the entire planet into a smoldering cinder. Remember, this is the same God who had declared, *Let there be matter and energy, time and space*, and these things became corporeal reality. If He did too little, the people (being *people*) would not have been suitably impressed, but if He did too much, they would not have survived the encounter.

Being a God of wisdom as well as power, Yahweh gave them a Goldilocks demonstration. It was *just right*: thunder and lightning, fire and smoke, trembling earth and awesome sounds—the mighty blast of a celestial shofar and the very voice of God. For the moment, anyway, the children of Israel were struck with a godly fear—with respect for Yahweh’s power, to be sure, but also with the distinct impression that coming into His presence uninvited would be hazardous to one’s health.

Israel’s godly fear persisted as long as they remained at Mount Sinai—almost a year (Numbers 10:11), during which time they built the Tabernacle and got used to life under Yahweh’s direct rule and provision. But just three days after they broke camp, the complaining began. I’ll admit, my first instinct is to castigate the Israelites for their faithlessness. They had seen and heard the powerful signs of Yahweh’s presence only a year previously; they had been eating His bread and drinking His water ever since. How could they have forgotten so quickly? But then I realize that although my own salvation is a far greater miracle than anything the Israelites ever witnessed, and that God’s provision for me has been an ongoing reality for the past *half century*, I *still* feel like complaining when adversity strikes. At this late date, I should know better. I must never allow my easy familiarity with my Father Yahweh to degenerate into something resembling complacency.

(992) *Ask for a mediator to communicate between you and Yahweh.* “Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’” (Exodus 20:18-19) I can’t help but chuckle at the Israelites’ reaction to Yahweh’s awesome display of power on Mount Sinai: “Hey Moses, that mountain looks really dangerous; so *you* go up there and talk with God, and then come back and tell us what He said, okay?” Of course, the people were absolutely right to be terrified. Yahweh had provided signs and wonders calculated to produce that very effect. Why? Because He wanted to introduce us to the concept of an intermediary—Someone who would stand before the Almighty on our behalf, passing His instructions on to us in a way to which we can relate. Moses here is a picture of the coming Messiah.

Yahweh wasn’t displeased with their timidity in the face of all the sound and fury going on up on Sinai. He had, in fact, strictly warned Moses to declare the mountain off limits to them (Exodus 19:12). In the recounting of the story in Deuteronomy, Moses makes it clear that Yahweh was pleased that the people understood their need for a mediator. They had said, “**You go near and hear all that Yahweh our God may say, and tell us all that Yahweh our God says to you, and we will hear and do it.’** Then Yahweh heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and Yahweh said to me: ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!’” (Deuteronomy 5:27-29) It’s a revealing exercise to compare what the people had said with what Yahweh commended them for saying, for they aren’t precisely the same thing. The people were mostly interested in having someone positioned between themselves and Yahweh, someone who would represent Him and present His instructions without frightening them to death. Yahweh responded, “They are right,” but He wasn’t thinking about Moses; He was envisioning the role *His Messiah* would play: an intermediary between God and men who would give them a heart of reverence and a desire to keep His commandments, for this very reverent obedience would prove to be the key to our well being—for eternity.

(993) *Consider the glory of God a test of our reverence.* “**And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.’** So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.” (Exodus 20:20-21) I realize that this sounds contradictory in English: “Don’t fear, but *do* fear.” And even in

Hebrew, the same word family is used in both places. The verb and adjective *yare* (to fear, revere, or be afraid) are the basis of the noun *yirah*: reverence, fear, piety and respect toward a superior, terror (i.e., a state of anxiety or alarm), worship, awe or awesomeness (that which causes wonder or astonishment). The word translated “test” is central to our understanding here. *Nasah* means to “try, test, or assay (to attempt to learn the true nature of something); to attempt, that is, to exert oneself to do something; or to test or try—cause or allow hardship or trouble in a circumstance, often with choices within the situation, implying that a different outcome is possible.” (*Dictionary of Bible Languages with Semantic Domains*) So I would paraphrase Moses’ admonition: “Do not be afraid, for God has come to ascertain whether or not you will choose to revere Him. His awesome glory has been displayed so that you might not miss the goal He has set before you.”

