

Yeshua MISHPACHAH

A NEWSLETTER TO THE FAMILY OF JESUS FROM RESTORATION MINISTRIES

The Hebraic family is not simply an individual or private matter. Rather, it is an institution in which the whole community has a stake. Thus, the Hebrew word "mishpachah," meaning family, not only refers to parents and children, but to the whole extended family worldwide in the body of "Yeshua"—our Jesus.

Dear Friends,

Did you know that before Jesus came to earth, Satan was already here?

"There was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him" (Rev. 12:7-9).

Since the time of Christ Satan has been establishing a counterfeit christian kingdom on earth. Sadly, many serving in this counterfeit religious system have been duped into believing they are serving God.

An event from my past may help you understand the depth of my emotional conviction about this: My first assignment in Vietnam was flying cargo and ammunition from a supply ship off the coast resupplying the "gun line"—a group of destroyers off North Vietnam tasked with halting the flow of enemy supplies to the south.

Late one afternoon I hovered my helicopter over the gun mount of a destroyer as it was firing its guns beneath me. The ship had run out of ammunition, and as fast as I was delivering it, they were firing it.

Several days later as I entered the wardroom of our supply ship, the other officers congratulated me. My helicopter, with the ship's name on it, had made the front page of *Stars and Stripes* newspaper. Someone had taken a picture of it hovering over that destroyer.

When I saw the picture I became livid and berated the astonished offi-

cers with choice 'Navy phraseology.' In "Christian" parlance my words went something like: "You men are out here safe and secure on this ship, feeling like you're doing your best for the war. Let me tell you the truth. I have to hover off the back of your flight deck waiting 10 minutes or more for the next load of ammunition to be ready. That's because you don't see the men dying in the foxholes down south. You don't feel the sorrow of their families when they receive the death notice. Those destroyers are running out of ammunition because of you! Vietcong supplies are getting south because of you! And you are killing our own men!"

The commander of the supply department quickly escorted me out of the wardroom. In the passageway he said, "What you did in there was wrong, but what you said was absolutely correct." He asked me to accompany him down to the cargo holds. That day we redefined how cargo was moved aboard that ship. In one day we increased our speed of delivery from 9 tons an hour to 126 tons. Our new motto became: **"No one dies because we didn't care."**

Until the *larger* purpose of that supply ship had been clarified, the officers carried out their duties with a goal no larger than their own comfort and safety. Many of God's people live with this same myopic view of their Christian lives. What if *those officers* had been fired on by the bullets that had made their way south? Do you think they'd have seen the war differently?

Now let's consider the spiritual war that every follower of Jesus is engaged in. When people who *call* themselves "Christian" begin to obey God's commands, they encounter the hateful opposition of Satan. Their

understanding of *being* "Christian" is entirely changed.

The Line of Demarcation Between Faith and Reason

To put their own personal safety and comfort ahead of others who were in danger was the natural pattern of thinking for the officers aboard that supply ship. This thought pattern also motivates many who claim to be Christians: to think safety and comfort. The culprit that fans the flame of self-focus and self-gratification for Christians is human reason. *Reason* is the *natural pattern of thought that undermines faith*. The battle between faith and reason is age-old, something our spiritual father Abraham faced. Each time he chose faith, God *"credited it to him as righteousness."*

When Do We 'Cross the Line' Between Faith and Reason?

There is a biblically defined line of demarcation between faith and reason. That line just happens to coincide with the same demarcation between the our Lord's KINGDOM and the Satanic christian system disguising itself as "Church" today. The KINGDOM of Jesus costs us *everything* we once were if we are to become like Him. We are changed by the Holy Spirit as He both convicts and empowers us as servants of Jesus. Satan's system allows people to live comfortably within the confines of religious practices. Not having embraced repentance, they rely on their own reasoning to rationalize their sins and spiritual laziness. If these people would stop and *study the Bible for themselves*, they'd discover that many of their religious practices emanate

from man's reason. Such rationalizing² said, "If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit" (Matt. 15:14).

