

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for,
it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*
(Matthew 18:19,20)



SECTION 3 - LESSON 22

**Hellenism And Romanism Today:
*The Prophets Are Still Warning
A Call To Repentance
Scrutinize Your Own Faith Practices***



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Section 3 Lesson 22

Hellenism And Romanism Today: *The Prophets Are Still Warning* *A Call To Repentance* *Scrutinize Your Own Faith Practices*

Hellenism and Romanism Today *The Prophets Are Still Warning*

“Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did... These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come”
(1 Corinthians 10:6,11).

Never discount the words of truth our Father has poured out for us in the Hebrew Scriptures! The Apostle Paul directs us back to the Older Testament because the events recorded there for our benefit as followers of Jesus “*occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.*”

God’s people had chosen to compromise their relationship with Him through disobedience and spiritual adultery even though He had proven His love for them and His awesome power over and over. The Apostle recognizes the frailty of human nature and understands that we in Jesus can also stray. That’s why the consequences of disobedience were spelled out so clearly in the Hebrew text “*as warnings for us.*”

Shouldn’t we be paying closer attention to the caution lights our Lord flashes through His vessels, the prophets? His character and His ways don’t change!

God is pointing us back to the Older Testament so that our hearts can be convicted and convinced about that which He is restoring today in the Hebraic Restoration.

The Israelites, that tiny people group He handpicked to represent Him to the nations, are an example of how our Father responds to His children when they keep on sinning. The followers of Jesus have been “handpicked” by our Father as well to bring the Light of righteousness to the pagan world around us.

The *holy fear* that time and again turned adulterous Israel toward their God in times of chastisement for their disobedience has become a non-issue in Hellenized Christianity. The prophetic warnings with which the prophets of old poured out from God’s own heart have been relegated for the most part to history’s dustbin.

BUT, as Paul intoned, these warnings are intended to bring about a holy fear of our mighty and loving God so that we might not fall into the same willful sin as the Israelites did. Our Lord is sounding a *wake-up call* for those who call themselves “Christian”: to use the accounts of His warnings to the Israelites as an impetus to scrutinize our *own* lives. How are we tolerating and excusing sin?

Our holy God loves His children far more than any of us can imagine, and uses prophets out of His tender mercy.

His prophecies of hope and Messianic peace to ancient Israel as well as His promises to His family in Jesus reveal His ardent heart. And when His people stray from His commands, out of *love* He sends prophets to warn them—a pattern found in both Testaments.

But our Lord also sends warnings through prophetic messengers to warn about *forthcoming events* so they (and we) won't become fearful or be taken by surprise. For instance, Luke records a prophetic warning issued through Agabus so that the followers of Jesus could take measures beforehand to prepare:

*One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a **severe famine** would spread over the entire Roman world (**This happened** during the reign of Claudius) (Acts 11:28).*

When His children are endeavoring to fulfill a major undertaking He has directed them to do, our Father often sends prophets to *help and encourage* the people to press on to completion (see Ezra 5:2, 6:14 for example). Our Lord's arm is not short to speak forth plainly that which His people need to hear!

We've brought up these examples of our Lord's pattern of speaking through prophets for a distinct reason: The prophetic voice of God is undergirding the Hebraic Restoration. He is restoring the Jewish people back to Israel one last time, fulfilling the promises He made through the prophets.

The return of over 1 million Jews in the past decade and a half to that particular piece of real estate has been a miracle that's surpassed the escape of the Israelites from Egyptian captivity! This too was prophetically foretold:

'Therefore,' says ADONAI, 'the day will come when people will no longer swear, "As ADONAI lives, who brought the people of Isra'el out of the land of Egypt, but, "As ADONAI lives, who brought the people of Isra'el out of the land to the north and out of all the countries where he drove them"; for I will bring them back to their own land, which I gave to their ancestors (Jeremiah 16:14,15).

Out of His mercy to Gentiles worldwide who have so little understanding of the Older Testament (and we realize many Jews are clueless about the Hebrew Bible as well!), God is restoring the *Hebraic foundations* of the Church. Through the disobedience of Israel in the past, He is showing *us* the mercy that He's calling upon us to now show *them!* (See Romans 11:30-32.)

