

Is That in the Bible?

When I was a boy, my family belonged to a large church denomination. I went faithfully with them to church every Sunday.

In Sunday school class we studied church history and church doctrines. We were not encouraged to go very deeply into the Scriptures, but were expected to be content with the accepted church literature and the 20-minute sermon each week.

Yet, even at the young age of 12 there were questions that truly puzzled me. One that especially bothered me was this: how could the Savior be in the grave three days and three nights, as He promised in Matthew 12:40, if he were buried late Friday afternoon only to rise the following Sunday morning? I never was given a satisfactory answer.

I was contending with another problem. If Sunday is the Sabbath (Biblically the 7th), as the church taught, then why did my wall calendar show that Sunday is the first day of the week?

I had been struggling with these and other inconsistencies between what the denomination was teaching and what the Bible plainly said. I brought these questions to the minister at Wednesday night Bible studies. He no doubt was hoping I would stop raising all these discrepancies that he was having such a difficult time explaining.

We eventually left and finally found the answers to my questions after a long search and thorough study of the Scriptures.

Maybe you, too, are bothered by certain teachings that just don't harmonize with Scripture, or even contradict what you read in the Bible. No one you ask seems to have the answers. Your minister's best responses seem only half right and difficult to prove from the Word. You are left with nagging doubts.

Rest assured that you aren't alone. Many serious seekers of truth are wrestling with the same dilemma. Much of what is passed off as Scriptural is, in fact, a gradual development from centuries of human tradition and not what the Bible teaches at all. The Apostles, not to mention the Savior Himself, would be shocked to see how their clear statements have been twisted to fit false conclusions.

The "faith once delivered to the saints," spoken of in Jude 3, is quite different from what is preached today. Jude speaks of a small number returning to the true faith in these latter days. If the majority of churches had been teaching correct doctrine, then this prophetic verse would be unnecessary! Yet the Scripture says the true faith would be taught and established again just before the Second Coming of the Messiah Yahshua.

The reasons these right teachings of the Bible have not been proclaimed as the Savior and His disciples taught them is a fascinating study in itself.

Call on His Name

Take the Savior's Name, for instance. You probably were never taught that "Yahushua" was the actual Name the angel Gabriel gave to the Savior's Hebrew parents, Joseph (Yowceph) and Mary (Miriam), Matthew 1:21. The angel instructed them to name the newly born Messiah "Yahushua." "Yahushua" reflects the Savior's Hebrew heritage. But translators changed His Name.

You are likely familiar with the Hebrew expression, "halleluYah," meaning "Praise you Yah." Even more important is the Hebrew Name Yahushua, which is tied to salvation (literally meaning, "Yah is salvation"). His Name Yahushua comes from His Father's Name, Yahweh. Perhaps you have heard ministers and priests use "Yahweh" occasionally. Most of them know that Yahweh is the true Name of the Heavenly Father, yet few will call on Him exclusively by this vital, saving Name.

The Father's Name Yahweh is easily verifiable in Bible encyclopedias, Bible dictionaries, secular encyclopedias and dictionaries, and prefaces of many Bibles.

That His Name is Yahweh is taught in seminaries worldwide and is found in Bible versions like the scholarly Anchor Bible and the Catholic Jerusalem Bible, among others. It is found in ancient manuscripts, including the famous Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Only Name for Salvation

Anciently, names carried important meaning. Philippians 2:9 tells us that the Father has highly exalted the Son, and given Him a name which is above every name. The Father and Son don't have many different names as pagan deities do. Yahushua said He came in His Father's Name, John 5:43, and the people would not receive Him in that Name. Little has changed in the past 2,000 years.

Acts 4:12 tells us there is salvation in no other Name. That makes perfect sense, doesn't it, now that you know the important meaning of the Savior's divinely given Name! The form "Jesus" simply has no such meaning as it is Latinized-Greek and came much later.

The fact that Yahushua came in His Heavenly Father's Name is intriguing. Some will tell you that this means that He came in and through His Father's authority. That's true, but that's only half the truth. The point completely ignores the importance of the family Name.

The beauty of this family Name lies in the fact that Yahushua's Name is in His Father's Name, Yahweh/Yahushua. He is the representative of the Father's power and authority on earth.

At this point you may be asking, If "Yahweh" is His Name, why don't we use it? Good question! The Third Commandment tells us not to take His Name in vain, which in the Hebrew means to falsify and to allow to come to nothing, which is exactly what has happened. His true, personal Name has become as "nothing" as it can be!

