

A Follow-up To *The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*

De-Hellenizing Mental Muck: Lesson 1

Introduction

It's been nearly 10 years since we wrote *The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*. We found even as we were writing that it was difficult to convey a *Hebraic* understanding of the Covenant relationship our Father offers in Jesus to a *Hellenized* Christian audience. You may not think that you're among the Hellenized. But that particular worldview has so infiltrated western thinking and beliefs that the distinction between the world's humanist ways and the lives and values of the called-out ones of Christ has morphed into a "tolerant compromise" in which *nothing* is absolute — not even Jesus as the ONLY way, the ONLY truth, and the ONLY life eternal for all who trust Him as their ONLY Lord and Savior.

For too many centuries this intellectualized domination by Hellenism throughout Christendom has inhibited so many from truly taking hold of and living by the *heart relationship* of *responsive obedient trust* as their way of life our Father has made clear in His Word and that He commands those who claim to belong to Him.

We've found over the years that the information in our article entered the minds of readers as just more facts to file away. But it seems that relatively few actually weighed its truth *in their spirit* so

they might wholeheartedly yield to the Spirit of Christ in them and be transformed to do our Father's will (2Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:2).

Their minds were clogged by the Hellenist, humanist confines of what they'd been taught, to the extent that their spirit was relegated to silent sidelines. Content to limit their spiritual pursuit to scheduled times and gatherings, most disregarded how far they were from relational intimacy and love-grounded commitment to Jesus.

How this has grieved us! Now we realize that until Christians intentionally de-Hellenize themselves, they'll never comprehend the Hebraic bedrock on which *both testaments* of the Bible were written.

A Summary Contrast Between Hellenist and Hebraic Worldviews

Derived from the ancient Greeks, Hellenism is an intellectual grid through which you regard information solely as mental input. In other words, it's what you think that counts, not what you do with that thought. Paul observed this process at work during his visit to Athens: "*All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas*" (Acts 17:21). Hellenism predominates western thought and education

We want these lessons to challenge you and those you care about to re-examine your own "faith." We're also admonishing you to earnestly identify what factors, whether historical, cultural or personal, may be hindering you from doing our Father's will (Matthew 7:21;12:48-50). You can most effectively use these lessons by discussing them with others close to you who want to intentionally and purposefully make God's commands their *way of life*. Your *discussion* can lead to 70% retention while your *resultant actions* will result in 90% retention. Through your deliberate discussion the Spirit of our Lord can equip each of you in your mutual endeavor to do your Father's will (Matthew 18:18-20). And please, don't disregard our recommendations for "Further reading"—they'll encourage you in your journey!

today, heavily impacting Christianity as well. An insidious byproduct of Hellenism in all too many lives is *mental passivity* — people quote far more Bible verses than they actually put into practice. (And in these days of only 4% biblical literacy, few even have their Bible facts straight.)

The *Hebraic* understanding of God's Word and His commands is totally opposite Hellenism. Whatever you do know, you've put into action. Throughout the Bible are the words "hear" or "know." Hellenism interprets these as "to listen" or to mentally grasp the point. But the Hebraic mindset understands "**hear**" as to "**obey**." It stresses that true knowing can only be achieved through the experience of taking action on what you've learned. In essence, you have not actually obeyed God until He sees the action your knowing produced. To Him it's what you *do* that counts, not just what you know.

Hellenism Treats the Bible As Academic Information

Hebraic Obedient Trust Prepares You To Make Disciples of Lord Jesus

If you're a product of Hellenized Christendom then you've been subjected to the various fact-conveyance methods that prevail over it. For example, you've been taught from behind a pulpit or in a Sunday school class (or taught one yourself). And *if* you've only been taught God's Word in an academic environment like this, then you're already trained to be nothing more than a passive listener. The context of classroom instruction has been imprinted on you so deeply that actually *replicating* in others what you've heard never occurs to you.

Further Reading: See our *Hebraic-Greek Comparison* under Hebraic Articles at "Free Printable Materials".

Because you're not use to love-grounded responsive obedience to the Spirit as you look into God's Word, you become your own decision maker. His Word then is just a historical reference point to you, not the quickening of His commands as *a way of life that pleases Him* (see 1John 3:22). Your error to choose mental passivity finds you not only ignoring an *obedient responsiveness* to His commands but also demonstrating that you have *no biblically authentic love* for Lord Jesus (John 14:23,24). That's the tragic and deceptive fruit of Hellenist influence in your life.

Now the decisive contrast. Our Lord Jesus declares to His own the *Hebraic* way of reproducing your faith—the way He modeled for all His followers to emulate:

*"All authority in heaven and on earth was given to Me. **Going** [wherever you are], **make disciples**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to **observe all things that I commanded you**; and behold, I am with you all the days until the completion of the age"* (Matthew 28:19,20, literal translation).

Perceiving the Hebraic backdrop of making disciples as our Lord commands offers us a clearer understanding of our role as His followers. First, Jesus *role modeled* what He taught. This required *ongoing close contact* with those He was discipling. Then He sent them out to *do likewise*. Unlike Hellenism which focuses on disseminating information, the Hebraic process of making disciples reproduces *a way of life* that represents Jesus to all who encounter you. Our lives are a *living testimony of His grace* as we're transformed by His Spirit through Hebraic discipleship. Out of grateful love for our Lord Jesus we yearn for others to want to seek Him heart and soul as well.

