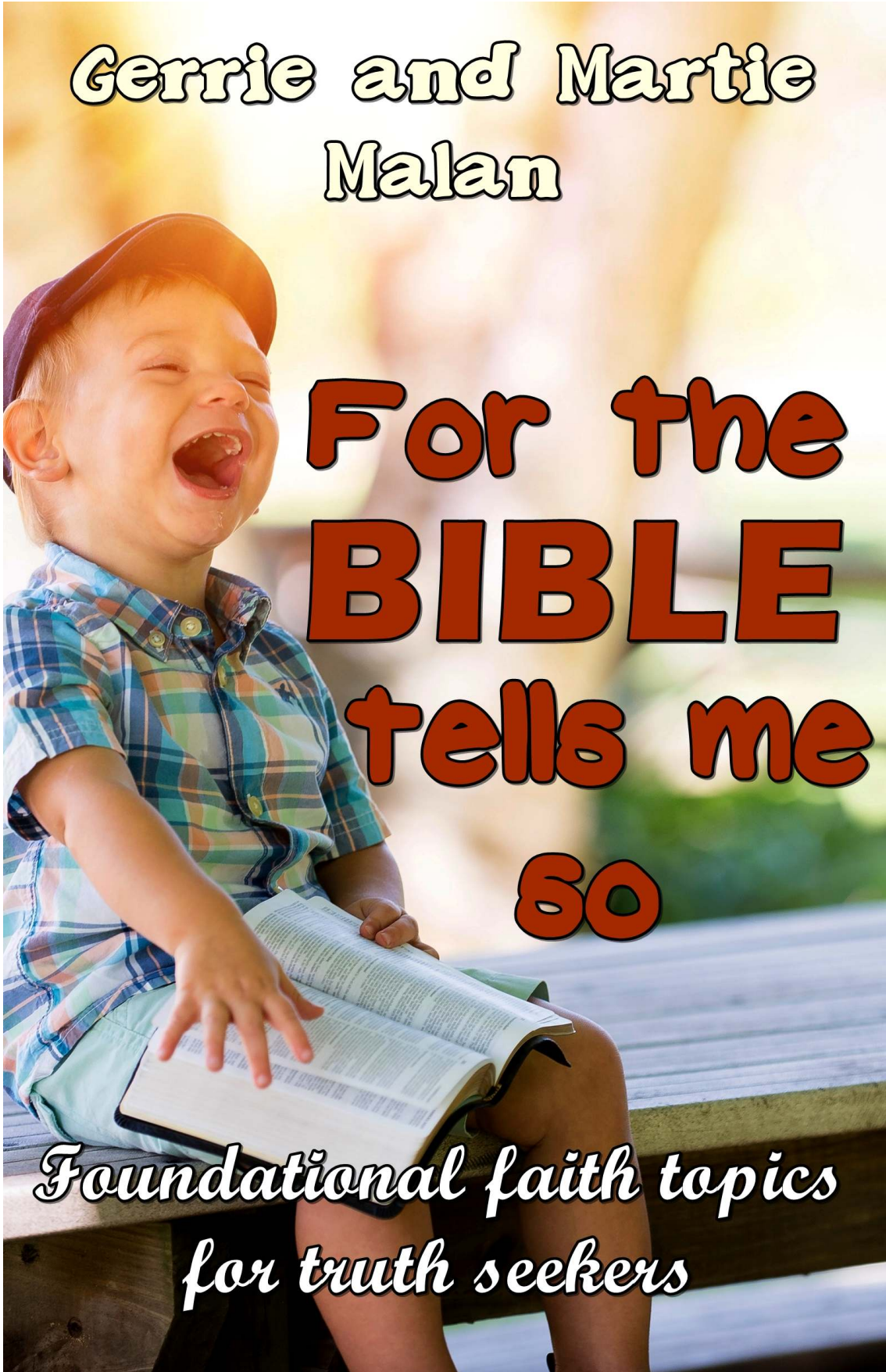


**Gerrie and Martie  
Malan**

**For the  
BIBLE  
tells me**

**60**

*Foundational faith topics  
for truth seekers*



# **FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO**



Foundational Faith Topics For Truth  
Seekers

**Gerrie en Martie Malan**

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**Dedicated to Liewan, our first great-grandson.**

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**Hibberdene: The Hosea Connection**

## FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO

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## PREFACE

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This book is a compilation of articles that saw the light in my and my wife Martie's search for the unphilosophised truth in the Bible text. Because articles are not necessarily written in a specific sequence, the idea of putting some with connecting topics together in book compilations. Similar suggestions have also been received from friends.

We accept that such books would assist in giving greater clarity regarding the development of our understanding of Bible content within the correct context. The position of so many of our articles dealing with end-times topics does not really reflect our heart's focus. We would much rather have been addressing basic faith topics from the Bible – topics providing the basic foundation on which our faith knowledge in Jesus Christ as the Way and the Truth and the Life are built and reinforced.

It is therefore with great joy that we present this first collection from our articles spanning most of a decade. Some contain improvements of the original writings, not only in typographical corrections, but sometimes also in addressing possible lack of clarity. We trust that this book will provide the reader with a constructive contribution to his or her own search for the truth amidst all the philosophised and confusing doctrines found in the wider Christian environment.

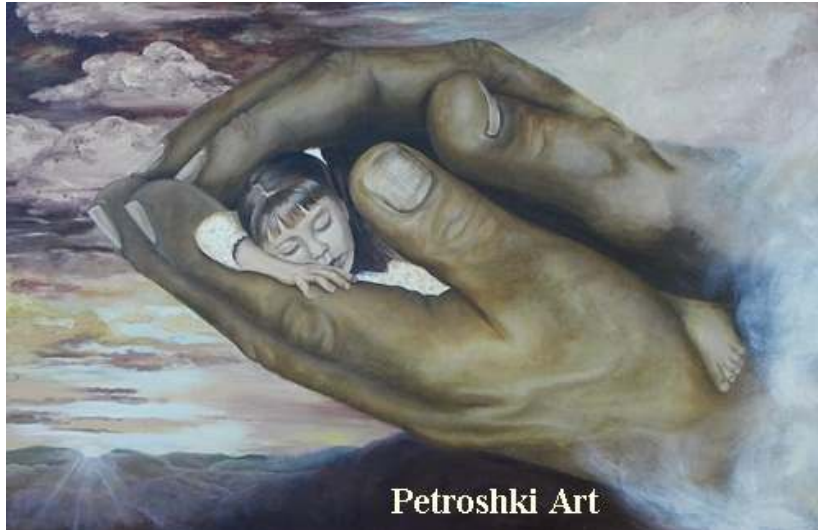
*Gerrie en Martie Malan (Hibberdene, October 2017)*





## OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE MESSAGE – THE ‘SKELETON’

---



**W**e believe that there is one true and living God, Elohim Yahwe (or Yahweh). He is the self-existent One, who has no beginning and no end. By Him was the heavens and the earth created and man was made in His image - a living soul.

God has revealed himself progressively in the scriptures we know as the Bible. It is a collection of 66 books, written by approximately 40 writers, over a period of approximately 1500 years, in three languages (Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek) and on 3 continents, and yet it forms an amazing whole. We believe it is God’s communication with humanity in different ways. The

66 books of the Bible were written in very specific contexts - geographical, cultural, historical, literary, etc. The only way to avoid error and ensure that the scriptures are interpreted or understood correctly is to read and understand them in the fullness of their original context. Such an approach would unavoidably include a reasonable attention to the languages in which the Scriptures were written. Even then, acknowledging that most of the New Testament had supposedly been written in the Greek language, we cannot deny the Hebrew mind was always present. Modern technology has brought wonderful abilities within our reach, even if we had never had the opportunity to study the biblical languages.

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**A single passage of Scripture usually has one meaning only.**

---

Consequently we believe that as a rule of thumb, a single passage has one meaning only, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. The meaning of the biblical texts is fixed and unchanging - applications, however, may change. We cannot seek meanings beyond the grammatical-historical meanings of texts, such as assigning “future” meanings to historical events. The moment we do that, we become, as we have seen in modern Christendom, *“tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit”* (Eph 4:14). We can, however, seek to grow in correct understanding and to navigate the swamp of doctrinal error by using sound methodology. In the process sincere and God-fearing people’s toes of tradition get trampled on and the human spirit finds this very, very difficult to deal with.

The Bible is a book of covenant and reveals God’s heart for humanity. It describes how God chose for Himself a people of the bloodline of Abraham, that the world may know Him through this people. In Egypt they were fruitful and multiplied according to God’s covenant, after which He led them to a

seemingly insignificant piece of land - a land which was the political, economic and cultural crossroads of the time. The people who controlled that piece of land were in the ideal position to influence the whole known world of the time and beyond.

---

**God chose Israel as covenant nation in order that the world might know Him through them.**

---

Sadly, Israel was a stiff-necked people who continuously turned to idolatry despite the calls of the prophets. After Solomon the kingdom divided into two when 10 of the 12 tribes formed the kingdom of Israel with Samaria as their capitol. This kingdom lasted little more than 200 years. All 19 their kings were idolaters who led their people into idolatry. They all refused to heed the warnings of God through his prophets, and eventually God removed them from his sight through the Assyrian Empire (2 Kgs 17:22, 23). They are regarded as lost (un-identifiable) in their original tribal context even today.

The Southern kingdom, with capitol Jerusalem, was preserved for the tribe of Judah as the predestined Messianic lineage. They were also later exiled by the Babylonians, but a remnant eventually returned to the land of Judah and the Holy City, Jerusalem. Then, in the **fullness (completion) of (the prophetic) time**, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, **to redeem those under the Law (Gal 4:4, 5)**.

We believe the New Testament is the record of the fulfillment, in other words, the **completion** of the Mosaic dispensation (the Law and the Prophets). On the cross the Son of God cried, *"It is finished"*! He did not cry, *"We are halfway there"*! He came to usher in the manifest Kingdom of God on the earth. In His discussion with Nicodemus on being born (or better, begotten) from above, Jesus was stating that the kingdom of God was no longer to be regarded as the sole inheritance of those of

Abraham's lineage! There was now a new lineage (one new man - see Eph 2:11-22).

---

### **"It is finished!" The 'New Jerusalem' had come.**

---

Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. It was no longer the Holy City, for the "New Jerusalem" had come - one which was and is everywhere with those who worship God in Spirit and in truth as Jesus told the woman at the well of Samaria (see John 4:19-24). Not one stone of the physical temple as the centre of worship and centre of God's presence among men was left upon another. The Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are now the sanctuary or temple (see Rev 21:22). To deny this, is to discard any regard of truth of the Letter to the Hebrews in its entirety.

The church preaches a second coming of Christ. We believe that Christ's Second Advent, or "Second Coming", was fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD70. This was the reply Jesus of Nazareth gave his close disciples on their question as to His coming (or presence) in Matthew 24. Jesus spoke the truth, or He lied - we cannot have it both ways. This was clearly included in the doctrine the apostles taught from there onwards - they were waiting for the Second Advent and that is what they wrote in their letters. Before you look at anything else, focus on who the letters were written to.

Revelation, for example, was written to 7 churches only, although there were many more at the time! Why? Those were the churches that John ministered to (and not because their condition pointed towards seven so-called church ages). These seven churches also lay on the exact route sequence the messenger would have had to follow to deliver the letters. The only way Jesus is to "come again" is for you and me individually when we give our last breath and the spirit (soul) returns to its maker. The original texts were not built around a theology of excuses.

**We believe that the Bible is a fulfilled book.** We need not wait for prophecies yet to be fulfilled, but we should apply the principles it provides in our lives for true kingdom living here and now! We need to make out for ourselves: is Jesus here with us through the Holy Spirit, or is He not?

Radical? No, when we strip our traditions and pet doctrines of the violations of unsound interpretation, we find that this is what the Bible says.

Our teachers and end-times prophets have added so much error to our understanding of the scriptures. For example, Revelation 15:8 states that **no one** could enter the sanctuary **until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed** (and which people are still waiting for in fear due to the fruit of the end-times industry). But Hebrews 9:12 declares that Messiah entered the holy of holies **once for all...by His own blood.....having obtained eternal redemption.**

---

**The modern rapture theology implies that the blood of the Lamb was not good enough. Neither has the presence of the Holy Spirit among humanity for 2000 years been effective. Consequently men will have to pay for their salvation by their own blood!**

---

Hebrews 12:22 states that they, the first recipient readers, **had come to mount Zion, to the city of the living God (the heavenly Jerusalem).** But will the heavenly Jerusalem not only appear some day in the future according to Revelation 21? And is that day not in our future according to the modern popular end-times industry?