Don’t complain, asking “Since Yahweh never shows His glory in the world today, how are we supposed to be suitably awed?” Actually, He does it constantly, if only we’ll look for it. The obvious place to start is to look into the sky. **“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.”** (Psalm 19:1) There, we are faced with a choice. We can either view stars as great balls of hydrogen and helium that happened totally by chance, or we can see them as the factories where God manufactures the heavy elements upon which our mortal existence depends. Scientists have figured out *when* God “created the heavens and the earth,” (about 13.7 billion years ago), and they have some idea of how “awesome” it is, but they have not yet determined *how* He did it, and don’t seem to care why. Nevertheless, I submit to you that only a fool can look at the starry heavens and fail to be awed by them.

Then, we can look at the magnificence of Yahweh’s living creation: **“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”** (Matthew 6:28-30) The phenomenon of life is another subject that eludes science, though Yahweh has presented its stunning complexity in seemingly infinite variety. Those not awestruck by life—those who assume it’s a pointless accident of nature—are simply not paying attention. Paul sums it up: **“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God [that is, although they had ample evidence of His existence and benevolence], they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their**

foolish hearts were darkened.” (Romans 1:20-21) We shouldn’t need thunder and lightning or fire and smoke upon the mountaintop to understand something of the power of God, nor should we take His creation—of which we are a part—for granted. It’s all here for our benefit, to teach us to revere Yahweh, so that we might not sin.

- (994) *Know that Yahweh wants us to be filled with His Spirit. “Then Moses said to [Joshua], ‘Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all Yahweh’s people were prophets and that Yahweh would put His Spirit upon them!’”* (Numbers 11:29) The background here is that (as usual) the children of Israel were complaining—this time about the food. Yes, manna was being provided daily, so they weren’t starving to death, but they really missed the leeks, garlic, and fish they’d had to eat as slaves in Egypt. *C’mon, Moses, they whined. This manna is boring! Give us something to eat that’ll make our breath stink. Give us some meat, already!* Moses, of course, had no meat to give them, and frustrated to the point of madness, he told Yahweh (and again, I paraphrase), *Please! Don’t make me tend these ridiculous sheeple any longer. If you love me, just kill me! Put me out of my misery.* (v.15) Yahweh had a better idea, arranging for Moses to share the burden of leadership with seventy elders of Israel—the prototype of the Sanhedrin. These seventy were instructed to surround the Tabernacle, where they were informed that they would soon have so much meat (in the form of low-flying quail) that they’d be vomiting out of their noses before it was all over. Yum.

But that’s another story. These seventy elders were each given the same Spirit that was upon Moses (v.25), and they began to prophesy (Hebrew *naba*’: to speak as a prophet; to communicate a message from a deity, either of proper behavior to a standard, or of future events—*DBL-SD*). But something strange happened. Two of the appointed seventy didn’t get the memo. But back in the camp, they too began carrying on just like their peers over at the Tabernacle—prophesying, speaking out powerfully in the name of Yahweh. The names of the two missing elders are revealing. They were called Eldad and Medad. The “-dad” component (*dowd* or *dawd*) is the basis of King David’s name. It means “beloved.” Medad means “He who is loved,” and Eldad denotes “loved by God.” Some things never change: we who are loved by God can’t help but speak out in His name.

Joshua, jealous for Moses’ sake, was horrified at what seemed to him like a gross breach of spiritual protocol, but Moses was thrilled, pointing out to his protégé that it was God’s ideal that *everybody* would speak to Him, and of Him, and for Him. As a later prophet would put it, “Behold,

the days are coming, says Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says Yahweh. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Yahweh: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know Yahweh,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says Yahweh. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34) The same kind of close personal fellowship the called-out assembly of Yahshua (a.k.a. the Church) enjoys with their God will someday be a living reality in Israel. In the end, the redeemed and restored children of Israel will know Yahweh.

Joel describes what being filled with the Spirit of God looks like: “**And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.**” The glory that Yahweh showed us on Sinai will be reprised as well: “**And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of Yahweh. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of Yahweh shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as Yahweh has said, among the remnant whom Yahweh calls.**” (Joel 2:28-32) That “deliverance” will be personified in the reigning Messiah, Yahshua.