Why does man accept substitutes like God and Lord that are only titles, and inferior ones at that? (Did you know that even Satan is referred to as "the god of this world" ? See 2Cor. 4:4. "Lord" is simply Old English for "keeper of the loaf.")

Aren't names important? Isn't your name important to you? The sacred Name is far more important to the Heavenly Father and Son. You can find the sacred Name nearly 7,000 times in ancient Bible manuscripts from which are derived today's versions. Yet copyists and translators deliberately hid His Name in our translations, mostly out of superstitious fear.

From now on, as you read the Scriptures, notice the countless times you come across verses referring to His Name. You will be amazed to see how very important His Name actually is, and how many promises and acts are through His Name!

But does it really make a difference whether you call on His Name? Here's a challenge. The next time you face a trial, sickness, temptation or other crisis, instead of praying in a title, call on the Name Yahweh. Petition Him through the Savior's Name Yahushua. See whether He will not answer you if you pray in His Name. "If you shall ask anything in my Name I will do it," Yahshua promises in John 14:14.

A Quest for Biblical Truth

We believe and practice the teachings of Yahushua and the Apostles. One thing we all had in common was a thirst for truth and a willingness to live by the truth wherever we found it. We hadn't found it in our former affiliations. What we found was an adherence to church tradition and man-made doctrines that were favored over Scripture. "Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Mark 7:7.

The Savior asked the Scribes and Pharisees this pertinent question, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of Yahweh by your tradition?" Matthew 15:3. He is still asking that question today.

We have learned that the Bible harmonizes from Genesis through Revelation into a beautiful plan of salvation for the man and woman who are willing to take part in it (Isa. 8:20).

We discovered that special yearly observances that Almighty Yahweh set forth in the Bible to be kept by His people FOREVER have been virtually ignored through the millennia. Man-made holidays and traditions have completely taken their place.

Yet He says that His annual Feast days will be reinstated worldwide when the coming Kingdom is established by Yahushua on this earth, Isaiah 66:23, Zechariah 14:16-19. Our question was, if Yahweh's special days are so important, shouldn't we be observing them now? Obviously, we should!

"Aren't Churches All the Same?"

How can you know where the "true church" is? Certainly all the hundreds of denominations and organizations with all their conflicting doctrines can't all be right. Yet, we know that True Worship does exist. Paul wrote, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Master, one faith [doctrine]; one baptism," Ephesians 4:4-5.

Here is how the Bible itself defines those True Worshipers who are truly following Almighty Yahweh and His ways:

- First, the true Assembly would not deny His Name but in fact would be called by His Name, 2Chronicles 7:14, Daniel 9:19, Revelation 3:8.

- Second, His true people would work in these end times to find and restore the bedrock, forgotten truths. Jude tells us that for salvation we "should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," verse 3.

- Third, His True Worshipers would not be a huge denomination with millions of members. "Yahweh did not set His love upon you, because you were more in number than any other people; for you were the fewest of all people," Deuteronomy 7:7, Acts 7:38; Matthew 7:14. "...the world knows us not because it knew Him not," 1John 3:1.

•Fourth, those who sincerely follow in all truth will be obedient to His laws. In a day when law is something scorned and ridiculed, Yahweh's own Assembly will be advocating obedience as a sign of their love for Him. "For this is the love of Yahweh, that we keep His commandments:

and His commandments are not grievous," 1John 5:3.

•Fifth, His people will have love for one another. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another," Yahushua said in John 13:35.

•Sixth, the True Assembly will accept ALL the Bible, Old and New Testaments, as the inspired Word. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Yahshua the Messiah Himself being the chief corner stone," Ephesians 2:20. We are told to "search the Scriptures..." meaning both Old and New Testaments, John 5:39. ("To the law [Old Testament] and to the testimony [New Testament], if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. 8:20.)

•Seventh, Yahweh's true Worshipers are expressed by the Hebrew word kahal, meaning the called-out ones. In the Greek the word is ekklesia, a gathering of called-out ones. Yahweh's people will not find pleasure in the riches or glory of this world, but have their eye on a much greater Kingdom to come to this earth. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth...but in heaven," Matthew 6:19-20. We are called out of this world, just as Abraham, Moses, Yahushua, and all the disciples were called out for a special purpose.

Finally, notice the traits of the one, true, end-time Philadelphia Assembly found in Revelation 3:8: "I know your works: behold I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept My word, and have not denied my Name."