Let's look at some other passages which speak to the *Hebraic* way of reproducing your faith in making disciples:

• “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. **Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:7,8).

• “Join with others in **following my example**, brothers, and take note of those who **live according to the pattern we gave you**” (Philippians 3:17).

• “Whatever you have **learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice.** And the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:9).

• “Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but **be an example** for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity” (1Timothy 4:12).

Because Hellenism is so pervasive throughout Christendom, most churching people have been exposed to Hellenized methods. They're *comfortable* in Hellenized passivity, in *knowing about* but not doing. Yet that's a manmade form of religion that's contrary to biblical truth! That's what makes it so hard for you to be convinced that *not* putting His commands into action makes you unacceptable to Him according to His Word.

This isn't just our opinion. Consider carefully how *authentic faith* is described by our Lord and by one of His own:

“Thus, **by their fruit** you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **only he who does the will of My Father** Who is in heaven. **Many** will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, **‘I never knew you.** Away from

*Me, you who **practice lawlessness!*** Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine **and puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had **its foundation on the rock.** But everyone who hears these words of Mine and **does not put them into practice** is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house. And **great was its fall**” (Matthew 7: 20-27).

“But be **doers of the word, and not hearers only**, deceiving yourselves... Thus also faith by itself, **if it does not have works**, is dead... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so **faith without works is dead also**” (James 1:22, 2:17,26).

Hellenism and the “believers” it produces lack the biblical faith that results in action. In our book, *Restoring the Early Church*, we introduced the Hebraic basis to faith: ***emunah*** [em-oo-NAH].

Emunah, the Hebrew word for “faith”, doesn't refer to mere mental belief or cognitive assent. Rather, the word represents the same determined steadfast trust in God which Abraham had. The trust of this man who is called the father of all who trust in Jesus (Romans 4:16) led him to obey God! So your faith, or more accurately, your *trust* that produces *love-impelled obedience* in you is an emotional and responsive term that *emanates from your heart* toward the One Who has redeemed you by His grace.

The “belief” that Hellenism produces is counterfeit, unacceptable by the God of the Bible *or* by the Bible of God. Mere intellectual “belief” places you in unsavory company: “You believe that there is one God. Good! **Even the demons believe**

—*and shudder*” (James 2:19). Isn’t it time you jump off the Hellenist bandwagon and humbly ask our Father to show you what authentic loving, obedient trust is?

Thoughts and questions to consider and discuss with those close to you:

- **First, in order to continue to be transformed by the indwelling Spirit into the image and character of our Lord which He has commanded you as His beloved child, you need to be convinced that He requires *responsive action* from you to validate your faith as authentic. Your relationship with our Father in Christ is fully realized by His grace through your trust in Jesus when you are born again of His Spirit. Your responsive obedience is an *outflow of love* as His Spirit works in and through you. You need to use the Word of God as He intends—to be a “hearer” who then *takes action* based on what you hear — so you can de-Hellenize your passive view of His commands.**

In doing so, be prepared to lose relationships; some may wrongfully accuse you of trying to “earn” your acceptance from our Father because they’re blinded by a counterfeit Christianity which distorts grace into lawlessness and self-idolization. But consider this: Do you want to come before the Judgment Throne and discover that your manmade religious “belief” system was unacceptable to our righteous God? Will you blame Him for allowing you to be deceived? When the complacently passive you “fellowshipped” with are judged for believing a false gospel which disregards our Father’s will, it will be too late to take action!

Further Reading: The Hebraic foundation relies on *direct experience* in making disciples. Ongoing personal contact and role modeling are essential. When direct experience is impossible, *simulation* may be used. Our Lord’s parables were often simulations, enabling His listeners to place themselves in the story. This is why we wrote our *Kingdom Living Today* series, so you could put yourself into everyday Kingdom living situations.

- **If you came into the presence of our Lord Jesus, what evidence could you give Him:**
 - to reveal how you have loved and trusted Him according to His Word and by His grace?
 - to show how you put His commands into action as He prompted and empowered you?
 - to confirm how you’ve been transformed to become more like Him through your trust and yieldedness to His Spirit?
- **Hebraically, knowledge of God comes through life experience which flows from an intimate relationship of love for our Lord Jesus and responsive obedient trust in Him. You experience His loving presence in and around you each day through divine encounters and interventions as you seek to bring Him glory. You testify to others about your experiences with Him which point to their need too for Him as their Lord and Savior. And those who already live in loving assurance of their acceptance in Jesus are strengthened and encouraged by what you say. By your words and your actions He becomes a *living Lord* to others.**

When you speak of our Lord, do you just convey facts you’ve learned *about* Him, or do you express with grateful love your relationship with Someone you experience personally as your Lord, Lover of your soul, your glorious Friend and Redeemer?

Further Reading: We’ve previously recommended the Complete Jewish Bible translation by David Stern. It’s the best source we’ve seen for understanding the Hebraic emphasis on *taking responsive action*. Unlike English, which focuses on the noun or subject, Hebrew emphasizes the verb. Also, Stern does a wonderful job of pointing out the *ongoing sense* of verbs when the original languages call for it. English tends to make many of God’s commands look like a one-time act when in fact He intends that we *keep on* doing it. For example, here’s Stern’s translation of Romans 10:10: “*For with the heart one goes on trusting and thus continues toward righteousness, while with the mouth one keeps on making public acknowledgement and thus continues toward deliverance.*”