Who is lying? Jesus? The writer of the letter to the Hebrews perhaps? John? Or maybe the modern end-times proph-

ets who have had to change their unfulfilled predictions again and again?

John writes that the antichrist is one who denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:18-22). He states many of them had already come - in his day! (See 1 Joh. 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 Joh. verse 7). Look around - there are thousands upon thousands of them even today. Modern end-times prophets find a modern day world leader, THE ANTICHRIST in the book of Daniel. There is only one way to find such a person in Daniel, and that is to read far beyond what is written! The Seventy Weeks Prophecy in Daniel was a prophecy to the Jewish nation (actually to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin who were taken into exile to Babylonia). It was never intended as a prophecy to the known world at large in biblical time, let alone the world as we know it.

**We have been robbed by theology, however sincere individuals may have been in their endeavours, of the full knowledge and power of the kingdom life Jesus came to usher in.** We have been left with doctrines of deceit, and with an organisational system that God never modelled. It is probably wishful thinking to even think that men would be willing to relinquish the institutes of religion for a return to the church that Jesus founded. Many modern congregations do wonderful, Godly work. But it is time to at least reclaim our biblical minds and take ownership of rightly dividing the Word of Truth again. We need to have the fullness of life in the New Jerusalem that is here and now! Jesus did not come as the Lord of corporate organisation or management. He came as the Lord of Life, not of death. And I fail to see us in this fullness until the church, yes, both the institutional church and those who have moved away, are willing to undertake a deep cutting look at the biblical accuracy of its doctrines and start to consider on that basis where we are.

**Note that in Acts 3:11-26 we find Peter talking to “Men of Israel” in the temple, where they were diligently busy practicing religion. Like Peter, we are tired of religion.**

**Christ and not the organised Christian church is the Way,  
and the Truth, and the Life. There is a difference!**

---

The original article was written in 2010 and distributed among our friends and interested people in December of that year, in a personal newsletter, *The Hosea Letter*, Vol. 2, no. 1.

Drawing by our daughter, Petru Malan, under the banner of Petroshki Art.





## STATEMENTS ON MY FAITH AS A BELIEVER IN JESUS CHRIST

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**M**odern technology has had amazing results in the area of communication. Yet, for all its convenience, it will always lack the personal touch of face to face presence with each other. It also falls short when it comes to description of my faith. Jesus and His Apostles preached and taught the Gospel (Good News) of the Kingdom of God by oral means, by relationship in their homes and *ecclesiae* and not by writings. Sure, there were writ-

ings to various individuals and *ecclesiae* in that first century, but they were the result of the relationships and not the cause.

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**The New Testament writings were the result of relationships, not the cause.**

---

Because I do not intend to write a complete book on my faith, this document will no doubt also fall short, but I am sure it will bring any reader some important clarity on my faith. I am often approached by people from the so-called Torah observant groups and for their sake I also use the Hebrew names.

### CHILDHOOD INFORMATION

Like so many of my generation, I grew up in one of South Africa's mainline Afrikaans churches – The Dutch Reformed Church. Looking back today, I know that, also like so many of my generation and even the generation of our fathers and mothers, we were often simply following the tradition of a religious culture. This does not mean that it was all bad, but that we gained perceptual and intellectual knowledge about God the Father, this great judge who we were taught was always watching us, His Son, Jesus Christ who died for our sins (whatever that meant), and the Holy Spirit (a name mentioned in passing without providing any understanding of the deep spiritual realities it carried).

It was only many years after my childhood (actually approaching my fiftieth birthday) that I really came to faith in the sense of understanding and knowing it. The question naturally follows: what is this faith in what or whom? I will try to explain without getting lost in too much description.

## MY APPROACH TO OTHERS AND THEIR WORK

I have come to the realisation that I could listen to what others were saying, but the responsibility for what I believed was mine and mine alone. I could never transfer that responsibility to anyone else. What I could do, however, was to listen to the others, carefully weigh what they were saying, testing it against the Scriptures and then decide for myself what I believed to be the truth.

I also try to separate the person from his or her teachings. I can therefore differ from another's views and still love and appreciate the person. Isolating oneself from the world in a convent or monastery type of institution was not God's will for us. So many times in the Scriptures we find His command: be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth!

---

**I can differ from another's views, yet still love and appreciate him/her.**

---

## FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

I believe in *elohei Avraham elohei Yitschak velohei Ya'acov* – the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I believe He is the one true elohim (God) who also revealed himself to Mosheh (Moseh; Moses), and to the other prophets we read of in the Old Testament (or Hebrew Tanakh). He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, of the universe.

I believe that the prophets foretold the coming of an Anointed One and the Messianic Age. The Hebrew Rabbi's always took this to be the "end of the age" or "end times". Referring to the Seventy Sevens prophecy in the Book of Dani'el (Daniel), the Rabbi's have forbidden the Hebrews to count or calculate the sevens, for then they would know that Yeshua MiNatzaret (Jesus of Nazareth) was indeed that Messiah

(Maschiach/Moschiach). (Pronunciation of Yeshua – accent on Yé, followed by schwa).

I believe that He is that completion of the Law and the Prophets, not the destruction thereof. I also believe that He gave His disciples a new law – that they should love each other as He loved them. This stands on a level far above loving one's neighbour as you love yourself. Torah (the law and teaching of God) was no longer written on stone tablets and papyri, but on the heart.

**In the Messiah, His life, crucifixion, resurrection and eventually His *parousia* and judgment upon Jerusalem and the Temple in the year 70 AD, as well as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that one wonderful day of Pentecost described in Acts 2 the old Mosaic Covenant was replaced by a New Covenant. It was not a renewed covenant as some would teach, but a New (better) Covenant (Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ibrim/Hebrews 8:1-7).** The work Yeshua/Jesus has been given to do is far superior to that of the human high priests. He entered the holy of holies (Holiest Place) once for all, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption (for those who would believe in Him as the Son of God).

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**By His own blood, Jesus entered the holy of holies once for all obtaining eternal redemption.**

---

I believe that the Scriptures, or the Bible if you will, is a fulfilled (and not terminated) book. After all, Chapter 15 and verse 8 of the Apoakalypsis (Revelation) states that no one could enter into God's presence until all the plagues of the seven angels had been poured out. If the Apoakalypsis has not been fulfilled as I believe, then I still cannot enter into the presence of Elohim Yahweh even today. Then I would still need a Levitical high priest to come before God in my place.

The Apostles' generation was the Elect, for they were the vehicle for the establishment of a new and better Covenant, and we need to follow the principles of their doctrine. To do so we need to clean up the pollution of our understanding by the stubborn stains of Greek and Hebrew philosophy. Yet even today, the Scriptures are not being read, they are being interpreted instead. And the interpretation inevitably adds into the Scriptures what was never written or intended. It is no wonder then that there are more than 40 000 denominations in Christendom.

Differences are not limited to Orthodox, Reformed, Pentecostal and Charismatic Christendom, though. We find it in the writings of Judaism, for example – I only have to think of Rabbi's Shammai, Hillel and Akivah. And so, too, do we find it in the writings of those who identify themselves as 'Torah Observant Christians.'

I dearly appreciate the use of the Hebrew names of *HaShem* (The Name) and of His *Maschiach*. Having said that, however, I realise that there is a lot of confusion here too. In literature of Torah observant groups, sometimes called Sacred Name groups, there are so many variations, and all declared to be The Correct One. I have at least 26 variations of God's name and 14 of Messiah's name. Then I have statements from, for example, the Institute of Scripture Research's translation of the Bible, called The Scriptures, and which is used by Torah observant groups in South Africa, and also some abroad. This Institute has preferred to retain the Hebrew Tetragrammaton for God because, like many others (including rabbinic circles), they declare that through non usage over so many centuries, no one really knows what the proper pronunciation of HaShem (The Name) is.

I am convinced, after reading much in this regard, that the English name "Jesus" has absolutely no pagan connection as some say and is simply a derivation of "Yesous," the Greek transliteration (and not translation) of "Yeshua." In his discussion of the matter, Dr. Michael Brown, of Hebrew descent and who holds a Ph.D in Semitic Languages points out that *Iēsous* was the natural Greek rendering of the Hebrew name *Yeshua*

two centuries before his birth. Brown also points out that the original Hebrew-Aramaic name of Jesus is *Yeshu'a*, which is a short variation of *Yehōshu'a* (Joshua). The name *Yeshu'a* occurs 27 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, primarily referring to the high priest after the Babylonian exile, called both *Yehōshu'a* (see, e.g., Zechariah 3:3) and, more frequently, *Yeshu'a* (see, e.g., Ezra 3:2). So, Yeshua's name was not unusual; in fact, as many as five different men had that name in the Old Testament record. And this is how that name came to be "Jesus" in English: Simply stated, this is the etymological history of the name Jesus: Hebrew/Aramaic *Yeshu'a* became Greek *Iēsous*, then Latin *Iesus*, passing into German and then, ultimately, into English, as Jesus. The name *Yahushua* which seems so popular in some circles as the correct name of the Messiah, does not exist in Hebrew culture or understanding of God, according to Brown.

**With this in mind, I can only marvel at God's grace, for we all fall short.** He reprimanded Israel through the prophet Yesha'yahu (Isaiah), that they honoured Him with their words, but that their hearts were far from Him. Yeshua (Jesus) repeated these when he too addressed the religious leaders of His time (Mattityahu/Matthew 15:7). The mirror image (direct opposite) of this would then be that the words from people's mouths were often inaccurate, but their hearts were with God – and this He graciously understood. After all, He was the one who told Sh'mu'el (Samuel) that He did not look upon man as man did, but He looked upon the heart. Is it not amazing that an adulterer and murderer, David, was called a man after God's own heart?

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**God told Samuel He did not look upon man as man did, but He looked upon the heart.**

---

Without this grace and reconciliation that came in Maschiach – and I do not see it as a free pass to do what we like – would there be any humans alive today? And if so, would any of them be blessed? I base this statement on Torah itself, for

example D'varim (Deuteronomy) 28:15-19 which states that if they did not carefully follow **All His commands**, they would be cursed in the city and in the country, their descendants and first-born of their herds would be cursed, and they would be cursed coming in and going out. The commands/ commandments include many things we would not be allowed to do today – such as stoning a rebellious son, for example.

The nation of Israel was set apart that the whole world of their time (and consequently beyond) would know God through them. They were given the land Canaan – physically the geographical, political, economic and cultural crossroads of that era. The nation controlling that small piece of land could influence the whole known world. But Israel was a stiff-necked people and the nation was eventually became torn apart into two kingdoms. The Northern kingdom, known as Israel were idolators and eventually became dispersed and lost in terms of the tribal identity. Hebrew Rabbis acknowledge that they are lost in that sense even to this day.

Judah and Benjamin were preserved as the Southern kingdom, or Kingdom of Judah, thus preserving the Messianic bloodline coming down from Noah's son Shem (also identified in the Scriptures as Melchizedek). The modern nation of Israel is not a prophetic restoration of the Nation of Israel as the popular end-times industry prophets would have it. It is simply a manmade phenomenon. God's name was on the ancient city of Jerusalem, for that was where His Temple, the centre of His presence among men, was. **Jerusalem of today is no longer the holy city and by the very words of Yeshua to the Samaritan woman at the well (Yochanan/John 4:21-24), there is no need or place for a rebuilt temple.**

**The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is Good News.** In Yeshua HaMaschiach Adonay, we have been reconciled with Elohim Yahweh – and I use this name knowing that He hears my heart, not the correctness or not of my spelling or pronunciation. **That kingdom is not a physical area, but I understand it to be the power of God working through His people. It is, or**



**should be, a visible kingdom, not by rituals but by the visible power of God in the lives of those who say they believe that Yeshua MiNatzaret (Jesus of Nazareth) was and is indeed the Messiah foretold by the prophets.** Sadly we are all a stiff-necked people so many times, just as the people of old Israel. We need only look at the world around us to see that like Israel of old, there is a lack, if not absence, of strong Godly leadership, leaders whose lives are a daily sermon of hope and Godly love to their own people and the nations abroad. We need only consider Ya'acov (James) 3:13-18 and measure contemporary political, judicial and church leadership against this Kingdom standard to know why the world is in a mess.

For me, the constitution of this kingdom is found in Matityahu (Matthew) 5 – “Blessed is (...)”. I should never need to have to tell people what my faith is. They should know it from knowing me and seeing it in my life.

May you be blessed in the city  
And blessed in the country.  
May you be blessed in your work  
And in all you do.  
May your basket and kneading bowl be blessed;  
And may you be blessed when you come in  
And when you go out.

Sjalom.

**Gerrie Malan**

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The original article was written 2012.