Several years ago Focus on the Family reported that few children were following the religious practices of their parents. What are these kids rejecting? Are they rejecting God? Or, has God given them insight to see Satan's christian kingdom for what it is — *activity devoid of Spirit-empowered relationship?*

Remember, Satan got thrown out of heaven because he wanted to be like God. He hasn't lost this motivation even though he lives among us. He offered Jesus kingdoms (see Matt. 4:8-10), and today he offers *us* religious kingdoms like little 'franchises.'

To purchase your own little religious kingdom you must give up your passion for Jesus and accept some prestigious religious position that will get you noticed.

Remember: He has already established a counterfeit 'christian' kingdom on earth. He just needs willing workers.

Jesus confronted the practices of the Pharisees. Why? Because they were of Satan, not of God. The leaders of the religious system sought prestige. They used man-made laws to control and intimidate the people. Isn't it interesting that Satan tempted Jesus from the top of the temple. Was Satan standing on top of his own religious kingdom? How do you understand the following passage? "*And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come*" (Heb. 13:12-14). Isn't Jesus telling us that if we would serve Him, we need to go outside the "Jerusalem-like" religious systems Satan has established? [Note that I'm not talking about the city of Jerusalem, which is highly regarded in God's sight.]

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Paul understood the slavery of the Jerusalem temple religious system when he wrote to the Galatians: "*The present city of Jerusalem...is in slavery with her children*" (Gal. 4:25). John alludes to the satanic religious system of Jerusalem when he writes, "*Their*

bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified" (Rev. 11:8). Satan's religious system parallels the man-made systems of Sodom and Egypt.

"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.... Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside" (Luke 4:1,2a,14).

I have observed many who are ***full of the Holy Spirit*** because of their love for Jesus. As they are ***led by the Holy Spirit*** to embrace the truths of the Restoration, the Spirit allows them to be tempted. The most common temptation they face as they grow in their trust of Jesus is to be offered a position in Satan's christian system. But as they base their decisions on truth, not reason, they conquer their temptations and grow in the ***power of the Holy Spirit***. These people who have been tested and strengthened in the midst of their trials find themselves walking in the footsteps of Jesus (see 1 Pet. 2:21).

If you have embraced and applied the truths of the Restoration, you know that restoration of intimacy and power in Jesus is a work of the Holy Spirit. The ultimate goal of the Restoration is the revelation of our Father's compassion and love. Those who embrace the Restoration are having to make choices about the temptations facing them.

Here are a few of the temptations we've heard about in just the past few weeks:

- "Would you consider heading up a youth Sunday school program?"
Meaning: We see increasing joy in your relationship with Jesus. We'd like our kids to have that joy since their own parents are so lukewarm, but if we confront those parents, we'll lose both them and their kids. Our numbers will fall, and so will our budget!

- “Would you mind being an elder/ join³ only reality.’ Therefore life as seen the vestry/ serve on the parish council?”
Meaning: You have a lot of influence in the lives of others in this congregation. Your occupying a position of leadership gives the system credence and will keep people from asking, “What is the *biblical basis* for what we are doing in this congregation?”

- “Most of those who are actively involved in our congregation are worn out. We could use your help.”
Meaning: Our key people have lost their passion for Jesus because of their busyness. Join us and become like them.

Other questions to ask yourself in order to recognize Satan’s system:

- Who is running Satan’s christian kingdom for him today?
- Who has the most to lose if it falls apart?
- How does Satan recruit these individuals?

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love” (1 Cor. 16:13,14).

How can you protect yourself from serving in Satan’s christian kingdom? First, understand that he uses our selfish human nature against us. Permit me to share three of the elements in our nature that make us vulnerable. I’ll deal with them separately, but in reality they’re interconnected.