If you're accustomed to bringing your questions before our Lord to reveal His confirmation to you, you'll have no problems searching Scripture and hearing from His Spirit that this restoration is indeed occurring now. If you're resistant, however, He is voicing a warning of impending judgment for those who refuse to heed and test if this is the Father's doing.

You may remember in our earlier Lessons we discuss the fall of Jerusalem under the hands of the Romans. This tragedy was no surprise to those who responded to Jesus's warning voiced some 40 years prior to the event: "*Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down*" (Matthew 24:2).

Jesus also advised them how to respond when the city was about to be overtaken: "*Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains*" (24:16). Finally, He warned them to not let themselves be deceived by wishful thinking that has no

basis in Scripture: *“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it”* (24:23).

The true prophets of today have been warning for decades about God judging the United States. Even the most jaded would admit that the past decade has witnessed a landslide of moral decay and lawlessness that parallels the worst of ancient Rome and Greece.

As the daily struggle to make ends meet becomes an exercise in futility for large segments of our population, those who are hopeless will feel no guilt over seizing whatever they want or need. Video clips from the New Orleans disaster clearly demonstrated the lawlessness that takes over when survival is an issue.

Noted prophetic writer and pastor David Wilkerson has foreseen a day when the major cities in this country will be aflame in race riots. And, as Billy Graham has often remarked, “If God doesn’t judge the United States, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.” Our God *doesn’t apologize!*

God’s Word makes clear that undeniable consequences face those who refuse to confess and turn from the *spiritual adultery* they’re tolerating through willful sin. Only by humbling themselves through repentance and filling in those sinful ruts with the pure power of God’s Spirit and His Word will they keep from giving way to the lies of lawlessness and perversion of true grace:

Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth (Daniel 9:13).

In 1998 when we were nearing the end of writing our last book, ***Pastoring By Elders***, we spent a considerable amount of time in prayer at a retreat center in the mountains of Colorado. One morning the Holy Spirit revealed this message to us:

“Dark Days of Chastisement are coming on the United States. The children of today will not become grandparents before this occurs. When this is done, 50 million people will be dead. The message of the Hebraic Restoration will not bear its full fruit until the Dark Days come and people realize they *need Jesus*.

If you remember your history classes, you may recall that *25 million* died as a result of the Black Plague in Europe. The religious system was so corrupt at that time that God had to intervene by bringing that continent to its knees.

If you have trouble believing God gets people’s attention through disasters, you need to revisit His ways in the Bible. Does He ENJOY bringing about catastrophe? Absolutely not! He yearns that people heed the warnings and *repent!*

Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? (Ezekiel 18:23; see also 18:32).

Because of unrelenting evil He once sent a flood to destroy all but eight people. Countless biblical episodes reveal “natural” disasters emanating from God’s hand: hail, tornados, earthquakes, floods, famine, drought. We’re warned that His last judgments will be by *fire* (see 2 Peter 3:10). All of these are signs

which are intended to point to Him as Sovereign Lord so that all people might cry out to Jesus in repentance.

A repeated refrain is sounded throughout Ezekiel as the prophet reports God's disasters to come: "***And they will know that I am the LORD.***" The word "LORD" here is God's covenant name, YodHehVavHeh (YAH-weh). Those who have discernment will realize from the nature of the calamities that they've proceeded from the only true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Yet, our Lord doesn't intend that we spend our days worrying about what might happen. Those who know Jesus in the midst of devastation such as tsunamis and earthquakes and floods can walk in full peace and assurance of His Presence. That peaceable Spirit within them will stand out as light in the darkness and provide a sturdy platform from which they can testify of His faithfulness!

None of us knows when or where disaster will strike. Therefore we must make the most of each day, following the pattern the Apostle lays out for us:

*Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? **You ought to live holy and godly lives** (2 Peter 3:11).*

If you're going through these lessons and aren't familiar with our Lord's use of prophetic gifting, be assured that the Newer Testament affirms that God is still speaking through prophets today. (For example, check Ephesians 4:11; Acts 2:18; 21:10; 1 Corinthians 14:1.) His spiritual anointings were intended for all followers of Jesus for all time!