CHOOSE THIS DAY...

- (995) *We should ask Yahweh for a Shepherd to guide us.* “**Then Moses spoke to Yahweh, saying: ‘Let Yahweh, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of Yahweh may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.’**” (Numbers 27:15-17) At this point, a new Israelite generation was preparing to enter the Land. Moses was pushing 120 years of age. More to the point, Yahweh had told him decades before this that he would not be allowed to lead his people into their inheritance. So his thoughts naturally turned to succession of leadership in Israel.

One of the hallmarks of a mature nation is that they know how to transfer power peacefully from one generation to the next. Some nations never do get the hang of it—they simply spasm from one tyrant to the

next, their people desperately hoping that the next regime change won't be quite as bloody as the last. Others suffer from political Alzheimer's: even if they manage to transition to the next government in relative peace, the old social order is forgotten the moment the new leader takes the reins, for law and tradition is sacrificed to the attitudes and whims of the victor of the *coup du jour*—it's literally "winner take all." Then, many nations these days rely on organized mob rule to transition from one regime to the next: it's called "democracy," and it's perpetrated—I mean *achieved*—by convincing more voters than your opponent to vote for you, even if to do so you have to lie, cheat, intimidate, invent scapegoats, or make ridiculous promises you can't hope to deliver on. Most candidates offer "change." Few deliver improvement.

Moses didn't do any of that. He was all too aware that he himself had been called by Yahweh to the task, plucked from obscurity and exile to do a job to which he neither aspired nor felt qualified to perform. (I kind of suspect that this is why God chose him.) In truth, he had been in preparation for his role from birth: Yahweh had engineered his unique qualifications. Moses knew that he wasn't the *leader* of Israel anyway, not really. Yahweh was; Mo was only His secretary, amanuensis, and ambassador. God had put a "government" in place—priests, Levites, and elders tasked with administering a relatively simple and straightforward code of civil law. But nobody in Israel had what we'd call "power." The Torah did not provide for any kind of political supremacy—only positions (mostly hereditary) of service and responsibility. Israel's tribal leaders were mentors and ambassadors, not governors and warlords. There were rules limiting kings, but no provision for acquiring one. There wasn't even a police force: "enforcing" the law was everybody's job. If we compare the statutory administration of early Israel with our national governments today—any of them—it becomes clear that we've gone horribly wrong somewhere.

But Moses knew that battles lay ahead for his people, and that the conquest of Canaan would require a leader tasked with coordinating the armies of Israel with the mind of Yahweh—Who, after all, had promised to fight their battles for them. Having been a shepherd for forty years, Moses knew that the children of Israel were like a big flock of sheep: they might be okay as long as there was food, water, and safety from predators, but if they had to move—for any reason—they'd need a shepherd to guide them. Moses surely had a successor in mind—his assistant, protégé, and friend for the previous four decades—but notice that he didn't suggest to Yahweh, "Hey, how's about we install Joshua as the next Mo-Man?" No,

Moses simply asked Yahweh to choose a worthy and responsible successor. Why can't we do that?

- (996) *Know that Yahweh has provided the Shepherd we need. "And Yahweh said to Moses: 'Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight.'*" (Numbers 27:18-19) Yahweh honored Moses' prayer, and chose the man he had obviously hoped for, but for whom he hadn't lobbied: Joshua, the son of Nun. As if to tell us that God's servants can come from anywhere, the record (in Numbers 13:8) states that Joshua (a.k.a. Hoshea, a.k.a. Jeshua—phonetically, Yahowshuwa or Yahushua) was not from the tribe of Levi (as Moses and Aaron were), nor did he hail from Judah (already established as the preeminent tribe—eventually to emerge as the royal tribe of Israel). Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim.

"Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it." (Deuteronomy 1:38) We (okay, I) tend to think of Joshua as the "kid" that always hung out with Moses—his gofer or minion. But he was more like the full colonel who acts as aide for a four-star general. Joshua, who had led the disastrous spy expedition to Canaan, was apparently the oldest man in Israel when Moses died (since everyone from the exodus generation over twenty had died off except for him and Caleb, who was about thirteen years his junior). The record seems to indicate that Joshua was about fifty-five years old at the time of the exodus, and ninety five when he led the Israelites into the promised land. He died at the age of one hundred and ten.

Moses was instructed to "inaugurate" Joshua. The Hebrew word is *tsavah*, meaning literally to command, give charge to, commission, appoint, or ordain. This ordination was not to be done in secret, but publicly, before the High Priest and the entire congregation. Since Joshua (in whom was the Spirit of Yahweh) is a transparent metaphor for Yahshua the Messiah—they even share the same name—the picture is one of transferring authority (all of which ultimately rests in Yahweh) from Moses to Yahshua, that is, from Law to grace. Again, the names themselves are a clue as to what's happening. Moses means "drawn" in Hebrew (since he was drawn out of the water by Pharaoh's daughter—see Exodus 2:10—or "born" in Egyptian, whereas Yahshua (as we have seen) means "salvation" or "deliverance.") Thus we read the words of Yahshua to Nicodemus explaining this two-step process: **"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I say to you,**

you must be born again [literally, from above].” (John 3:5-7) The state of being “born of water” (“born of flesh”) is thus represented by Moses and His realm, the Law. But being subsequently born of the Spirit is represented by Joshua (i.e., Yahshua), to whom the Law’s authority has been transferred. The Law is fulfilled through our Salvation.

- (997) *Recognize Joshua’s authority.* **“And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before Yahweh for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation.”**

(Numbers 27:20-21) Moses happily did as he had been instructed, relieved to know that Israel would be in good hands for a while after he was gone. **“Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, “Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you.”** (Deuteronomy 31:23) This is really getting interesting. Once more, Joshua is presented as a prophetic dress rehearsal for the coming Messiah. Did you catch it? *Joshua* would be the one to “bring the children of Israel into the land,” but *Yahweh* had promised, “*I* will be with you.” At some symbolic level then, Joshua’s role and Yahweh’s (through Yahshua) are linked, even equated.

Of course, Moses couldn’t have known that his successor’s name was the same as that of the coming Messiah. Yahshua, meaning “Yahweh is Salvation,” is a rather common name in Hebrew history, popping up several times in scripture before we even get close to the New Covenant. But let’s look at Josh’s *father’s* name. Nun is from a word meaning “to continue in perpetuity, to increase, to propagate.” This verb is used only once in scripture: **“His [in context, the Messiah’s] name shall endure forever. His name shall continue [*nun*: go on perpetually, increasing in glory] as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him. All nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be Yahweh, God, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things!”** (Psalm 72:17) So it could be reasonably stated that “Joshua, the son of Nun” is a name that tells us that the one in whom “Yahweh is Salvation” will be “the son of perpetuity.” *Who* is perpetual? *Who* “continues” and “increases?” Again, the answer is contained in the name: “Yahweh” means “I Am,” or “I exist”—a statement denoting perpetual continuance. This is precisely the relationship that exists between the Messiah, Yahshua of Nazareth, who was described in the womb as Immanuel—“God with us”—and God the Father, Yahweh. “Joshua, the son of Nun” is a name that describes who the Messiah would be *and* what the Messiah would do.

“Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as Yahweh had

commanded Moses.” (Deuteronomy 34:9) At the present time, Israel does not “heed” the *ultimate* Joshua, Yahshua the Messiah. Israel as a nation has not listened to Him, nor has this generation done as Yahweh commanded Moses. But the restoration of Israel, their turning back to Yahweh’s Messiah, resulting in a glorious national reawakening, is by far the most oft-repeated prophetic theme in all of scripture. It *will* happen, or Yahweh is a liar.

- (998) *Defer to Yahweh when choosing your leader.* “**When you come to the land which Yahweh your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,’ you shall surely set a king over you whom Yahweh your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.**” (Deuteronomy 17:14-15) This is not, as is sometimes claimed, a command to set up a monarchy in Israel in place of the theocracy that existed under Moses. It is merely instruction on how to go about doing so if and when they ever did. In fact, when it finally happened almost four hundred years later, the move was characterized by God’s prophet as a rejection of Yahweh as Israel’s Leader—even though they followed both the Torah and Samuel’s instructions in the process of the selection of King Saul (see I Samuel 10:17-19).