# SHOULD CHRISTIANS BE TORAH OBSERVANT?

## WHAT DOES CHRISTIAN FREEDOM MEAN?

---



I have been confronted at various times – in both negative and friendly terms – by people who are classified as Torah Observant. In the process there has regularly been absolute insistence on a number of matters, including:

- Keeping the Sabbath on Saturdays.
- Obedience to the Law of Moses, and therefore
- Keeping the seven biblical feasts.

- Correct use of the name of God and Jesus. The name “Jesus” is allegedly a derivative of Zeus, the chief god of Greek mythology.

They also allege that Christians abuse Paul’s letter to the Galatians as proof that the Law no longer applies. Apart from an argument of additions that were not part of the original letter, they state that Paul nowhere wrote in the letter that they were not to keep the Law anymore.

Let us briefly look at the most important aspects at the base of the different viewpoints. I will not be arguing everything in detail, because the simple mention of a fact from the Bible should in some cases be sufficient.

### **THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE LAW**

The founding of the nation that became known as Israel flowed forth from God’s covenant (and accompanying covenant promises) to Abraham, and which was repeated to his son, Isaac and grandson Jacob. Jacob’s twelve sons became the patriarchs of the tribes that eventually formed the nation of Israel. The known world was to know God through this nation who was described as the least of all nations (Deut 7:7).

God took this nation to a small land area in the Mid-East that, according to the economical and constitutional history, formed the geographical, economic, and political crossroads of the known world of the time. The nation exercising control of that part would have been able to influence the whole world – and reveal the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to them.

In their exodus from Egypt on their way to the land of Canaan, they received the Law of God (which we know as the Ten Commandments) at Mount Sinai. This law was extended by what became known as the Law of Moses. Apart from extensive directives for community life, this Mosaic Law also included various punishments, including death by stoning, for certain transgressions. It is obvious to what measure the Law of Moses

dealt with protecting the nation's purity – and therefore the protection of the Messianic bloodline from the descendants of Noah's son Shem.

---

**In simple terms, we can say that the Mosaic dispensation's purpose was to reveal the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to the known world and to maintain the pure Messianic bloodline until the fullness of time (the appointed time) for the appearance of Messiah came (Gal 4:4).**

---

From the aforementioned, three aspects are important:

- The law and the prophets were until John (Luke 16:16). Since that time the kingdom of God became manifest in the Messiah.
- In the Hebraic understanding the fall of the Mosaic dispensation was regarded as the passing of the heavens and the earth. When the beloved apostle John wrote of a new heaven and new earth in the Revelation, he was writing of the end of the Mosaic dispensation. A new dispensation had been set in place – therefore a new heaven and new earth.
- **The Law of Moses and the whole of the Mosaic dispensation was given unto Israel.** There is no directive that other nations were to be taught to implement and keep the Mosaic rituals.

**Consider the fact that what we have here, is a period (*a kairos*) in which the law was given from generation to generation by oral tradition (see Jos. 1:8, for example).** One does not have to philosophise about the important place that physical rituals played in such an environment. In their community it

would time and again bring them back to or remind them of very specific events on their road to becoming a nation, and their relationship with *elohei Avraham, elohei Yitzak, velohei Ya'acov*, amidst all the temptations and threats. History, as recorded in the Book of the Judges, confirms this (e.g. 3:4). Yet, we still read in Judges how they often departed from the Godly ways and did was wrong in the eyes of the Lord.

Despite all the Mosaic directives and accompanying festivals/rituals, we find God saying through the prophet Isaiah (29:13): *“Because these people approach Me with their mouths to honor Me with lip-service – yet their hearts are far from Me, and their worship [consists of] man-made rules (...).”*

### **The whole law had to be observed**

Everywhere in the Pentateuch (the Books of the Law) it is accentuated that Israel had to observe or keep the whole law, for example:

- Deuteronomy 4:2 specifically declares that they were not to add anything to the law or take away anything from it.
- In Deuteronomy 28 a number of blessings which would follow obedience are announced, followed by curses should they not obey all of God's commandments and statutes.

I do not for the purpose of this discussion intend to quote the various directives of the law, but simply mention that several were to be executed by stoning. Bear in mind as well, that important sections of the law dealt with first the Tabernacle in the desert, and then transferred to the physical Temple in Jerusalem. This temple was completely destroyed in 70 AD and not one stone was left upon another.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE LAW

### Jesus

References to the Law in the New Testament usually refer to the whole Mosaic collection of statutes. This not only includes the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic statutes, but also the 613 ordinances of Israeli religious leaders through the centuries. These ordinances are additions – also called hedges or fences – by the religious leaders, allegedly to protect the people against transgressions. It was these “hedges” that Jesus addressed in Matthew 15:6-8, *“Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”* (King James Version).

Jesus makes an important statement in Luke 16:16, 17: *“The law and the prophets were until John [the Baptist]: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.”* (KJV).

This portion of Scripture is regularly used by the so-called Torah Observant groups to show that the law would never be terminated. Their understanding is unfortunately rooted therein that they do not see that little sentence within the context of the whole. Within that whole section (which starts with chapter 15) Jesus was taking the religious leaders to task that they were so attached to their own manmade additions (traditions) to the original law, that they would rather see the Messianic kingdom pass them by than to relinquish even one tittle of their ordinances. See, for example, Matthew 15:6. It only goes to show again how important it is to rightly divide the Word.

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## **Bear in mind that Jesus was simply addressing the religious leaders in all His parables.**

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In Matthew 22:34-40 Jesus caught the Pharisees in their own trap about what the great commandment in the law was. He answered their question with, *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**”* (KJV)

In John 15:12, the portion about the true vine in whom they should abide, the Master extended the aforementioned by stating, *“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have love you”* (KJV). Earlier (verse 8) He encouraged them to bear much fruit, as the Father would be glorified by it. This commandment is clearly on a higher level than loving your neighbour as you love yourself.

### **Paul and the Galatians**

There are two important things to bear in mind here:

- While there are differences of opinion, credible evidence shows that the letter to the Galatians was Paul’s very first epistle (±49 AD).
- Paul was writing to mainly Christian converts from a non-Jewish background. In other words, the larger portion of his readers/audience had never been part of the Mosaic dispensation and therefore never under the Law.

From the letter to the Galatians it clearly shows Paul had taught them that the law had been the protector and disciplinarian of the biological descendants of Abraham on their route to the prophetic Messiah. (3:24). This law was not based on faith,

but on works (3:12). He pointed out that someone who was under the law and did not observe and do **all things** written in the book of the law was cursed (3:10). To be circumcised as required by the law would profit them nothing, except to make them debtors to do the whole law (5:2, 3). Christ would be of no effect to them. In Philippians 3:2 Paul also referred to the circumcision as meaningless (actually calling it concision or mutilation). In Romans 2:29 he accentuates the circumcision of the heart, in the spirit.

In his discussion of the works of the flesh compared to the fruit of the Spirit (5:16-22), Paul was teaching them anew that the law of Christ was fulfilled by bearing one another's burdens. This they could only do by living and walking in the Spirit. Works by the law would not make any man righteous before God, but faith in Christ manifesting in good deeds (fruit of the Spirit) would do so.

The fact that they allow themselves to be misled by the Judaizers to observe special days, months, seasons and years, leaves Paul with the distraught feeling that he had wasted his time on them (4:11).

### **Paul and the letter to the Romans**

Romans 13:8-10: Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (KJV).

### **The letter to the Hebrews**

We can consider Hebrews 9:11, 12 too, without the necessity of a complete analysis:



But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, **but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.**

To participate in festival rituals requiring the slaughter of animals today, is to declare that the blood of the Lamb of God was not sufficient.

### **The Acts of the Apostles**

In this portion of the Scriptures we read of Paul's meeting with the apostles in Jerusalem. Following the discussions the record of the message that Paul and Barnabas were asked to convey to the Gentile converts reads as follows (Acts 15:24-29):

Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well (KJV).

### **THE CHRISTIAN'S FREEDOM**

Christ, as the reconciliation offering, has brought those among humanity who believed in Him as the prophetic Messiah, everlasting reconciliation with God. Reconciliation means that a broken relationship has been restored. In the Mosaic dispensation a priest needed to stand before God as mediator between Him and the people. Now everyone has access to the Throne of

Grace in Christ. We are not required to go up to Jerusalem to seek God's presence, but we worship God in spirit and in truth. Christ is the Way and the Truth and the Life.

**The law of God was not destroyed or made null and void,** but the law of Moses and the religious leaders' manmade traditions/hedges were. God's law is no longer written on stone tablets but in the heart of humans. The law requires humankind:

- To love the Lord God with all that is within us; and
- To love our neighbour as Christ loves us.

Our lives should show the fruit of the Spirit. Just as works without faith in Christ has no meaning (Gal 5:6), faith in Christ without works is also only lip-service (Jas 2:14) with a heart far removed from Him.

In his letter to the twelve tribes in the dispersion (the oldest work in the New Testament, c. 45 AD) James accentuates the true Christian life and freedom (3:13-18):

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace (KJV).

The foundation of it all is found in the Kingdom Constitution that is recorded in Matthew 5-7.

### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

From the bird's eye view in the previous pages, it seems to me that those who are allegedly Torah Observant, are only partly so and may try to philosophise themselves out of that cor-

ner. Also, I have found that some who faithfully observe the Sabbath on Saturdays do not even get that right, because the Hebraic Sabbath runs from Friday evening 18h00 to Saturday evening 18h00. The Hebrews base that on Genesis 1:5: “(...) *And the evening and the morning were the first day.*”

The Sabbath concept comes down to “take a deep breath.” The human’s body needs a day of rest. We do not worship God one day per week only. Nonetheless, it is good if one’s day of rest also means rest from the world around you and affords you more time to sit boldly at the Throne of Grace. In the same way God’s food directives are praised and promoted by modern dieticians, God knew the body needs rest. In His wisdom He also prescribed times of rest for the arable land.

In His Great Commission, Jesus sent out His apostles to make disciples of all nations and to teach them all He had taught them. Jesus did not send them to teach observance of the Mosaic law. The Father wants people who worship Him in spirit and in truth, not people who remain true to man-made traditions, however commendable they might be. It has to do with what lies in a person’s heart.

And as far as true rest is concerned: The late John van der Berg, a South African radio broadcaster, stated in his weekly program on the former Springbok Radio some five decades ago:

Rest is not elsewhere; it is on your threshold. It comes as a gift of grace from the inside, not from outside. It is not given through material things; you carve it into your life every moment with every broadening of faith in Him who said: ‘Come to Me all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’

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**Painting of the Sermon on the Mount:** Carl Heinrich Bloch [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons.

## IS THE BIBLE GOD’S WORD?

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An agnostic, i.e. someone who believes that nothing is known, or can be known, of the existence or nature of God or of anything beyond material phenomena<sup>1</sup>, asked me whether I believed that the Bible was the Word of God. This person is part of my generation – a generation which was raised with a sincere perception of the holiness of the Bible in the sense that one would not even dare write in it. You will not find a single pencil or ink mark in the Dutch Bible of my namesake grandpa in my bookshelf, which was printed in 1899, except the part right in the front in which one recorded the birth of your children, as well as a message of the person who gave my grandpa and grandma this Bible.

I thought a lot about the matter, not because I doubt the truth that has been recorded for us in the Bible, but because everywhere there is such an enormous onslaught today against the biblical content and believers in Christ. This onslaught sadly does not only come from outside the institutional church environment, but also from within.

In South Africa, the destructive pronouncements of UNISA theologian, Professor Sakkie Spangenberg and others who initiated a so-called New Reformist Network have enjoyed wide publicity in the past years. Among other things he stated that the Bible is simply a basis book for faith. In another statement he described the Bible as a mere collection of folklore and myths.<sup>2</sup> Spangenberg was still a registered member and candidate for the ministry of the Dutch Reformed Church when he enjoyed regular publicity in newspapers such as *Beeld* and *Rapport* with such statements.

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**UNISA theologian Sakkie Spangenberg's usage of the word 'faith' is simply a synonym for 'religion' in my view.**

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The singer Steve Hofmyer again, declared that he would return to the church only if the alienating command of Jesus in John 14:6, that He (alone) was the way and the truth and the life, and that no one could come to the Father but through Him, was removed from the Bible.<sup>3</sup>

Many more examples could be mentioned, but these are sufficient for the purposes of this article.

**The question once again:** Is the Bible God's Word? I have two answers in this regard – a short answer and a long one. Let us consider these now.

**SHORT ANSWER**

Yes and no!