Our Lord Himself is the Source for the prophetic words He shares with His

people, "***For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy***" (Revelation 19:10). God promised Israel through prophecy that He would return them to the Land and put in them a *new heart* and a *new spirit*. The work of that unchanging Holy Spirit was quite specific: "***I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws***" (Ezekiel 36:27).

One purpose for the indwelling Spirit stands firm for those today who are already in relationship with Jesus as their Messiah: to guide, direct and admonish His people when they *don't* walk in obedience to God's decrees. When His people refuse to follow the Spirit's prompting to obey, He sends prophetic messengers to reopen their spiritual ears!

Are there counterfeits who speak of words and visions which have emanated from their own imaginations? Absolutely! The prophetic writings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, for instance, overflow with attacks against true prophets by those who falsely represent God. Tacking on a "Thus says the Lord" in no way validates a supposed word that panders to the desires and hopes of the disobedient.

That's why followers of Jesus are given instruction for correctly dealing with prophecy. Because our Lord does speak through prophetic words as part of His wonderful manifestation of His Spirit's power, we're warned:

Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).

Counterfeit prophecies *can* lead astray those who aren't sound in their pursuit of the standard of God's Word. People

would much rather hear a word that makes them feel good even if they're tolerating wickedness! That's why each prophecy must be evaluated against Scripture. "*Weigh carefully what is said*" (1 Corinthians 14:29). Our Lord never contradicts His character or His Word through a prophecy. If something is shared that doesn't line up with the unchanging *logos*, disregard it!

Don't allow the worldly psycho-babble which permeates many false prophecies to convince you that you can excuse your sin under false grace. That's deceptive *horizontal* thinking from man's perspective, not God's. God treasures the righteousness of obedient trust.

When you're resistant to repentance, He sends prophetic words of warning to represent His *vertical* perspective. The step of response that will stir a listening heart away from tolerated sin is recognizing *just how sinful* that sin really is in God's sight. Then fellowship can be restored:

*Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will **loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices*** (Ezekiel 36:31).

We encourage you to test the message the Holy Spirit gave to us earlier. When the Dark Days come, there won't be *widespread* repentance. Instead, in the same spirit of willful blasphemy and unrepentance that's found in Revelation 16:9-11, people will turn their darkened hearts *against* God. Those enmeshed in the scheming deception of Hellenism and Romanism will turn against the true followers of Jesus and persecute them, just as the false prophets and priests persecuted Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Does it seem impossible to you that when catastrophes occur, people will

still refuse to turn from their sin and cry out to Jesus for forgiveness? Tragically, our Lord has already revealed the response of those whose lives evidence they tolerate wickedness. Spurred on by satan's emissaries, the spiritually blind will cling to their worldly treasures and "work of their hands":

*The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues **still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshipping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk*** (Revelation 9:20).

Don't be among these people.

Don't be complacent about scrutinizing your life and faith practices. Heed Paul's words, "*Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation*" (2 Corinthians 6:2). If you don't, when darkness is upon you, you may be too overcome with compromise to respond in humble, obedient trust.

Walking uprightly according to the Spirit's impulse and the direction of God's Word is a sure way to strengthen your spiritual resolve to endure to the end. The prophet Isaiah confronted tolerated sin from both the religious leaders as well as the people, yet he never ceased representing God's perspective:

*You come to the help of those who **gladly do right, who remember Your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, You were angry. How then can we be saved?*** (Isaiah 64:5).

In the footsteps of the prophet John, the son of Zachariah, prophets today have a vital mission to address the same situation he faced (see Luke 1:16,17):

- to turn the “sons of Israel” (including today’s nominal believers and the yet-to-believe) back to God.
- to turn the hearts of “fathers to children”—to revive a deep Spirit-concern for the training of the next generation to follow Jesus in Spirit and in truth.
- to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just — not just head knowledge but the *application* of that wisdom.
- to make ready for our Lord a people *having been prepared to serve His purposes.*

“By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead” (Hebrews 11:4).