Several things bear notice in Yahweh’s precept. First, He alone has the authority to choose men to rule over Israel, whether legitimate or not. It’s clear to me that even when evil tyrants ruled, Yahweh had taken a hand in placing them on the throne with an eye toward testing (or even punishing) Israel. Indeed, in the infamous “blessings and cursings” passage of Deuteronomy 28, contrast is drawn between the consequences of asking Yahweh to rule and choosing an earthly king instead. If they obeyed the voice of Yahweh, it says, “**Yahweh will establish you as a people holy [i.e., set apart] to Himself.... All peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of Yahweh, and they shall be in awe of you.... And Yahweh will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not beneath.**” (vs. 9, 10, 13) But if they did not, “**Yahweh will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke.... Yahweh will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone.**” (vs. 20, 36) Bad kings in Israel would be the result of the people’s disobedience against God. I can’t help but reflect that we gentile nations have pretty much the same deal: the quality of our leaders is apparently a reflection of the spiritual condition of our populations. That ought to sting a bit. Does it?

Second, God's people were prohibited from having a "foreigner" rule over them. Besides being a left-handed admonition to adhere to God's Law, thus avoiding having characters like Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, Caesar, Saladin, or Stalin ruling over them, it is a tacit reminder that their true and eternal King, the Messiah, would be a son of Israel. According to my reading of prophecy, Israel will have one more opportunity to get this one right: they will have to choose whether or not to accept the gentile Antichrist's messianic claims or to reject Him. Most of the world will seize upon the Antichrist's silver-tongued lies in the desperation and despair of a post nuclear-war world, but scripture tells us that a sizeable remnant of Israel, comprehending Yahweh's love at last (better late than never), will reject the world dictator's satanic claims and choose to flee to the wilderness—their final three and a half years of exile—rather than accept his satanically inspired "mark of the beast." The King they finally embrace will be the returning Jewish Messiah—their "Brother," Yahshua.

(999) *Look for a coming prophet who, "like Moses," will communicate God's words as an intermediary or emissary, in a calm, non-frightening manner. "Yahweh your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me [i.e., like Moses] from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of Yahweh your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of Yahweh my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'" (Deuteronomy 18:15-16)* Israel's close encounter with Yahweh's glory at Sinai was a terrifying experience. All that fire, smoke, lightning, earth shaking, and rock splitting were more than these poor ex-slaves were equipped to deal with. They were convinced (and not without reason) that if God continued to confront them personally like that, they would all die. As it was, of course, Yahweh had shown them but a tiny hint of His real power—just enough to get their attention.

Yahweh's little demonstration had the desired effect: the people were so awe stricken, they begged Moses to intercede for them, to talk with Yahweh himself and then tell them what He'd said, instead of having God communicating with them directly. What they pleaded for in their terrified state was precisely what Yahweh had in mind all along—a human intercessor filled with the Spirit of God, an anointed representative for both heaven and earth—a Messiah. **"And Yahweh said to me: 'What they have spoken is good.' As if this were *their* idea. "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him."** (Deuteronomy 18:17-19) Yahweh's response made it clear that Moses

himself was not the ultimate intercessor, but that someone “like him” in certain ways would be “raised up” at some point in the future. This Spokesman, moreover, would be “raised up for them.” Interesting turn of phrase.

First, this person would be “a Prophet.” That is, He would be a *nabi*, one who proclaims truth with divine insight, either foretelling or forth-telling the words of God. Second, this Prophet would be “like” Moses, who was characterized by his humility and diligent service while leading God’s chosen people, as well as his being filled with Yahweh’s Spirit, allowing him to speak with God “face to face.” Third, this Messianic figure would be raised up “from among *their* brethren” (not *my* brethren). That is, He would be an Israelite, though not necessarily from the tribe of Levi like Moses. Fourth, He would speak the very words of God, words that Yahweh Himself would put in His mouth. Fifth, those words would carry Yahweh’s authority: if anyone refuses to hear the Prophet, Yahweh promises to demand an answer as to why.