1. Satan’s key weapon uses **human reasoning** as a weapon against us. We are so used to the reasoning activity in our minds that we find it difficult to question our natural thought processes. To protect us from ourselves, the Bible tells us to conform our thoughts to those of Jesus (see 2 Cor. 10:5). The only genuine reality in life is Jesus. When He says, “*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,*” the Greek word for ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ is the same. In effect, He is telling us ‘*I am the way of life and the*

only through your own reasoning rather than through the truth of Jesus is a figment of your imagination.

This often-quoted verse, “*We live by faith, not by sight*” (2 Cor. 5:7), proclaims the folly of relying solely on that which can be perceived visually. What we filter through our eyes can result in deceived decisions. Paul warns against trusting in what *appears* to be true when he warns the Galatians, “*Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence*” (Col. 2:23). A trusting faith emanates from *within the heart*.

“Appearance” has two applications here for us:

- 1) Followers of Jesus cannot live by how things appear to us, but only by the reality of Jesus. Satan is a deceiver, and through our reasoning he deceives us into wrong conclusions.
- 2) Followers of Jesus cannot live by displaying the *appearance* of Christianity. This is a net in which Satan has trapped many: Their “Christian walk” is predicated on the outward appearance of religious practice that is based on human reason. They justify their “Christianity” by parading their activities and kingdom contributions, rationalizing that these prove a sincere faith.

Satan battles us daily to keep us from experiencing intimacy with Jesus and a personal, applicable knowledge of the Bible. Without these two elements, we will rely on our own reasoning for guidance. Let me give you an example of Satan’s perversion of our reasoning:

I believe God exists, yet I can’t see Him.

Since I can’t see Him, He must be far away.

If He is far away, then He can’t see me.

Therefore I can do what I want, as long as I can excuse myself as “walking in grace.”

This thought process is so prevalent in Christians who have been taken captive to serve in the counterfeit kingdom. Part of this is due to the anti-Semitism in the Church which over the centuries caused us to lose the Hebraic (Abrahamic) roots to our faith. Abraham knew a God Who was personally involved in people’s lives. The captives in Satan’s religious system really don’t expect God to be involved in their lives nor to have an impact on their relationships. Years ago I went through my Bible and marked every verse in which God spoke or interacted with people. You’d be amazed! It is more natural for God to be involved with His creation than not! Consider a few examples:

Adam: Gen. 3:8,9

Enoch: Gen 5:24

Abraham: Gen 12:1-3; 18:16-33

Moses: Exo 3:4-10

Apostle Paul: Acts 9:3-6; 18:9,10

- Do *you* believe God is involved in your life each day?
- How do you recognize His involvement?

God’s Spirit lives in us

God indwells His people through His Spirit. He even sends angels to minister to us. Along with the humans He’s created, God also sees both angelic and demonic beings. Satan has achieved a great victory by keeping God’s people unaware of this reality.

Some denominations reason that after the Bible was canonized, God ceased His involvement with His creation. Wouldn’t you like to find out who first came up with these doctrines that have ascended from the pit of hell? Some churches, however, may not teach this— they just *live* as if God were dead.

If we are to live Hebraically as did our father Abraham, we need to remind ourselves again: “*Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for*” (Heb. 11:1,2). If we are to walk in righteousness as did our father Abraham, we need to walk by faith in God and His

Word, not by our reasoning of what⁴ *themselves* in accordance with the Scriptures: *“But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world”* (1Cor. 11:31,32). God’s judgment results in His discipline. His discipline keeps us from being condemned. God has a ‘line of demarcation’ between His judgment and condemnation. Those who serve Satan’s counterfeit religious system have ‘crossed the line’ of demarcation.

2. Another of Satan’s weapons uses people’s reasoning to establish religious practices that aren’t based on the Bible. It’s important for him to keep people away from personally knowing and applying God’s Word to all matters of their lives. One obvious way he deceives churchgoers is to induce people into seeing their spiritual and secular lives as separate and compartmentalized. In his kingdom they confine their religious activity to their congregations but ignore their workplaces. Perhaps they also drive miles to a church building unconcerned about the spiritual well-being of the people in their own neighborhood.