Have you ever wondered how Adam and Eve’s second-born could still be speaking to us today? His decision to obey God and trust that his sacrificial offering would be acceptable set the pattern for all offerings that would be acceptable to atone for sin. Even though his obedience cost him his very life at the hands of his jealous brother, Abel chose God’s way.

(Note that God did *not* intervene to stop this murder. Obedient trust today can be as costly, as our brothers and sisters in Jesus in persecuted lands can attest. God’s sovereign purposes don’t guarantee an easy ride even for those who walk uprightly.)

Pay attention to whether your *own* choices are righteous in the situations our Father places before you, a lesson for us from Abel.

When you read Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the other prophets of the Older Testament, do you think their prophetic words applied only to the Israelites? It’s clear that some of the prophecies were intended for a *future* time:

- *“He replied, ‘Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the **time of the end**’”* (Daniel 12:9);
- *“For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it **speaks of the end** and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay”* (Habakkuk 2:3).

There’s no doubt that God’s words through many of the Older Testament prophets refer to nations other than Israel. Many of the messages even delineate these countries by name.

The Newer Testament as well speaks of a time when words spoken through past prophets will be fulfilled: *“[Jesus] must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He **promised long ago through His holy prophets**”* (Acts 3:21).

Prophetic fulfillment is still taking place all around us! How great is the need to be like the *men of Issachar* so we don’t miss the relevance of these messages from His Throne! These men *“**understood the times and knew what [God’s children] should do**”* (1 Chronicles 12:32).

Hellenism and Romanism Today A Call To Repentance

“Now the glory of the God of Israel went up from above the cherubim, where it had been, and moved to the threshold of the temple. Then the LORD called to the man clothed in linen who had the writing kit at his side. ‘Go throughout the city of

Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.' As I listened, he said to the others, 'Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. Slaughter old men, young men and maidens, women and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary.' So they began with the elders who were in front of the temple" (Ezekiel 9:3-6).

When God could tolerate the defiling spiritual adultery of His beloved people no longer, He removed His glory from the Temple (see Ezekiel 10). A line of separation between the righteous and the wicked had been drawn. Those who identified with His grief and lamented over the corruption and spiritual decay were marked on their forehead just as the blood on the door posts of the faithful preserved them when the Destroying spirit passed throughout Egypt (see Exodus 12).

The disobedient—all who chose to follow the adulterous idolatry of the religious leadership—suffered the same fate of merciless annihilation as their corrupt elders. Neither wicked shepherds nor duped sheep were spared; each was held *personally responsible*.

God's judgment began at the Temple, where those prominent within the religious system presided. In the pattern lamented in Ezekiel, chapter 34, the leaders had failed miserably in their responsibilities to walk in God's righteous commands. By deceiving themselves that they could hide their personal pagan practices, the religious leaders neglected to confront the spiritual adultery that was rampant among the people.

God's holiness tolerates no compromise with evil. Those who are mature in their relationship with Him can recognize the distinction between that which is righteous and that which isn't. *Relational responsibility* within the Body demands that we confront those who continue to mix sin with religious practice and see nothing wrong with that.

Her [clergy] do violence to my law and profane my holy things; they do not distinguish between the holy and the common; they teach that there is no difference between the unclean and the clean; and they shut their eyes to the keeping of my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them (Ezekiel 22:26).

When those who call themselves "Christian" continue to tolerate sin in their own lives and within their families, they bring down God's Name. Those who are indwelt by the Spirit of Christ yet continue to willfully sin are promised by Peter that they'll face judgment before their Lord:

For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17).

Just as Ezekiel was commanded by His offended Lord to confront the sins of Israel and Judah (see Ezekiel 23:36), so today those He has called to prophesy warning to His people must obey. The parallels between the children of Israel and the disobedient within Christianity are too similar to ignore!

Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Since you have forgotten Me

[the God of both Testaments] and thrust Me behind your back, you must bear the consequences of your lewdness and [spiritual] prostitution (Ezekiel 23:35).