## LONG ANSWER

The Bible is a collection of **66 books** – therefore a library – written over a period of **1400 plus years** on **three different continents** in **three different languages** by **some 40 different writers**. I wish to accentuate the ‘some’ because there is not complete consensus in the wider church and academic environments about the authorship of all the books of the Bible. Also, and for example, there are those who hold the opinion that the book of Isaiah as it is found in our Bible today, may be the work of three people/groups (e.g. that the work of Isaiah had later been extended or added to by students of his). Isaiah is therefore divided into Proto-Isaiah (1-39), Deutero-Isaiah (40-55) en Trito-Isaiah (56-66).

In this library, and in the words of a university lecturer of the Hebrew language (himself a Hebrew descendant), one finds many voices with a variety of perspectives and styles.<sup>4</sup> It is not a remote text reserved for churches and synagogues but rather a human document full of history, poetry, politics, theology, as well as spirituality.

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**Each book of the Bible has a unique character – something of the writer who had been inspired by God.**

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The apostle Paul wrote the following to his student Timothy:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim 3:16-17; King James Version).

The Holman Christian Standard Bible renders it “*All Scripture is inspired by God (...)*.” The Greek word used here is *theópneustos*, which literally means to be breathed into the writers by God. It cannot justifiably be interpreted as if the Holy

Spirit of God had dictated it to the writers. They were inspired by the Spirit to put their experiences, environments, circumstances and spiritual impressions in writing. One should also bear in mind that Paul was referring here to the Old Testament Scriptures, although that does not imply the same God-breathed inspiration did not lead the authors of the New Testament writings. I fully believe that was what happened.

Books such as the two books of the Chronicles provide us with an historic record of events and people, extensive genealogies, but it also contains the Word of God – see 1 Chronicles 17:4-14, for example, where Nathan brings David the Word of God that he was not to build the temple. The history of the nation of Israel is not limited to a single book, however, but is interlaced in all of them with little exception. This history never stands apart from Israel's seesaw relationship with God. This is also not the primary purpose of the Scriptures, but the message contained in the books.

Read the Bible with an open mind and you will hear the voices of people everywhere in the pages of the Bible books. When Pharaoh speaks, it is his ruler's voice that is recorded. We can say the same, for example, of the Babylonian and other kings. In the book of Ecclesiastes we have the voice of the preacher and we find the voices of several people in the Proverbs. The Song of Solomon and Esther have their own voices. In Deuteronomy 32:1 it is Moses saying, "*Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth*" (KJV). These few examples of the words of people should be sufficient illustration.

However, when Moses or the Prophets clearly proclaim that it is what the Lord had spoken, we have the word of God. Jeremiah is a good example of a prophet that clearly distinguishes between his word and the **word of God**:

The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: To whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in

the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month (Jer. 1:1-3, KJV).

In verse 4 Jeremiah clearly states that the word of the Lord came to him and it is a statement he repeats regularly. In the same way we can clearly distinguish the word of the prophet from the word of God in all the books of the Prophets. Make a point to look out for this when you read the Prophets.

It would seem at first that this principle of God's word as opposed to the word of people is found much less in the New Testament. The letters especially bring us the voices of people. The gospel by Luke is a more extensive and chronological-historical rendition of events than the three other gospels. This applies to the book of the Acts as well. There are scholars who hold the opinion that the Gospel of Luke and Acts formed one single document for Paul's defence before the Roman Caesar (in modern terms, the legal document for his court hearing).

Would this then imply that the New Testament is to be questioned as part of the Bible? No, not all, because a new dimension is added in Christ Jesus. In John 1:1 we see that He is the Word which was in the beginning, who was with God, and who was God. Jesus stated (John 5:19) that He could do nothing of himself, but what He saw the Father do. The words of Jesus of Nazareth that were recorded in the four Gospels are the word of God. This is accentuated unequivocally by the writer of the letter to the Hebrews:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Heb 1:1-2; KJV).

**How should we then describe the Bible other than that it is the Word of God?**



The answer is a simple one and in my view fully rooted and grounded in the books of the Bible. It is the recorded revelation of God to humanity from the first page to the last. In those pages we find direct revelations by God himself to individuals, families and nations. The truth of these revelations as coming from God can be seen in the historical fulfilment of all the prophesies. There are also revelations written down by people such as the apostles through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Likewise I accept that the writers of the gospel accounts had been led by the Holy Spirit. If someone should therefore say that the Bible contains the word of God it would not be wrong, but taking into account that it also contains the words of humans.

### **A CONNECTED UNDERSTANDING: THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT**

I have personally stood alongside a preacher of the word in a congregational meeting as he ministered deliverance (from demonic influence) to some people. In the process of praying for a person, he would chop him against the neck with his Bible while saying, “*Devil, I smite you with the Sword of the Spirit,*” as if the physical Bible book were the sword. This is a good illustration of the confusing result caused by inaccurate interpretation of the Scripture on the word of God. Please note that I am not stating this in a derogatory spirit against the person – I have been guilty of such practises due to wrong teaching as well.

**In his letter to the Ephesians Paul refers to the word of God as the Sword of the Spirit. Does this not then simply mean that the Bible is the Word of God?**

The Greek word used by Paul in this case and which is regularly translated with the English ‘word’, is *rhēma*. This word refers to a spoken word; a word that is spoken by a living voice. Zodhiates<sup>5</sup> explains its application in the case of Ephesians 6:17 as referring to the doctrines and promises contained in the Scriptures. The Sword of the Spirit is consequently much more than the physical Bible book. It is the dynamic word that ‘happens’ when the message of God is spoken by someone. This *rhēma*

word may be found in various forms, such as in preaching, for example, or as a manifestation of one of the spiritual gifts such as a word of wisdom or of knowledge described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12.

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**The Sword of the Spirit is the dynamic word that 'happens' when the word of God is spoken by a living voice.**

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<sup>1</sup> TULLOCH, S. (ed). 1995. *The Oxford Dictionary And Thesaurus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> SPANGENBERG, S. 2001. Verskille in Bybel: Skrywers gaan kreatief om met geloof. *Beeld*. 13 August, p.8.

<sup>3</sup> SMIT, M. 2003. Steve Hofmyer dalk Sondag terug in die kerk mits... *Beeld*. 9 January, p.6.

<sup>4</sup> CARASIK, M. 2014. *The Bible's Many Voices*. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society. Sales Excerpt.

<sup>5</sup> ZODHIATES, S. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*. Add-on to e-Sword, Version 10.1.0, 2000-2012, Rick Meyers.

**23 April 2015**



## BACK TO BASICS

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We visited the town of Knysna a few years ago and on one of the beaches I photographed the scene above. I noticed the sign reading “This is a water stressed area – Join the Knysna Water Wise Campaign” and could not help smiling at the irony, for right behind the sign lay the vast ocean and its abundance of water as far as the eye could see. The message the town council or regional authority was trying to convey, of course, was that it was a fresh water stressed area.

Another picture also came to mind from this scene and it was in the words of a song from my childhood days: “Water, water everywhere; not a drop to drink”. Just think, lost at sea in a small boat you can die of thirst despite all that water you see around you.

When we move our attention to the Bible we are presented with God’s truth in the pages of this wonderful Book, given to us by some 40 writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit over a period

of almost 1500 years, in three languages and on three continents. Sadly, All over the world sincere people are relying on Bible teachers and preachers, and authors to teach them the biblical truths. They all read the same Bible, but having fallen into the trap of various man made traditions dressed up in biblical terminology, they all too often present a potpourri of differing teachings to those who are trusting their knowledge and insight to correctly teach the truth. The fact that there are some 40 000 denominations is ample testimony to this sad position.

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**Yes, there is an 'ocean' of teaching around us,  
but we live in a truth-stressed area.**

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Many readers will be aware of the Great Disappointment that the late Dr. Harold Camping and his followers experienced in 2011 after his second prophecy of the world's end ended up exposed once again as a lie and false prophecy. He previously pulled a similar stunt in 1994. There is a reason, of course, for this gullibility among Christians to all the Left Behind fiction and hype, for they have been prepared generation after generation by much of the church at large with unfortunate Second Coming doctrines (leading to more than 40 failed predictions only in my lifetime). While I cannot deal with the doctrines in all their aspects in this limited space, I do deal with relevant aspects in various articles and our books which are downloadable from our website ([www.hoseaconnection.org](http://www.hoseaconnection.org)).

A number of emails my wife, Martie, and I have been receiving over the years often have some connection with end-times theology in one way or another. Some have been about visions and different prophetic statements emanating from different parts of the world. We are concerned by the unquestioned credibility some of these visions seem to enjoy in Christian media. It is not that we do not believe in the reality and place of dreams and visions in our faith walk - it is described in the Bible after all. When it is contrary to the Bible, however, it needs to be

pointed out, even if the source is a big name in some way in Christendom.

How glad we all need to be that it is the heart of the person that has fellowship with our heavenly Father and the Son of His Love that matters. If the words we speak and the understandings we build on were to be the non negotiable conditions of acceptance in the Father heart of God, most of us, if not all, would be in deep trouble!

When I differ from others in our understanding of the Scriptures, I honestly try to address the issue at hand, and never the person. My approach is best described in the words of Ephraim Currier in his 1841 plea to readers of his book on the Second Coming of Christ doctrines:

All I ask of the community is, that they will give my views an impartial investigation, and if they are agreeable to the word of God, embrace them, if not reject them. One thing in particular I have to request of the clergy, as well as of all others, and that is, not to pass by the work now offered for their consideration, without notice; but let it be closely scrutinized, and if it cannot be refuted in a spirit of fairnes(s), and in a satisfactory manner, to admit it is truth. But if, on the other hand, any man can show in a satisfactory manner that my views are unscriptural, let him do it, the sooner the better. When this is done, I pledge myself frankly and unreservedly to acknowledge my errors. But long cherished opinions, and all history not found in the word of God, must be left entirely out of the question. I have nothing to expect from the sympathies of any sect of religionists now in existence, for I know well that all their strength will be arrayed against me. But from candid and sober argument I have nothing to fear. If my sentiments are unscriptural, it is a pity if it cannot be shown in a spirit of fairness and good feeling".<sup>1</sup>

I have never had the privilege to learn the Hebrew and Greek languages. Fortunately our modern technology puts at least the ability to understand the critical principles and characteristics needed to study the Scriptures **within their true and intended**

**context** in one's grasp. This is much more important, in my mind, than the ability to read the language. To be able to do the latter is not equal to understanding or recognising the contextual background of the original writings. There are good materials available to us to research the meanings of words in Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek – as long as we remember that context is crucial for accurate understanding.

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**Context is crucial for accurate understanding of the Bible content.**

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The term “End of Days,” for example, has always been taken in Hebraic understanding as a reference to the messianic era. In other words, the people within whose cultural, historical, geographical, literary and theological context the books of the Old Testament had been written have always understood the end of days to be a coming together of times in the arrival of the long awaited Messiah. If we then believe that Jesus of Nazareth was and is that Messiah, on what grounds can we now redefine the meaning of expressions such as the end of days, or latter days, or the end of the age (Matt 24)? In addition, it is also crucial to identify translation errors or translation subjectivities in Bible versions.

Not only have I seen preachers of Afrikaner upbringing who read English well completely miss the meaning of what they have read, but I have heard preachers of Jewish upbringing, who are fluent in the Hebrew language, preach end-times error. In fact, I was raised in a church denomination whose theological students were put through several years' of study of the Hebrew and Greek languages. Yet they have been teaching the denomination's doctrines that may be in error without blinking an eye. It seemed that another main subject they studied, Philosophy, played a far greater role in forming their polluted understanding of the Scriptures than they would be willing to acknowledge. It

simply underlines the strength of man-made traditions, especially when they become synod directives!

It is little wonder then to find one A.N. Wilson writing in the year 2000 that (in his view), when all the mythologies of religion have been discarded and all the false theories of Christianity have been exposed by patient and honest scholars, men and women of a reflective turn of mind will remain convinced that there is underlying this universe a deep moral purpose. Such men and women will then find that there is a religion that satisfies this deep human need for a moral code without mythology. It is not Christianity he said. This religion which Wilson proposes will replace Christianity is Islam. In the process he implied the Christian habit of continually adapting the Scriptures to justify both contemporary viewpoints and moral decline was an inherent weakness and flaw in Christian teaching.<sup>2</sup>

The modern end-times theologies - and especially their trail of end-times disappointments and let downs – unfortunately continue to make a mockery of the biblical truth. Is it not ironic that when the achievements of a sports team declines, everybody seems to shout: Back to Basics!? But not so with knowledge of the biblical record - back to the basics never seems to be an option! Instead, we continue to be confronted by more and more spiritual philosophising, or by some long drawn out argumentation on whether or not to accept and adopt some religious-political confession in order to promote formalised institutional church unification.