Satan works hard to dampen the importance of God’s commands in the Bible. He convinces people that God’s love overrules His laws and principles, so that His Word is neither authoritative nor applicable to their lives. People who avoid searching the Bible for themselves often succumb to this train of reasoning:

I don’t know God’s law so His love must excuse my ignorance.

I can’t be found guilty because I didn’t know.

Ignorance of the Bible is a mile marker on the road to hell.

Our Father’s underlying requirement is that if you love Him and truly appreciate His Son’s sacrifice for your sin, you would want to know what pleases Him. The path of righteousness is found in the freedom and boundaries of His Word. Throughout the Scriptures the connection is made: “Love Me and keep my commandments.” God says, *“My Word is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from My sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before Me to whom you must give account”* (Heb. 4:12,13).

When God judges people, it is because they have failed to judge

themselves in accordance with the Scriptures: *“But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world”* (1Cor. 11:31,32). God’s judgment results in His discipline. His discipline keeps us from being condemned. God has a ‘line of demarcation’ between His judgment and condemnation. Those who serve Satan’s counterfeit religious system have ‘crossed the line’ of demarcation.

I know some of you may be reasoning, *“There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus”* (Rom. 8:1). That verse, like so many others, is often quoted out of context. [In a previous letter we shared how Rom. 8:28 is quoted that way. Reasoning infers that ‘God always works for the good of His people.’ Yet, the passage emphasizes two conditions: Those that *love* Him and are *fulfilling* His purposes.] To understand Romans 8:1 we need to remember that salvation is a process or pilgrimage *in* Jesus. Read Rom. 8:1-11. You can see that a sinful mind will always be hostile to God. Sadly, too many people, thinking they are okay in God’s KINGDOM, have crossed the line and serve in Satan’s religious kingdom.

In our book, *Christian Halakhahs*, we explain that applying God’s Word to different areas of our lives through the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit is like building a wall of protection. Inside the perimeter of that wall is the place of peace where righteousness prevails.

- Where is that place for you?
- Is your home protected by biblical principles of practice and behavior where God’s Word has been applied?
- Do you know where the line of demarcation is between the ways of God, which He blesses, and the ways of the world, which are hostile to Him?

“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18).

Are the people with whom you have fellowship earnestly endeavoring to

apply the Word of God to their lives? Or, do they believe that their religious practices somehow show that they are acceptable to God? Remember, Satan was once in heaven before he was banished to earth. He saw God and yet he still “crossed the line” of self-determination and rebellion. Adam once lived in the Garden of Eden where he shared sweet fellowship with His Creator. Yet Satan got him to “cross the line.” His intimacy with God was broken and Adam never got to raise his children in the Garden.

God has a “line of demarcation” for all His creation. Satan crossed it. He tempted Adam into crossing it. And he can lure *you* into “crossing the line” into his “christian kingdom.” He will do this unless **you** stop to question the biblical basis for your religious practices. Ask yourself: Are you doing everything out of love for your Lord and in the power of His Spirit? Or, are you striving in your own strength to do what you think is expected of you?

The Israelites were rebuked by God because they sacrificed to the demons. Their persistence in willingly serving demonic deities “crossed the line” with God. His wrath was aroused:

“They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. They sacrificed to demons, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear. You deserted the Rock who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth. The Lord saw this and rejected them because he was angered by his sons and daughters. ‘I will hide my face from them,’ he said, ‘and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful!’” (Deu. 32:16-20). Do you think God has changed? Does He still hide His face from people who serve demons disguised as gods??