With rampant clergy sexual misconduct and divorce, and a Christendom with morals no different than unbelievers, what do you expect God to do? He is going to begin His judgment in His own family so that others will see and repent. And, we believe this has already begun.

“You are not being sent to a people of obscure speech and difficult language, but to the [United States]”
(Ezekiel 3:5).

The truths that our Father gave us to share are being downloaded from our website and translated all over the world. However, in the words the Spirit gave us, He sent us back to ***“the hardest place on earth for these truths to bear fruit. The spirit of Hellenism owns Christianity in the United States.”***

Yet Zechariah’s prophecy will be fulfilled, even among those about whom we were told “don’t need God and don’t need each other” in the self-sufficient US: ***“I will rouse your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and make you like a warrior’s sword”*** (Zechariah 9:13).

An Hebraic understanding of Scripture is being poured forth to undo what the spirit of Hellenism has done to Christendom. And gradually, ever more people who have fled Nicolaitanism are embracing the Hebraic foundations. They’re realizing that *God’s parameters* for receiving His mercy in Jesus never change: He ***“keeps His covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands”*** (Daniel 9:4; see also John 14:21).

Our intensity and earnestness to share

have grown because we have no doubt that **Dark Days of Chastisement** are coming on the United States. We’ve placed on our website all that God has given us to be freely used by those who seek truth to apply it to their lives.

The Bible warns through the character and actions of our unchangeable God that there comes a time when man’s sin is so great that He is compelled to act. *Before* that time comes, he is warning each and every person to get under the atoning blood of Jesus through repentance.

‘Even now,’ declares the LORD, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. ‘Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity (Joel 2:12,13).

Now is the time for the Hebraic foundations of His entire Word to become your way of life, a life that is pleasing to our Father. Even if none of your friends understands your response to His call or joins you in it, don’t let that stop you.

If you’ll turn to our Father in complete repentance and learn to live by the foundations which the earliest followers of Jesus embraced, our Lord promises you,

As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness (Ezekiel 34:12).

“They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers” (Nehemiah 9:2).

“Let us lie down in our shame, and let our disgrace cover us. We have sinned against the LORD our God, both we and our fathers; from our youth till this day we have not obeyed the LORD our God”
(Jeremiah 3:25).

Take an honest look at the history of Christendom and consider if our Father’s Kingdom as described by Jesus is accurately and faithfully being represented today: congregations that parallel the institutions of the world (some with clergy functioning as CEO’s); compromising to avoid persecution and martyrdom or just plain inconvenience; blending in with the culture to make worship palatable and entertaining.

Is your heart *grieved* by the way our God’s Name has been defamed by the unrighteous lives of those who call themselves Christian? This needs to be the generation that repents for both *ourselves and our forefathers*. By embracing Greek and Roman influences, we have transformed the holy living organism of Christ’s Body into a man-centered, man-serving organization. In our individual and collective failure to courageously return to the Church being built by Jesus and proclaimed by the apostles, we’ve settled for the mediocre and powerless.

Marvel at the example set by our prophetic spiritual fathers. Nehemiah, Jeremiah and Daniel each confessed the ancestral sins that had brought defeat and captivity to the Jews. Even though they themselves had walked in obedient trust, each man *owned the guilt* of His disobedient people.

Turning to God in earnest prayer, as followers of Christ are called to do today, these men confessed the sins of the whole nation for past generations as if

these iniquities were their own. Daniel recognized that the “*good hand of the Lord*” would not be with his people until those sins were confessed and their effect repudiated. (See Daniel 9:3-19.)

Turning away from God’s commands as though they only belonged to the ancient Jews and are irrelevant to followers of Jesus today is rebellion of the sort these prophets confronted so vigorously. Those who disregard the *timeless righteousness* of His laws and ways endanger themselves no matter how many self-serving steeped buildings they habituate:

Though Ephraim built many altars for sin offerings, these have become altars for sinning. I wrote for them the many things of my law, but they regarded them as something alien (Hosea 8:12).