If ever there was a need to return to the truth of God's Word in place of man's religious traditions, it is now! If godly leaders do not, the moral fibre of this nation (and others) will continue its current steep decline. Instead of publicly blessing irresponsible young politicians and so enhancing their already big egos, as some South African religious leaders have been doing, they should be returning to the basics here as well and call the young hotheads to order in godly fashion and sense of responsibility.



May you all be blessed in your own search for the truth. Thank you that you remain our friends, even if you differ radically from our understanding. As always, we appreciate your input, even where you differ - especially if it is based on questions you have from a different understanding of the Scriptures. Responses in such a spirit have been responsible for several articles or improvements to articles in the past.

18 October 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> Currier, E. 1841. *The Second Coming Of Christ And The Resurrection*. Skowhegan. Digital version by Google Books.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, A.N. 2000. Christianity: The end is nigh. *Mail & Guardian*. 1 December 2000.  
[www.mg.co.za/articledirect.aspx?area=mg\\_flat&articleid=162801](http://www.mg.co.za/articledirect.aspx?area=mg_flat&articleid=162801)

## THE POWER OF TRADITION

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**Tradition:** A custom, opinion, or belief handed down to posterity, whether orally or by practice. In theology it is often regarded as a particular doctrine claimed to have divine authority without documentary evidence.<sup>1</sup>

When Martie and I left the Dutch Reformed Church in 1996 in search of the truth (after some 44 years since childhood), we found the journey through the Pentecostal and later Charismatic environments exciting. Our studies in biblical counselling further enhanced our experiences. With time, however, we could not remain blind to many excesses and Scriptural

abuses we saw. Trying to talk about it with some leaders (fortunately not all) immediately resulted in branding as a rebel who refused to submit under authority. “Touch not the Lord’s anointed” is not an uncommon remark by perceivably insecure and sometimes spiritually abusive leaders. Dupont made a similar observation in his book on *Toxic Churches*.<sup>2</sup>

One seminar we attended among many today stands out for its amusement factor. The presenter opened every day’s activities with prayer, during which all kinds of demonic spirits were addressed and instructed what they should do or not do. And so, without fail, he would also come against and “bind” the reformed tradition spirit. Yes, and we eagerly ‘amened’ him in the process. Today we can only grin foolishly at our sincere amens of that time, for our eyes have opened to the fact that every denomination has its own set of traditions which dictate what the Bible and their doctrines “really” say.

Over the past five or six years we have come to realise more and more just how powerful church traditions are and how effectively it keeps Christians captive in wrong doctrine. Even sincere believers, whose lives testify of a love of Christ, battle to shake of the shackles of their traditions. Many times it is due to a lack of knowledge. Research that I undertook in 2005 among members of various denominations for an academic dissertation found that only a small minority of church members had been taught principles of Bible interpretation. And of course even that is no guarantee of accuracy in biblical accuracy interpretation and understanding.

As Martie and I study the Bible anew, as if for the first time and without using the writings of great names to tell us beforehand what the Bible says, we share our understanding with family, friends and acquaintances. Today we have a website where we add our articles and other material, but previously we used the email only to share our views with a small group of people. The reaction has followed a predictable pattern throughout: The majority (probably 90% or more) reacted simply with silence. From a few we would receive constructive

feedback, whether they agreed with us or not. In these cases we could follow-up and enjoy responsible discussion. Most who did react, however, did so by sending us some well-known person's material on the topic, without adding any insights, concerns or disagreements of their own.

There have been a number of not-so-friendly reactions as well, and I am glad to say they were few. What has been grounds for great concern though, was the reaction of some pastors. In his reply to a newsletter explaining our understanding of some core end-times concepts, one stated that: *"...there are over 300 references to the end times. Every major Christian religious group (except for the Witnesses) believes there will be a rapture...."* Apart from the fact that his statement on religious groups that believe in a coming rapture was factually inaccurate, it was also clear that he had not made any real study of the 300 so-called references to the end-times. The traditions handed down by his teachers were enough, it seems. Another friend's reply was that he desperately needed Jesus to return (and one can surely sympathise with his sentiment). It is highly improbable, however, that he closely studied and considered our biblical understanding in this regard.

I do not write this in an unkindly fashion, for I was there once – teaching and preaching end-times doctrines handed down to me by my teachers and preachers, and of course those dynamic, charismatic televangelists. And it all sounded so well, so biblical – until one puts the books of popular authors aside and start to study the Bible with the Berean approach found in Acts 17:11. In a treatise of Matthew 24, Ovid Need Jr. shared the following example: *"Several years ago, I raised a question regarding a favorite 'end time' passage to a very close pastor friend. I asked him what he was going to do with the clear teaching of the passage. I was surprised when he said, 'This is the way I was taught by men I respect. This is the way I have taught it, and I am not going to change now.' He admitted that the passage did not say what he had been taught, yet he was willing to reject the clear teaching of the passage in favor of*

*what he was taught by men he respected*".<sup>3</sup> There was a time when I may just as well have been that pastor friend of his.

When one considers the fact that there are reportedly more than 40 000 'Christian' denominations in the world, using the Bible as their foundation, but each with its own measure of peculiar traditions, I can understand the growing discomfort of the world with Christendom. But let's face it: if the return to doctrines that are biblically sound does not start with the church leaders and teachers, we will need a miracle from God to turn this ship of traditions around. Traditions are seemingly cast in concrete and have an ability to lock up God's word in favour of religion instead of revealing the kingdom truth.

The principle expressed by Yeshua MiNatzaret still holds true today:

*"Thus by your tradition you make null and void the word of God!"*<sup>4</sup>

*"...and you annulled the command of God on account of tradition your"*.<sup>5</sup>

*"In this way, you have revoked God's word because of your tradition"*.<sup>6</sup>

*"You have nullified the word of God on account of your tradition"*.<sup>7</sup>

Is it any mystery why the modern church has become so powerless in the world? I conclude with the following observations of A.W. Tozer: *"It would be impossible to overemphasize the importance of sound doctrine in the life of a Christian. Right thinking about all spiritual matters is imperative if we would have right living. As men do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles, sound character does not grow out of unsound teaching...All a man, a church or a denomination needs to guarantee deterioration of doctrine is to take everything for granted and do nothing. The unattended garden will soon be*

*overrun with weeds; the heart that fails to cultivate truth and root out error will shortly be a theological wilderness”.*<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tulloch, S. (editor-in-chief). 1995. *The Oxford Dictionary And Thesaurus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Dupont, M.A. 2004. *Toxic Churches: Restoration From Spiritual Abuse*. Kent: Sovereign World.

<sup>3</sup> Need, O. 2000. *Matthew 24, Facts And Fiction*.  
[http://www.preteristarchive.com/Books/2000\\_need\\_matthew-24\\_facts-fiction.html](http://www.preteristarchive.com/Books/2000_need_matthew-24_facts-fiction.html)

<sup>4</sup> Stern, D.H. 1998. *The Complete Jewish Bible*. Clarksville, Maryland: Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc.

<sup>5</sup> Green, J.P., Sr. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1986. *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew, Greek, English*. Hendrickson Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> *Holman Christian Standard Bible*. 2003. Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>7</sup> *NET Bible*. 2006. [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org).

<sup>8</sup> Tozer, A.W. Chapter 37. The Importance of Sound Doctrine. *Man – The Dwelling Place of God*.  
[www.worldinvisible.com/library/tozer/5j00.0010/5joo.0010.37.htm](http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/tozer/5j00.0010/5joo.0010.37.htm).



## ARE WOMEN TO REMAIN SILENT IN THE GATHERINGS?

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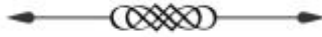


**(Paul's so-called 'command of silence', 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12)**

**Gerrie Malan**

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (1 Cor 14:34-35, KJV).





Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence (1 Tim 2:11-12, KJV).

#### INTRODUCTION

The church world has been focusing intensively on specific questions in the past few decades. This did not really flow forth from primary Bible study and resultant reconsideration of understanding the original meaning of portions of the Scriptures. No, the problems were mostly the result of neo-liberal demands coming from small minority groups in society who were previously considered to be unacceptable, and their case has been driven by a small group of so-called post modern thinkers within the church.

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**One of these problems has been the position of women in ministry.**

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The Afrikaans Reformed church environment did not escape this, and synod after synod wrestled with the matter. It is still continuing. Whereas one or two of these denominations moved on, first accepting women as elders and later admitting women as ministers, another one has continued to resist on the basis of Paul's so-called command of silence, as quoted above from 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 as important motivation.

The post modern thinkers do not regard the authority of Scripture as fixed and binding. Because the Dutch Reformed Church of SA, for example, has moved on and admitted women ministers, the post modern group now declare that the denomination has in fact recalled the New Testament command of silence. They then use this event, for example, as a principle to insist that anti-gay texts in the Bible should equally be declared null and void in the light of societal realities of today –

in the process they also make much of so-called scientific explanations (2016; Janse van Rensburg<sup>1</sup>).

In their report to the Dutch Reformed Church's General Synod of 2015, the General Task Team Doctrine and Current Matters (Algemene Taakspan Leer en Aktuele Sake) insisted that room should be made for a variety of perspectives within the Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>2</sup> While the Task Team states that the Scriptures are evidence of God under the guidance of the Spirit of God, they dilute it in the very next sentence describing the Bible as a **derived and secondary authority** compared to the only true and final authority, that of the Living Triune God.himself.<sup>3</sup> Seen in isolation such reasoning sounds good, of course, but it unfortunately lacks any credible evidence on how such a final authority is received from God (more so in view of their insistence on 'scientific evidences').

Discussions and reasoning on the command of silence often take place on the basis that men and women sat in separate areas in the Jewish synagogues, with women often even seated on a gallery. This command would then supposedly prevent shouting to and fro. Paul's directly preceding sentence (1 Cor 14:33) does declare that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints, does it not? Others again argue on the basis of cultural circumstances of the time and place, and the position of women compared to that of men. In the process both approaches read into the Scriptures that which supports the specific view or expectation. There are even those who argue that Paul did not write these two verses to the Corinthians.

For me there is only one approach that can lift out the truth in this case and that is to make an accurate determination of what Paul penned in this portion of Scripture. In the process a few simple and basic principles are important, viz. the full context of the content of Paul's letter, as well as the meaning of words within that specific time context. The reader might already feel at this point that a variety of Bible versions all confirm Paul declared that women should remain silent in the gatherings and

are not allowed to teach men. My question to that is: Is it really so? Let us see.

### **THE LARGER FULL CONTEXT OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14:34-35**

As point of departure one needs to realise that this portion of Scripture forms part of a larger portion of Paul's letter and deals specifically with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The letter was written from Ephesus in reply to a letter compiled by a group in Corinth and which was seemingly delivered to him by Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (16:17).

- The first six chapters contains Paul's reaction to information members of the house of Chloe are said to have given him, and which deals with some misunderstandings arising from a previous letter from Paul (5:9).
- Then follows the part we know as chapters 7-16 in reply to questions posed by the congregation (16:17).<sup>4</sup> Of these the focus in chapters 12-14 is specifically on the question of spiritual gifts.

One always needs to bear in mind that the biblical writings were not written in the form of chapters and verses. This was only added in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Do not allow these artificial additions to mislead you. Paul's letters, as is the case with all the books in the Bible, should be studied as a whole. In our compact book, *Rightly Divide The Word*, my wife, Martie, and I have explained that Bible translations may sometimes be confusing and misleading, and the topic I am addressing in this article is a good example in this regard, as you will soon see. (You can download our book free from our website: [www.hoseaconnection.org](http://www.hoseaconnection.org)).

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**The original scriptures of the Bible were not written in chapters and with verse numbers.**

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## SEPARATE AREAS FOR MEN AND WOMEN?

In this regard one only needs to consider the general circumstances of gatherings at the time. We read in various places in the New Testament writings that the believers met primarily in the homes. According to church history the use of specific buildings for this purpose only became practice some two or three centuries later.<sup>5</sup> The houses obviously did not incorporate separate areas for men and women as one would have found in synagogues.

**Nowhere in the New Testament does one find any indication that Jesus or His disciples separated the men and women in gatherings.** In fact, Acts 1:14, for example, declares that *“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren”* (KJV). This took place in the upper room where the remaining eleven disciples gathered after He was taken up in heaven in their presence (Acts 1:6-11).

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**Clearly, separate areas for men and women does not make a credible argument.**

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## DID PAUL REQUIRE WOMEN TO REMAIN SILENT?

1 Corinthians as one example shows that the gatherings were personal and informal. It also shows clearly that the gatherings were based on general participation:

How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying (KJV).