And sixth, being human, the Prophet would not be as “awesome” (read: *scary*) as Yahweh’s Mount Sinai manifestation. **“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law.”** (Isaiah 42:1-4) No more thunder, lightning, fire and smoke. Rather than causing earthquakes, the coming Prophet would calm the raging seas with a simple word, prompting His disciples to remark in awe, **“Who can this be, that even the waves and the sea obey Him?”** (Matthew 8:27)

We have no record of any Israelite other than Yahshua—*ever*—speaking out with the personal authority of Yahweh. At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, we read these telling words: **“And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”** (Matthew 7:28-29) The prophets of Israel had couched their pronouncements in terms of divine messages: “Hear, O Israel: thus says Yahweh...” The scribes and Pharisees merely parroted the opinions of previous sages: “Rabbi so-and-so argued thusly...” But Yahshua said comparatively outlandish things like, **“Everyone who hears these saying of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and**

it fell. And great was its fall.” (Matthew 7:26-27) Either He *was* the Prophet promised by Yahweh through Moses, or He was a fraud who *should* have been crucified for leading people astray. There is no middle ground. If you don’t believe that Yahshua was (and is) the Messiah, then be prepared to tell God why you think so: He has vowed to require an answer from you.

(1000) *Beware of false prophets.* **“But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which Yahweh has not spoken?’—when a prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which Yahweh has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”** (Deuteronomy 18:20-22) In contrast to the ultimate Prophet “like Moses” whom Yahweh promised to send to the people so they wouldn’t have to endure frightening atmospheric or tectonic phenomena every time He had something to say, God now advises them to be on the lookout for other prophets—both true and false. And since lies can sound plausible, Yahweh laid down some criteria for separating truth from falsehood.

First, the people were instructed to discern who the “prophet” was representing: Whose words did he purport to be speaking? If he claimed to speaking in the authority of some “deity” other than Yahweh—Ba’al or Molech, for example—then that prophet was to be put to death: period, end of story. But if he declared, “Thus says Yahweh” (as Moses did) then two means were given whereby the prophet’s pronouncements could be put to the test. In our English translation, these sound pretty much like the same thing, but they’re not. “If the thing does not come to pass” means pretty much what it sounds like: in the case of a predictive prophecy, the fulfillment of that prophecy—however unlikely it seemed—would be the vindication of the prophet’s words.

But the other contingency, “if the thing does not happen,” is not quite as straightforward. Literally, it says “if the thing does not exist,” or “if the thing is not established.” It employs the verb “to be,” *hayah*—the same word upon which Yahweh’s name is based. The problem is that not all prophetic pronouncements are predictive of some future event. Many—as testified by the bulk of the Torah—are commandments or statements of fact. So how are these things to be “established?” Remember that the Ten Commandments were delivered amid undeniable signs from God: fire, smoke, and so forth. It follows, then, that purported messages from Yahweh must be in harmony with these Commandments. So when Yahweh says, “You shall not commit adultery,” but the would-be

“prophet” suggests honoring the local “gods” by engaging in ritual sex with their temple prostitutes, you know what to believe—and who to stone. Or when Yahweh says, “You shall not steal,” and “You shall not covet,” you should know immediately that Muhammad is a false prophet when he authorizes raids on caravans and villages.

Predictive prophecy has its own little glitch. Not all (actually, very few) Biblical prophecies were fulfilled in the prophet’s lifetime. We are rarely treated to “prophet’s duels,” such as Elijah’s bout with the four hundred prophets of Ba’al on Mount Carmel—where the vindication of the true spokesman of God is revealed immediately. Equally rare are instances where God’s schedule is openly revealed in the context of the prophecy (as in Daniel 9:24-27). The premise of my book on prophecy, *Future History*, was to identify and place into its chronological framework every yet-to-be-fulfilled prophecy in the entire Bible—and even at this late date, there are still so many of them it took me nine hundred pages to discuss them all. The point is, the prophets themselves never saw the fulfillments of much of what they predicted. As far as their contemporaries (and ours) are concerned, these “things have not come to pass.”