Deceived religious leaders have ignored the precise commands of Jesus that permeate the Gospels as a *deepening* of the Hebrew Scriptural teaching. Many have perverted the words of Paul in particular to deny the validity of those very laws of righteous living. Disregarding obedient trust as “legalism”, those who casually declare they’re “saved” yet have “*plowed wickedness, reaped iniquity and eaten the fruit of lies*” (see Hosea 10:13) will be held responsible before our Holy Lord.

In the pattern of our righteous forefathers, believers must repent for the centuries-long sins of Hellenized/Romanized Christianity, and for *turning away from* the theocracy of Jesus as LORD of their lives and of His collective Body. He’s calling us through His forgiveness and grace to cooperate with Him with devoted and singleminded hearts to fulfill His words: “***I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH***” (Matthew 16:18).

Hellenism and Romanism Today
Scrutinize Your Own Faith Practices

Up through this lesson, we've discussed the Older Testament, the Hebraic perspective, and the influence of Hellenism and Romanism on historical and contemporary church practice and belief. Now we ask you to thoughtfully and prayerfully answer the comprehensive questions below.

These questions will give you the opportunity to probe your own faith practices. Think of this as an assignment to answer transparently before our Lord Jesus. When you're done, you'll have revealed to Him how you plan to lovingly *live for Him* to serve His Kingdom purposes. In the future, when people ask you about your faith practices, you'll be prepared to clearly articulate your reasons.

Some of these questions may be similar to ones you've answered in earlier lessons. Don't look back at your previous responses. Instead, answer from where your heart and spirit are right now with the help of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of wisdom and truth.

Since these questions are written for a diverse audience, not all of them may apply to you. So don't feel like you need to answer them all!

The Older Testament

What is your view of the Older Testament? What is its relationship to the Newer Testament?

Is your response different when you read the Hebrew Scriptures than when you read the Newer Testament? Yes or No? If yes, describe your feelings.

Describe how you believe God wants you to use the Older Testament in your relationship with Him, and what He wants you to glean from it.

Describe your view of God as you see Him revealed in the Older Testament. How is *love* shown to be an important part of man's relationship with God?

Describe your view of God as you see Him revealed in the Newer Testament. How is *love* shown to be an important part of man's relationship with God?

What, if any, major differences were there between your view of God in the Older Testament and the Newer? Since God doesn't change, why do you think you have two different views of Him?

Does that which you describe in the answer above resemble what you believe Jesus meant when He said you'd be a "stream of living water"? Yes or No? If no, why do you think your life differs from His promised result?

Covenants

Describe your understanding of covenants. Why do you think our God initiates covenants with mankind?

Can this "New Covenant" be intentionally broken by man? Yes or No? If yes, how?

Describe in detail what you believe the "New Covenant" in Jesus means to you. What does God require for a person to enter into this Covenant?

Revelation

Describe the varied ways God revealed Himself to mankind in the Older Testament.

Jesus promises that we would receive the Holy Spirit if we enter into this Covenant, and that out from us would flow "streams of living water" (John 7:38,39). Describe how you recognize that the Holy Spirit is in you.

Do you believe God is still revealing Himself and His will to man today? Yes or No? If yes, describe in as much detail as possible the varied ways He does this.

If your answer is yes in the question above, cite three instances of God’s revelation to you.

Sin

Describe what you believe sin is.

Describe what you believe God’s view of sin is. Why do you think He required a sacrificial death to pay the penalty of sin in the Older Testament?

Why did Jesus die on the cross?

David laments in Psalm 32 what happened when he failed to confess his sins. Describe your understanding of repentance and confession.

John writes, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). What do you think he means, “purify us from all unrighteousness”? At this moment are you holding onto any unconfessed sin? Yes or No? If yes, why?

Your Faith Perspective

We wrote in Lesson 8 about Hebraic logic and syllogistic reasoning. What is your goal and purpose as you read the Bible? Do you see God’s Word as an instrument to change you, or do you read it to add to your knowledge?

Is your “spiritual maturity” evidenced more by an increase in spiritual knowledge or by a godly way of life seen in your actions?