But does the word ‘brethren’ used here and elsewhere in the letter not indicate only men? My first reaction was that the whole compilation implied that this word was used to indicate

the compilers and signatories of the letter to Paul. However, the letter is addressed to “(...) *the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord (...)*” (1 Cor 1:2). More focused word study revealed that the specific word, *adelphós*, was also used in various forms of meaning, including that of a fellowship of love. Thus, the members of the same Christian community were called ‘brothers.’<sup>6</sup> Here we see again just how deficient our modern translations often are to present the true meaning of words, statements and viewpoints in the Bible to us. By using the word *adelphós*, which was translated as ‘brethren,’ Paul was actually addressing the whole community of believers in Corinth.

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**The word *adelphós*, translated as ‘brethren’ referred to the whole Christian community (or congregation) in Corinth.**

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In chapter 11:5 Paul specifically refers to women who pray or prophesy – who therefore are actively involved in the gatherings. His reasoning throughout chapters 11-14 at all times reflect a spirit of inclusivity in the spiritual gifts and unity among all. Please read it carefully and note especially his repetitive application of the idea of ‘all’ in 12:29-30. After making the plea then that they should covet the best gifts, he continues with describing to them an even more excellent way (or gift), the way of love. Most know chapter 13 well.

Chapter 14 shows us Paul exclaiming the excellence of the gift of prophecy above that of tongues, but all the time exhorting them to let all things be done unto edifying the congregation. In:26 he indicates that **every one** of them had a contribution when they gathered together. In this regard too, he asks that everything be done unto edifying. There is no indication of a

principle that women should be silent.

### **DOES CHAPTER 14:34-35 NOT CONTRADICT THE REST?**

Bear in mind once again that Paul is busy reacting to the content of the congregation's letter to him. The moment one ignores this, you open yourself up to misrepresentations. The key to understanding this portion requires one to bring verse 36 into the picture. For the sake of understanding the complete picture I provide all three verses (KJV):

**1 Cor 14:34** Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

**1 Cor 14:35** And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

**1 Cor 14:36** What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

Looking at this (and one can adding reading of more verses) I believe everyone would have to acknowledge that something does not make sense.

- There is no connection or transition between verses 35 and 36.
- Look again, one could say the same of verses 36 and 37.
- It appears as if verses 34, 35 and even 36 are irrelevant in this matter and that verse 37 connects directly to verse 34.

Because of this seeming unclear situation, some theologians such as Gordon Fee have concluded that Paul did not write verses 34 and 35, but that it was added by a scribe who copied

the letter.<sup>7</sup> This argument, however, also does not make sense as it does not contribute any clarification seeing that verse 36 will still seem to be an out of place patch. Most contemporary translations deepen this deficiency rather than present the correct meaning through very accurate translation (not philosophising). Let me share more in this regard.

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**The small first word of verse 36 is an important key– it is simply omitted in many versions.**

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Pauls begins his sentence (verse 36) with the little word ἦ. Like so many other Greek words, this little word also has multiple meanings that require very careful consideration of the specific context in which it appears. In addition, the markings seen above Greek letters (polytonic Greek diacritics), provide variations of pronunciation and meaning. One of the meanings for ἦ found in the extensive Greek-English Lexicon of Liddell-Scott-Jones, published in 1843, is that of an **exclamation expressing disapproval**.<sup>8</sup> Nordgren also refers to this source, but adds meanings of **a cry of surprise** as well as **a repressive exclamation** in view of these usages in the works of Euripides and Aristophanes.<sup>9</sup> They were both Greek playwrights from the fifth century of whom considerable works have survived, and which provide clarity for the meanings of various words.

With these explanations in hand I was able to read the 26 versions of The New Testament on my e-Sword program, complemented with the New Jerusalem Bible and a Dutch version from 1899 in my bookshelf. It was interesting to realise the old King James Version of 1611 presented 1 Corinthians 14:36 as follows, which agreed with the above descriptions of meaning:

[1 Cor 14:36](#) What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

Please note the introductory exclamation, ‘What?’ The earlier Geneva Bible (1560) did not use the expression “What?” in the text itself, but did include it in the extensive marginal notes completed by 1599. It is described in the notes as a sharp reprehension regarding the right to use the spiritual gifts in the assemblies, lest the Corinthians might deem themselves to be the only wise ones.

Several other versions also have the verse start with the word “What?” Among them is the translation of Murdock (1851), the *Revised Version* (late nineteenth century official revision of the KJV), and George Lamsa’s 1933 translation which is based on the Syriac Peshitta manuscripts (and therefore from an Aramaic dialect).

**These versions (translations) confirm the King James Version’s rebuking exclamation. It supports the understanding that verses 34-35 really are statements taken by Paul from the Corinthians’ letter which he then rebukes it strongly.**

In summary: Paul’s first letter to the congregation in Corinth found in the Bible was clearly not the first letter he wrote them. This letter was written approximately in the year 55 AD while Paul was staying in Ephesus. Some information was conveyed to him from the house of Chloe about misunderstandings emanating from an earlier letter to them. In addition, a group had written a letter to him on specific matters such as the flow in the spiritual gifts.

In his present letter Paul addresses all these matters and this provides the true context. Thorough study shows that he quoted their view on the submissiveness of women in the gatherings, followed by a sharp rebuke that by it they wanted to give new meaning to God’s word. Unfortunately this context has been lost



in many modern translations because the translators ignored and omitted a single small word found in the manuscripts. Once one rectifies this, it removes the existing and continuing confusion.

**In other words, the Corinthians made the statement in their letter (or they reported the insistence of some in the congregation) that women should remain silent in the gatherings, for which Paul strongly rebuked them.**

### **The context of 1 Timothy 2:11-12**

In my study of this topic, I realised once again how important the correct and full context of Scripture portions is for correct understanding. With correct understanding I wish to emphasise that it inherently comes down to how the original recipients or audience would have understood the written document or oral teaching. It also means that as far as contemporary context goes, one should guard against the temptation to read into the text what does not exist in order to obtain or prove a predetermined result.

- In this case Paul's letter was addressed to an established co-worker, Timothy, who he left in Ephesus in the course of their travel after his release from the first imprisonment in Rome. Timothy's instructions were to counter the influence of false teachers who have established themselves in this congregation (1:4).<sup>10</sup> This already establishes a specific and direction giving context.

The three pastoral epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus were his last ones. They were written approximately 63 and 64 AD (some 15 years after his first letter, which was the one to the Galatians), under specific circumstances and with specific objectives in mind. His approach and content differs to such extent from his other letters, that it appears he was addressing topics and circumstances of leadership to his two co-workers on matters concerning the congregations they were involved with, that he would normally deal with in a personal contact situation.

Circumstances have forced him to do this by way of letters in these cases as he had left them in Ephesus and Crete. (His second letter to Timothy was written during his last imprisonment in Rome). **It is important to note that these letters were not addressed to congregations.**

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### **The pastoral letters to Timothy (2) and Titus were his last three.**

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Before I go into the context of this portion of Scripture any further, it is important to consider Paul's general approach as it pertained to the position of women in the spreading of the Gospel.

#### **WOMEN AS PAUL'S CO-WORKERS**

The history of Paul as proclaimer of the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire proves that shows various women in prominent leadership roles, rather than portraying Paul as one who proclaimed that women could not teach in the congregation.

- Priscilla (with her husband Aquila) is mentioned in various portions of Scripture. Acts 18:24-26 show us that they took the native Alexandrian Jew, Apollos, home in Ephesus and explained the way of God to him more accurately.
- In Acts 21:8-9 Luke writes that Paul's group, of which he was part, stayed with Philip the evangelist in Caesarea on their way to Jerusalem. Then he notes that Philip's four unmarried daughters prophesied.
- Phoebe is called a servant of the church in Cenchreae and word studies such as that of Vincent (e-Sword) indicate that it was generally explained as deaconess (Rom 16:1). Paul asks that they welcome her in a manner worthy of the saints and that they should assist her in whatever manner she might require their help.

- Mary, Tryphena and Tryphosa were also recognised as playing leadership roles in the church in Romans 16:6 & 12.
- Euodia and Syntyche intige were probably also deaconesses (Php 4:2).

To complete this part it is appropriate to consider the following from Paul's letter to the Galatians, which is seemingly his very first letter:

**Gal 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (KJV).

### **THE CONGREGATION IN EPHESUS**

Ephesus of biblical times was a major harbour city and one of the larger cities of the Roman Empire. It was a prosperous commercial and political centre. The city boasted numerous monuments, theaters and temples, including the temple of Diana (also called Artemis). It was renowned for religious pluralism, mystic cults and occult practices, Hellenised Judaism, as well as early Christianity.<sup>11</sup> In this Christian environment a false group developed that was apparently established by the deacon, Nicolas, and which became known as the Nicolaitans.<sup>12</sup> These practices were referred to with disdain in the Book of Revelation (the letter to the church in Ephesus, Rev 2:6).

The congregation in Ephesus played a prominent role in Paul's travels and ministry. From the record in the Book of Acts and Paul's letters we learn that he visited them several times – once remaining there for almost three years (Acts 19). This stay was ended after an uprising by members of the Diana cult.

### **PAUL'S DECLARATION IN 1 TIMOTHY 2:11-12**

My considerable reading has shown that there are two popular explanations of Paul's statement to Timothy that a women should learn in silence in full submission, and that he did not

allow a woman to teach or have authority over a man. The first explanation accepts the cultural circumstances of the time as its basis and states that the woman was relegated to a lesser position, which Timothy was to teach the congregation to respect. Another explanation is based on doctrines of the Diana cult (or Artemis cult) that declared the woman to be the man's superior, that Eve was created first and that men were to be subjected to the woman. It is then postulated that there were women (or a woman) at the time who had been teaching such doctrine. Both these explanations are obviously based purely on assumptions.

Apart from these there is also an alleged translation error. The Australian Classical Greek scholar, Dr. Ann Nyland's translation reads that a woman was to learn without causing a fuss and to be supportive in everything. Paul did not grant her authority to teach that she was the originator of man. There is considerable criticism because of the Gnostic sources she used for support in determining the meaning of words, and that her translation of matters in the Bible pertaining to women are driven by a feministic agenda. I therefore mention this translation for completeness sake, but choose not to rely on it. As I will now show, it does not make any critical difference to my understanding of this portion of Scripture.

Superficially regarded it does seem that this section of Paul's letter to Timothy is problematic, especially in view of today's societal norms and customs. I therefore understand the various attempts to solve the situation. The fuss does seem totally unnecessary, however, and I agree with the question posed by Dr. David Thompson: **Do we read the entire Bible in light of these two problematic texts, or do we read these two texts in light of the rest of the Bible?**<sup>13</sup> To follow the first alternative is to open one up to false teaching and this is exactly what has happened in the church practice.

The record of Paul's proclamation of the Gospel (his epistles and Luke's Acts of the Apostles) show in various places and

ways that Paul appreciated as co-workers. But am I not now simply trying to hide a problem verse? The answer is an emphatic No!

In the introduction of his letter to Timothy, Paul unambiguously referred to his request that Timothy remain in Ephesus to command certain persons **to stop teaching false doctrine**. He called those people who wanted to be teachers of the law, although they did not understand what they were saying or insisting on. Timothy was to fight the good fight for the faith and hold fast to good conscience. Paul noted that some had rejected these and had suffered the shipwreck of their faith. Hymenaeus and Alexander are mentioned by name in this regard. The whole letter deals with the trustworthy word and good order in the community. Paul concluded his letter by once more noting that some people had deviated from the faith through false knowledge.

To summarise: We are dealing here with an instructional letter by Paul to an individual, his co-worker Timothy. It had been written in the context of the teaching of false doctrines by some in the Christian community in Ephesus. It is interesting to note that Paul's letter to Titus, whom he left behind on the island of Crete during the same travel, also focused on combatting false teaching and the establishment of sound order in the congregation. However, one does not find a similar 'command of silence' for women and that reinforces my understanding that the relevant portion in Paul's letter to Timothy was due to specific problems involving a woman or women.

### CONCLUSION

In my study of this topic I shook my head in the realisation of how powerful the spirit of tradition had been and still is in the church environment. It is reality that my generation in South Africa grew up without the television and computer technology. If we had not been exposed to these during the latter part of our lives, something our parents and theirs did not have, we would

probably still have been ignorant to the fact today of the many false teachings that emanated from all the traditions. I am grateful for the extensive library of works from many centuries that the information technology has opened up to me.

The Reformed ministers of our growing up years were all exposed to well equipped libraries at the seminaries of their universities and many years of fulltime study of the biblical languages and culture. This makes the struggles of so many synods over the last decade or two especially on matters such as the leadership role of the woman in the Christian environment even more difficult to understand.