It is up to us, then, to determine whether a spokesman is a prophet of Yahweh, or is speaking for someone else—himself, a religious organization, or even a false god. The prophets of the Bible, to a man, were in perfect accord with Yahweh’s revealed program in every place such a thing could be verified—leaving us no logical alternative but to receive their words in the places where new information is being imparted. In the end, we are faced with an unprecedented phenomenon: forty authors, living over a span of fifteen hundred years, writing of a variety of subjects, in a variety of languages and styles, from a variety of cultures, all purporting to speak for God, and all in perfect agreement with each other. The only possible explanation is that Yahweh Himself was guiding them, inspiring them, putting His words into their hearts and minds.

That’s not to say that every wannabe prophet speaks for Yahweh. We are told what to do with those whose message is out of sync with Yahweh’s scriptures, but unfortunately, our English translation here is totally misleading when it says, “**The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.**” This really means, “The prophet has spoken it in his insolence, arrogance, and pride—in contempt, scorn, and lack of respect (all of which is meant by the Hebrew word *zadown*). You shall not dwell, sojourn, or gather together with him, live as an alien in his land, nor be his guest” (which is the meaning of the Hebrew verb *gur*). In other words, we are to consider those who speak lies in Yahweh’s name—as

measured against the truth of His Word—to be arrogant, self-willed rebels. We are to avoid them, shun them, and refuse to listen to them. Of course, doing this requires that we learn and know what the Word of God says. Otherwise, we risk becoming the false prophet’s victim, for he preys upon the uninformed. As Hosea put it, **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”** (Hosea 4:6)

Identifying and embracing the real standard of truth is essential. After all, Yahshua Himself was accused of being a false prophet by the religious leaders of Israel, but only because they themselves had adopted a false standard—Jewish tradition, the oral law—in place of Yahweh’s Torah. In the end, Yahshua kept the Torah flawlessly—and He fulfilled it to the letter.

After His resurrection, Yahshua reminded His disciples, **“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures....”** We have looked at only one small part of the prophetic record to which He referred—the Law of Moses. Don’t blame me if it’s taken us over a thousand pages to cover it. Yahweh is nothing if not thorough, and as far as I’m concerned, it would have been unworthy of His love for us to settle for merely skimming over it once lightly.

“Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:44-49) Salvation was never meant to be the exclusive privilege of Israel, nor was the Torah meant to be opaque and meaningless to anyone other than the Jews. Its truth is universal; its message is for all nations. The good news proclaimed in the New Covenant is predicted in the Torah, and here in the risen Yahshua’s benediction, the entire sweep of Yahweh’s grand plan is reprised. We should not find it the least bit surprising that every point He raised is echoed somewhere in the seven consecrated annual appointments Israel was instructed to keep throughout their generations. Did you spot them?

(1) The “suffering” of Yahweh’s Anointed One was fulfilled on the first of Yahweh’s holy appointments, Passover. (2) The “remission of our sins” was

accomplished through the separation of Life from death as Yahshua's body lay in the tomb on the second miqra, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (3) His "rising from the dead on the third day" was predicted by the Feast of Firstfruits—which promises that we, the harvest of redeemed souls, will someday follow Him. (4) Our personal indwelling with "power from on high"—none other than the Holy Spirit of Yahweh—was achieved on the fourth of God's appointments, the Feast of Weeks. (5) Our "witness of these things," our preaching the good news of God's redemption to every nation, will reach its ultimate expression when we who trusted Yahshua are called to glory at the blowing of Yahweh's shofar—on the Feast of Trumpets, while those left behind are commanded to "give heed" to our testimony (Isaiah 18:3). (6) The "repentance" of Israel, "beginning at Jerusalem," will be accomplished at last on the definitive Day of Atonement, the sixth appointment of the series. And (7) the "promise of the Father's presence" dwelling and reigning personally among us will be kept on the last and greatest miqra of all, the ultimate Feast of Tabernacles. Yahweh's message is nothing if not consistent. And Yahweh's mercy is nothing if not breathtaking.

We indeed are witnesses of these things. *Maranatha!*