Is your faith walk based on creedal positions and doctrinal statements, or on a love relationship of obedient trust in which your biblical applications demonstrate a way of life that glorifies your Father? Explain.

Marriage

Why do you think God ordained marriage between one man and one woman?

Describe how unbelievers know you are a follower of Jesus. Do you live it, or just articulate “Christianese” to them?

If you didn’t include this in your answer above, how does the marriage covenant represent our Covenant relationship with Him?

Paul describes our faith pilgrimage on earth with these words, “*until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:13). Describe, citing examples, how you have matured in your faith.

Children

What are God’s purposes for a married couple to have children?

Describe the biblical responsibilities of parents in raising their children.

How do the requirements of raising children parallel the path to maturity our Father calls for in those who follow His Son, Jesus?

The earliest followers of Jesus knew that God wanted their homes to be the first and primary place for spiritual development. Do you agree with this? Yes or No? Describe what goes on in your home as it pertains to spiritual development.

Fellowship With Others

Describe what you believe the word “fellowship” means.

What do you think John means when he writes, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3)?

Can fellowship with God be broken? Yes or No? If yes, how do you restore fellowship with God?

If you answered yes above, can you have fellowship with others if your fellowship with God is broken? Can you have fellowship with a person who is not in fellowship with God? Yes or No? If no, how would you know if they were out of fellowship with God?

The early followers of Jesus fellowshipped in homes in order to maintain “communal righteousness” so that their prayers would be answered. Do you believe that your unconfessed sin hinders the prayers of others with whom you are in fellowship as extended spiritual family? Yes or No? If no, what do you believe the consequences are to unconfessed sin?

Do you gather in homes with others for fellowship as extended spiritual family? Yes or No? If yes, what is the criteria for your fellowship together? If no, why are you not fellowshipping in homes with others?

If you meet in homes for fellowship, how is your daily commitment to each other put into action?

When someone sins, Jesus offers this command: The unrepentant is to be treated as “a pagan or a tax collector” (Matthew 18:15-17). In dealing with the unrepentant

Paul commands the Corinthians, “Hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 5:5). What do you think our Lord and Paul mean by their statements? How does this impact your own interaction with an unrepentant Christian?

The Role of Elders/Shepherds

In Lesson 10 we describe the six stages of male development. The final stage, *zaken* (biblical elder), were the older men who shepherded God’s faith communities in the early Church. Do you believe God wants older, wiser men restored to pastor today? Yes or No? If no, who do you think our Father permits to shepherd His children?

What do you see as the biblical role of older men and women in faith communities today?

If you're in a congregation led by Hellenist clergy, can you remain in it and still fulfill God's Kingdom purposes for your life? Yes or No? If yes, substantiate from God's Word why you should remain.

Describe what you believe to be the role of authority in faith communities. Who can have authority? What does biblical authority entail?

Describe, with as much biblical support as possible, your view of spiritual gifts. What is the role of, and empowerment by, the Holy Spirit in your life as a follower of Jesus?

In Lesson 11 we spoke of the change from the Levitical priesthood to that of Melchizedek. What is your view of this change? How does this change apply to the shepherds of God's faith communities today?

The Influence of Hellenism and Romanism on Christendom

When you read about the influence of the converted Greek philosophers on Christianity, do you think this happened as part of God's blessing or curse? Describe your view.

The Indwelling Holy Spirit

In Lesson 11 we discuss the Holy Spirit. What do you believe the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" means?

How do you feel about the effects of Plato's dualism on Christian practices?

Do you believe that our Father wants His children to continue practices which are influenced by dualism? Yes or No? If no, what have you changed in your own life?

In Lesson 16 we discussed pietism, asceticism, and self-mortification. How do you feel about these practices? Why would they be considered an "attack on Jesus's victory"?

What is your view of the building that people call "church"? How does this misuse of the term cause confusion in regard to the true essence of those who are the "called-out" ones?

Describe what you believe about the role and purpose of worship. Under what conditions is worship acceptable or unacceptable to God?

Describe in what ways you believe your life is pleasing to God. Are there attitudes or actions in your life that are displeasing?