3. The foundation of Satan’s christian kingdom is based upon *rebellion* and *lawlessness*. These same motives caused Satan to be thrown from heaven. Note Paul’s warnings to us: *“Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebel-*

lion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thess. 2:3,4). Rebellion and lawlessness are characteristics of Satan's religious system. His churches are recognized by their adaptation of **unbiblical religious practices**. Often, those who wholeheartedly desire to follow Jesus and question these unbiblical practices in their congregations will be branded as "trouble makers."

To entice people into lawlessness, Satan brands those who know and apply the Bible as "legalistic." For some reason, many are fearful of this stigma. The reasoning behind the atmosphere of lawlessness sounds something like:

*God gave the law to the Jew.
Jesus came to fulfill the law.
Therefore I do not have to keep His law.*

First, we need to remember that in His fulfillment of the law, Jesus did not come to bring the law to an end. He came to *give it full meaning* and undo the "legalistic perversion" the religious leaders in Jerusalem had developed through their own reasoning. The Jerusalem religious system used prestige, man-made laws, and intimidation to stay in power. They "strained at gnats" to justify themselves before God.

The Bible tells us that the laws of God have their foundation in *love*. Keeping His commands did not justify anyone before God. In fact, Paul rebuked people for trying to be justified by "legalistic perversion" of what God created to be good. At no time do Jesus or any of the New Testament writers tell us to do away with the law and live lawless lives (see Matt 5:17-20).

We have written in previous letters about the epidemic of antinomianism (lawlessness) in the Church today. We have also mentioned the anti-Semitism found in some of the English translations of the Bible. (See *Pastoring by Elders*.) Satan has used

anti-Semitism for centuries to imprison people in his kingdom, either through the brand "legalistic" or through human reasoning to rationalize living in rebellion to God's commands.

The brand "legalistic" keeps many from sincerely learning and applying the commands of God. Human reasoning has created the myriad of man-made 'doctrines' and religious practices. These not only divide God's people, but, through the addiction of busyness, keep them from becoming aware of how far their reason-based practices have separated them from God.

Permit me to reiterate some biblical truths:

- We are justified *only* by the shed blood of Jesus, not by keeping God's commands.
- We seek to know and apply the commands of God because of *love* for Him and for our neighbor.

For instance:

1) Why don't I covet my neighbor's wife or goods? Because the law forbids it? No. Because I love my neighbor. But I wouldn't have known that I would have offended my neighbor if the law hadn't established that boundary.

2) When Jesus healed the withered hand on the Sabbath, He was not introducing a principle that we should work on the Sabbath. He was confronting Jerusalem's *legalistic perversion* of the Sabbath. In God's sight, acts of mercy and compassion for mankind are far more important than any religious service or observance.

"Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you.

Away from me, you workers of lawlessness!" (Matt. 7:23).

Lawlessness and legalistic perversion are Satan's combined traps to keep people in his kingdom. Either of these two *seeming* extremes depends on "reasoning": finding a way to talk myself out of an obedient life of love. Both do away with any need for a pilgrimage of intimacy with our Lord. Satan keeps these people so busy serving his man-made religious activi-

ties that they don't stop to question what they are doing.

- Lawlessness epitomizes both Satan's and man's rebellion against God. By showing a disdain for God's righteous commands, lawlessness becomes an idolatrous religion unto itself.
- Legalistic perversion is a form of idolatry in which man does right acts in order to gain approval and merit.

Keep reminding yourself that all the laws of God can only be truly understood and lived out by the Spirit who also enables us to lovingly keep them.

A final warning:

If you do not establish *perimeters of righteousness* that are based on the principles of God's Word for both you and your family, you will inevitably cross the *line of demarcation*. You will seek to justify your disobedience by rationalizing a *god of your own design who excuses your sinful desires*. In God's sight you will be viewed with the same sorrow with which He views the world system, for you will have *forsaken the truth Jesus brought* in order to live by *your own religious creation*.

By faith we are assured that:

The Father and the Son gave us the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives us the desire and power to obey God's commands.

Obeying His commands is our testimony to the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives.

Amen.

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Matt. 12:41

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