There can probably be only one answer for this situation: by man's traditions and oral transmissions the word of God has been robbed of its power (Matt 15:1-14). In the process the community of believers has been robbed of the contributions of gifted and God blessed women. They were relegated to secondary roles for far too long. Some Reformed denominations have moved past this, but their explanations and continuing debates do not rest upon the Scriptural truth.<sup>14</sup> There is a clear difference to be recognised.

I also realised anew how important it is to study portions of Scripture in their full context – including the cultural, historical, geographical, literary and theological context. It also remains important to study Paul's epistles in the sequence they had been written in and not the sequence they have been included in our Bibles. Considering the position of women in the gatherings against this reality, it becomes clear that there is no so-called command of silence in his most extensive work, the Epistle to the Romans. **In addition, we have noted the way in which Paul actively encouraged the prophetic gift to the Corinthians, among women as well. His recognition of Priscilla and other women in his letters also speak loudly.**

By stripping our reading of the relevant portions of Scripture in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy of all philosophising and

assumptions of content above what has been written, we find that Paul's focus was misrepresentations, manmade traditions and therefore false teaching. This false teaching in the two congregations involved had nothing to do with a prohibition of full participation of women in principle in the gatherings. The exclusive requirement was that the activities were to be guided by the word of truth. Paul's eleven other letters do not support a doctrine that women are to be silent in the gatherings. The record of his history written in the Acts of the Apostles by Luke actually reflects the opposite.

Paul summarised it well in his second letter to Timothy (3:16-17):

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (KJV).

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Every person (not man) of God! Unto all good works!

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#### FINAL THOUGHTS

- In Luke 2:36-38 we find the prophetess Anna at the temple where she served God day and night. She was present when Joseph and Mary brought the child Jesus to the temple to present him to the Lord according to the law. At that moment Anna “(...) ***began to thank God and speak about Him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.***”
- None of the other Apostles gave instruction in their letters that women are to be silent in the gatherings.
- Such an instruction is not found in the Epistle to the Hebrews or in the Book of Acts.

Amen!

This article was completed on 11 March 2017 and dedicated to the second of our four granddaughters:

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**Dedicated to our granddaughter, Jo-Mari Malan. Our prayer is that your God given talents will bloom to inspire every person of God who passes your way, to allow their lives to be blessed by the word of truth, equipped unto all good works.**

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<sup>1</sup> J. Janse van Rensburg. 2016. *Hermeneutiese Beginsels Vir Skrifverstaan*. Unpublished study document provided to a Cape Reformed study group.

<sup>2</sup> ATLAS verslag. 2015. *Agenda*. Submitted to the General Synod 2015, p253. Quoted in *ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*. p263.

<sup>4</sup> Wallace, D.B. 1998. *1 Corinthians: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*. Bible Studies Press. [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

<sup>5</sup> Curtis, K. *A Look At The Early Church*. <http://www.christianity.com/print/11629559/>. Agelaai op 12 September 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Zodhiates, S. *The Complete WordStudy Dictionary*. Add-on to e-Sword. [www.e-sword.net/support.html](http://www.e-sword.net/support.html).

<sup>7</sup> Fee, G. *The First Epistle To The Corinthians*. P699-708. Verwysing gebruik deur Hyatt, E.L. *One Little Word Dispels The Notion That Paul Silenced Women*. [http://www.eddiehyatt.com/women\\_silent.html](http://www.eddiehyatt.com/women_silent.html)

<sup>8</sup> Liddell-Scott-Jones. 1843. *Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford Clarendon Press.

<sup>9</sup> Nordgren, L. 2015. *Greek Interjections*. P166-167. Boek op [www.google.co.za](http://www.google.co.za).



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<sup>10</sup> Wallace, D.B. 2000. *1 Timothy: Introduction, Argument, Outline*. Biblical Studies Press. [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org). p4.

<sup>11</sup> *The Word In Life Study Bible (NKJV)*. 1996. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. P2124.

<sup>12</sup> Wikipedia. 7 August 2016. *Nicolaism*.  
[www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolaism](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolaism).

<sup>13</sup> Thompson, D.L. May 1999. *The Biblical Mandate For Women In Ministry*. The Wesleyan Advocate. P22-23.  
<http://whwomenclergy.org/articles/article5.php>

<sup>14</sup> J. Janse van Rensburg. 2016. *Op. cit.*

## TO BELIEVE LIKE A LITTLE CHILD

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(Picture: [www.morethings.com](http://www.morethings.com))

I read the following explanation by a Jewish school principal a while back:

“Children are blessed with a natural ability to believe in themselves and to imagine great accomplishments for their future lives. They have not had enough bad past experiences to limit their belief in what they are capable of achieving. Their future is not limited by their past -- only by how far their imagination can take them.” (Yaakov Lieder)

Reading this immediately opened up clear understanding of such an important message Jesus was giving the multitudes and most certainly the religious leaders of His day too.

Then He called a child to Him and had him stand among them. ‘I assure you,’ He said, ‘unless you are converted and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven’ (Mat 18:2, 3).

What was Jesus saying? I have no doubt He was addressing the power of religion in the Jewish people - something a little child was without! They were in such bondage to the Mosaic Law and the power of the man-made traditions that they were not able to perceive or see the kingdom of God in action in their midst. And is this not perhaps true of many in the Christian church today, leaders included? They are in such bondage to denominational and other religious traditions that they battle to understand the kingdom truth.

I was reminded of this while reading newspaper reports of the umpteenth debate in the synod of a South African church on whether women can become elders and ministers of the church. The synod decided 'on Biblical grounds' that they could not. But, interestingly, no attention was given to the fact that the New Testament provided absolutely no example of paid, full-time ministers of the Christian church - that was a creation of Roman Emperor Constantine. I am not noting this to reflect badly on anyone in that position, but simply to point out the complete lack of biblical consistency in their deliberations.

Oh, I know there will be all kinds of explanations and twisted interpretation of Scripture in answer to my statements. In the end it will amount simply to the justification of man-made traditions. The time has perhaps come for Christian leaders throughout the world to take heed of the message of Matthew 18:2 & 3 again. Maybe, just maybe, the Christian community will be able to rid itself of all the theological, philosophical and traditional doctrinal baggage that so heavily weighs it down.

And just maybe, the power of the kingdom will return to the religious club or society so much of the institutional church has become! **Then it might be heard again of the community of believers in the Christ, that they had favour with all people** (Acts 2:47). The world today holds just the opposite view. And let's face it - it's not just their fault!

[Published 29 August 2014]

## WHERE DOES IT LEAVE US IF ALL BIBLE PROPHECY HAS BEEN FULFILLED?

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### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The members of my generation, born in the mid 1940's, who have had our roots in the Reformed family, did not grow up without the Second Coming of Christ idea. However, it was never an overwhelming sermon topic. Things have changed a lot though in the course of our children's' era and even more inten-

sively in the lifetime of their children. The visual media has brought the Second Coming into our homes in various ways and variations. People, who had, for example, never heard of the concept of Rapture, suddenly became flooded by it in television programs and books. When Martie and I left the Reformed environment in 1996 on a journey of many years through the Pentecostal and Charismatic environments in search of biblical truths, we too became absorbed intensively in these teachings.

In time, however, questions began to surface and this gained momentum from 2007 especially. Intensive Bible study in the following years left us with the conclusion that if we studied the Bible in its correct historical, cultural, literary, geographic and theological context, with accentuation of the address to whom each prophecy was directed, it shows that every Bible prophecy has been fulfilled. We therefore understand the Bible to be a fulfilled revelation of the living God and His Anointed One (Christ, Messiah), yet it still remained the lamp for our feet and light unto our path of life (Ps 119:105). The moment one takes the Bible out of its ancient Hebraic environment you risk replacing or polluting the true meanings of the specific concepts or events with contemporary Western ideas.

Based on the aforementioned, we understandably often receive the type of questions that make up the heading. One can write a book of many pages on this topic and even sub-aspects of it, but this is not the purpose. I simply look at primary moments in order to provide answers to questions one often receives in passing. It is also deemed necessary to briefly explain our understanding of some other relevant concepts in order to ensure that the reader understands our analytic basis correctly.

In keeping with our approach in so many of our other articles and our books, I wish to accentuate here too, that the article is rooted in our search for the truth and not to enforce our understanding. It is all about what truth is and whether truth matters? It remains the individual's personal responsibility to decide in this regard.

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### Three important questions:

1. What is truth?
  2. Does truth matter?
  3. What remains for us to live for if there is not going to be a Second Coming of Jesus in our future?
- 

#### RELEVANT CONCEPTS

##### The Kingdom of God

After His return from the desert where He was tested by the devil “(...) *Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!’*” (Matt 4:17). Later He said to the Pharisees, “If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you” (Matt 12:28). There are three things to accentuate:

1. Firstly, the expressions ‘kingdom of heaven’ and ‘kingdom of God’ are the same. The first is the one commonly used in Hebraic environments because the use of the name God was generally avoided. It is still the case today.
2. Secondly, the word ‘near’ in our language leaves the perception that it is something still on its way, that it still needs to arrive. In the ancient Hebrew, however, it carried the meaning of already being there. It did not lie in the future.
3. Thirdly, the understanding of the kingdom in that culture did not describe a static image such as land area or a collection of people, but action. It referred to the presence of God reigning in the lives of people and its demonstration by signs and miracles. The kingdom of God

was therefore present everywhere His power was demonstrated through and in His children.

In summary we can say that the kingdom of God was brought to humanity by His Christ and was concluded in a New Covenant. This kingdom manifests in them who truly believe in Christ and in whose life the Fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22) and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are revealed (1 Cor 12). We can also add the content of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 to this. How sad it is that the reality of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are regarded as irrelevant in our time by some Christian groups, or that its integrity is polluted through artificial showmanship and excesses by others. People often say they are led by the Holy Spirit, but at the same time reject the reality of the Spirit's gifts which actually have to empower us to minister His kingdom presence to one another.

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## **The Kingdom of God is here!**

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### **Heaven and Earth**

The concept of the passing of the old heavens and earth and the appearance of a new heaven and earth in its place is a central aspect of the popular end-times teachings. It is presented as real physical events and people accordingly make the statement that we are still here; therefore the old heavens and earth have not yet been destroyed. Consequently such a new (utopian) heaven and earth have not yet arrived.

Our problem in understanding is rooted therein that the culture within which these concepts had been received and written, understood them in a spiritual sense while we want to do so in a literal or physical sense. In the Hebraic understanding of biblical times God laid or grounded the foundation of the earth and planted the heaven when He concluded the Mosaic Covenant with them at Sinai. This spiritual application is found throughout

the Scriptures. See, for example, Deuteronomy 32:1, as well as Isaiah 1:1-4; 24 (the whole); and 51:16 (which entailed a specific prophecy about the salvation for Israel).

[You can read more on the New Heaven and New Earth in our website article – the link is provided at the end.]

### **New Jerusalem**

Here we have another spiritual image from the Scriptures. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews stated unequivocally that “(...) *you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God (the heavenly Jerusalem) (...)*” (Heb 12:18, 22).

God’s sanctuary was polluted through Adam’s sin. The Mosaic Covenant was the guide, the vehicle, to the restored sanctuary which would come through the crucifixion of Christ, His resurrection and eventual judgment of physical Jerusalem. After explaining that the sacrifices of the Old (Mosaic) Covenant had to be made repeatedly because they were imperfect, the writer to the Hebrews then stated the following in chapter 9:11-12:

Now the Messiah has appeared, high priest of the good things that have come. In the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands (that is, not of this creation), He entered the holy of holies once for all, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

The whole context describes a completed reality. One became part of the Old Covenant by birth from a marriage between two Hebrews. Certain rituals were required, of which circumcision was one. Children born from a marriage between a Hebrew and a gentile, as well as children born from adultery and incest, were excluded for ten generations (Deut 23:2). Later people from other nations were also admitted under condition of being taught Torah, circumcision and other rituals. When the Mosaic Covenant was replaced by the New Covenant, the physical Abrahamic bloodline was no longer a condition. There now was a spiritual bloodline manifest in Christ – people who worship



the Father in spirit and in truth (John 3:5 & 4:20-26). All people are born into this position, but just like the Jews of old that turned their back on the God of the Covenant to serve idols, each person now also chooses whether he/she wants to or will be part of this family. The last portion of this article will say more about this family.

[You can read more about the New Jerusalem in our specific article on this topic on our website.]

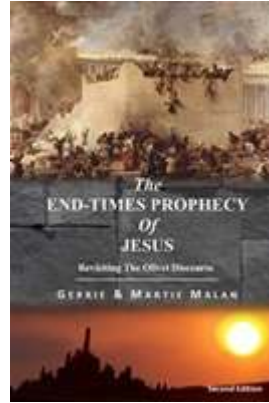
### **Parousia (Presence)**

The next important concept to understand is the term ‘coming’ within the specific word context of the questions the disciples of Jesus asked Him (Matt 24:3). It is the Greek word *parousia*, which is an expression of presence. There is absolutely no indication here, or any other place in the New Testament, of a physical return or coming of the Lord Jesus. Those who teach such a bodily presence to people have to philosophise it into the Scripture. In addition, only Matthew uses this specific expression and here we need to bear in mind that he was writing to a Jewish readership and therefore applied particular Jewish concepts. The parallel portions in Mark and Luke very clearly refer to the destruction of the temple.

The events pertaining to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple was the sign to that generation that the Son of man was indeed who He said He was – the Son of God, the Messiah seated at the right hand of the Father (and therefore in heaven). Matthew 26:64 & 65 (as well as Mark 13:62 & Luke 22:69) sheds light on any doubt one may have in this regard: “(...) *Jesus saith unto him[the high priest] (...) nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting **on the right hand of power**, and coming in the clouds of heaven*” (KJV). The word translated here as ‘coming,’ is *erchomai*, which also reflects the idea of a presence in this context. No thought of ‘one day in the distant future’ is to be found in the text.

## The hell

We grew up with this terrifying concept of the hell, a place of eternal torment. You either believe in Jesus the Christ, or you go to the flaming hell for eternity. Preaching, whether formal in the church or informal in conversations between people, often took on the form of “turn or burn.” It was sobering for me indeed when I discovered that the hell was not a biblical concept.



You will not find the word or expression in the Hebrew Tanakh (Old Testament). The 1917 English translation of the Tanakh uses the word “nether-world”, while translations such as The Scriptures, The New English Translation, and the Hebrew Roots Bible retained the Hebrew *Sheol*. The Old Afrikaans Translation of 1933 uses the word ‘doderyk’ (realm of the dead) for the Hebrew *Sheol* that is found 65 times in the Old Testament - the place where the souls of the deceased went to await the expected resurrection. The modern concept of hell was imported into its teachings by the Catholic Church from the North European Germanic mythology in the middle Ages. It is used 31 times for *Sheol* in the King James Bible. According to this mythology it was the place where demons and the spirits of the deceased were found.

In the New Testament one finds the expression ‘hell’ as translation for three different Greek words, viz. **Hades**, **Ge-henna** and **Tartarus**. The latter is only found in 2 Peter 2:4 and it describes a place where the angels that sinned against God were bound in darkness awaiting the judgment to come.

The word **Hades** is found eleven times and also carries the meaning of the realm of the dead, but without any reference to the presence of Satan, demons or eternal torment of the human soul. The judgement described in Revelation 20, was the Old Covenant Judgment which took place with the presence (return;

*parousia*) of Jesus in judgment and destruction of the Temple forty years after His crucifixion. Thereafter a temporary domain of the deceased is not mentioned again. *Hades* was destroyed (Rev 20:14). Also read Daniel 12, which has the same meaning of the end of that dispensation. Note the statement in Daniel 12:1, 2, for example: “(...) *But at that time all your people who are found written in the book will escape. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, and some to shame and eternal contempt.* It is here that Jesus ‘made a proclamation to the spirits in prison’ after His death on the cross (1 Pe 3:18-20).

***Gehenna***, a Greek word derived from the Hebrew *Ge-Hinnom*, appears twelve times. Some sources describe it as a valley outside of Jerusalem that was used as the local dumping ground where even the carcasses of dead animals and bodies of executed criminals and strangers were dumped. Here the fire was seemingly never extinguished – the typical image ascribe to the hell. However, this does not seem to be supported by archaeological evidence. Other sources describe it as the place where Hebrew idolaters sacrificed their children as burnt offerings to the idol Molech. Whichever description is the truth, the sources generally agree that it was a place and concept that eventually became a symbol of utter cursing for the Jews. It became associated as a place of bodily and spiritual punishment for all wicked and evil people.

**Nowhere in the New Testament does one find the apostles preaching the concept of *Gehenna* to the gentiles (heathens).** James used the word in his letter, but it is important to accentuate that it was a letter to the twelve Hebrew tribes in the dispersion (Jas 3:6). Even then he only used it as a symbol of the tongue as a source of unrighteousness (Jas. 3:6). Jesus also used the concept, but then it was to Jewish audiences and descriptive of God’s coming judgment upon Jerusalem. This judgement of *Gehenna* was eventually fulfilled in the year 70 AD with the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

### DOES THE BIBLE THEN HAVE ANY MORE RELEVANCE?

Contemporary preaching often creates the impression that the Bible is all about its prophetic content. This gives rise to the subtitle/question above. Such a perception is clearly and unequivocally denied in principle by the Scriptures. See 2 Timothy 3:14-17, for example:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing those from whom you learned, and that from childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Note the word ‘righteousness’ in the quoted text – and do make the effort in your Bible study to consider the presence of this word in the Scriptures. Paul wrote in Romans 4:3, “*For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was credited to him for righteousness.*” An honest question for us all: how much of that does one see in our life environment? In asking this we are not even thinking of modern governments!

For the Hebrew (or Israeli) of old, the Torah (Pentateuch) was the Book of the Covenant. In this same sense, and with the unknown writer of an article on the relevance of the Bible on the worldwide web, I can unequivocally say that the whole Bible is even more relevant precisely because of the fulfilment of the prophecies. I have already explained the concept of the Kingdom of God and accentuated some Scripture portions such as Matthew 5-7. It is up to us, the believers in Christ, to live these kingdom principles, values and standards. Unfortunately we have been left impotent in this regard by all the twisted end-times teachings. We should not only be making the world a better place to live in physically for the sake of our children and grandchildren, but also spiritually and culturally.

After all, the Scripture states that the government of Christ will increase forever – Isaiah 9:7 (9:6 in the Old Afrikaans translation) – whereas the popular end-times teachings preach an end to that growth. In Daniel 7:13-14 we read, “*I continued watching in the night visions, and I saw One like the son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before Him. He was given authority to rule, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.*” End-times preaching, however, declare this is not true and that his dominion will in fact be interrupted for some time.

When one approaches a medical doctor because you are ill, you accept the diagnosis and take the prescribed medication to heal. After you have healed you don't sit around longing for the illness to return so that you can take the medication again. No, you carry on with your life in that good health! Why is it so difficult for the institutional church to live in biblical health? Is it perhaps because the church throughout the world is walking very carefully on the eggs of tax exemption and do not wish to stir up the anger of governments against them by being true prophets of God who call the governments to order?

#### **DO WE HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO?**

We can also put the question differently, for example, what then remains for us to live for?

That brings us to the climax of this article. Yes, indeed, what do we have to look forward to? The answer lies open in front of us as John describes the purpose for which the Messiah came in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, why God the Father sent His Anointed One, the Son of His love to humanity (John 3:16):

For God loved the world [*humanity*] in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

**Eternal Life!** That is the prize for him and her who complete the race in faith in Christ the Lord! The Greek word *apollumi* that is translated ‘perish’ here implies total destruction, a complete end of existence. This is the second or everlasting death waiting on them who reject God’s Messiah. There is no mention of an eternal torment in a so-called hell fire – it is simply not found in the Bible. For the person who rejects Christ, his death here on earth is *apollumi* by own choice, a complete cessation of existence (bodily and spiritually) that can only be granted by the Creator of Life. Even then, so I believe, everyone who made that choice grieves God, for the Scripture in John 3:17 declares that God did not send His Son to the world [*humanity*] to judge/condemn them, but to give them redemption from the curse of sin.

According to the natural sciences energy cannot be destroyed. When it disappears from a system, it has simply moved on to another one (Wikipedia, 2011). In like manner, and according to the Bible, when the life essence of the human, the soul, leaves its earthly system or body, it is translated to another dimension, which I believe is His full, personal, boundary free and everlasting realm, (e.g. 2 Cor 5:8): “(...) *yet we are confident and satisfied to be out of the body and at home with the Lord.*”.

Amen!

(In Revelation 20:14-15 a second death is mentioned, which is the spiritual death. This is rooted in the Old Testament or Mosaic dispensational concept of *Sheol* or *Hades* that was terminated or destroyed in Christ in the New Testament dispensation or era. In this old dispensation the souls of the dead would have waited in *Sheol/Hades* for the resurrection and judgment – that has been completed in Christ. You can read more in this regard in our article on [The Great White Throne Judgment](#). The earthly death of one who believes in Christ immediately passes on to another, eternal spiritual dimension).

GERRIE MALAN.

**20 August 2015**



## RELEVANT ARTICLES ON OUR WEBSITE

These articles can all be downloaded from our website:  
[www.hoseaconnection.org](http://www.hoseaconnection.org).

Malan, G.J. & M.J. 2013. *New Heavens And New Earth*.

Malan, G.J. & M.J. 2013. *The New Jerusalem*.

Malan, G.J. & M.J. 2013. *The Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15)*.

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## OUR BOOKS

You can also download our books (free) from our website. Two of these focus on biblical end-times prophecy, viz. *Daniel Without Make-Up And Long Toes* and *The End-times Prophecy Of Jesus*. We believe, however, that our concise book *Rightly Divide The Word* is the most important one as it explains the principles we apply in our Bible study.

## BIBLE VERSION

Unless an indication was given of text taken from the King James Version of the Bible, Scripture quotes come from the Holman Christian Standard Bible, copyright 2003, Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission.

**ILLUSTRATION**

*New Jerusalem*, by Gustave Dore. Public domain.





## THE AUTHORS

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**G**errie and Martie Malan were married in 1970. Shortly afterwards he entered a new career in the South African Correctional Services, where he served for 25 years. They were transferred many times and also had to relocate twice annually between Pretoria and Cape Town for eight years when Gerrie was a member of the Correctional Services' Parliamentary staff. Although Martie could take up employment for short periods in those years, she mostly found herself in the role of home maker, raising their three children – often under difficult circumstances.

Shortly after he was released on pension in 1995 following severe burnout, Gerrie became a lecturer in Correctional Management at the Technikon SA, which later merged with the University of South Africa. It was in this time that they left the Reformed church in which they were raised to go on a journey through the Pentecostal and Charismatic environments in search of biblical truth.

Martie, in the meantime, had taken on studies in biblical counselling, with Gerrie soon joining her. While she focussed on the area of emotional healing, Gerrie's focus was on spiritual warfare. He continued afterwards with studies in the ministry environment and eventually completed a thesis on Christ's 'born again' and Paul's 'in Christ' concepts. On their journey they had wonderful experiences and met precious people, church leaders as well as ordinary church members. But as they studied the Scriptures, more and more questions arose about specific traditional church doctrines.

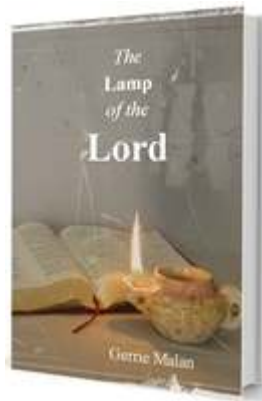
A home group of five in April 2001 soon grew to a weekly meeting of some 50 people. The group quickly grew into a formal congregation (Hosea Christian Family Church), which later joined with another where Gerrie and Martie took up the leadership of the Bible College. Today they are not attached to any denomination as they focus on the search for biblical truth on many questions that developed during their journey through the Reformed, Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions. Unlike so many others who in similar processes have turned their back on the Bible, they feel that they have developed a much better understanding of the simple biblical truths when it is stripped of centuries of philosophising and pollution which robbed humanity of the kingdom life that was and is in God's heart for His people.

This book is part result of their search to distinguish the truth from fiction in the midst of, inter alia, all the end-times matters which Christians are being confronted with so continuously today.

You may contact them through their website,  
<http://www.hoseaconnection.org>

## MORE BOOKS BY THE AUTHORS

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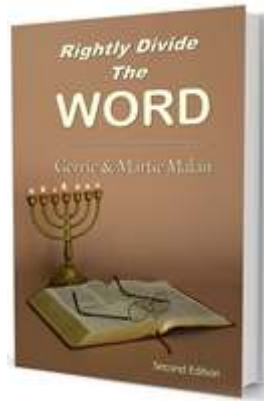
### **THE LAMP OF THE LORD**

(Biblical View Of The Human Soul)

Gerrie Malan

The Bible does not give a clear and precise definition of the soul. The same is true of the expressions 'spirit' and 'spiritual'. Considering the influence of pagan philosophy and Greek philosophical techniques on Christian thought throughout the centuries, and adding the modern variety of approaches to interpretation, it is no wonder that confusion reigns in this regard. In their efforts to fill this void Christian teachers and writers have been presenting teaching filled with assumption and confusion, albeit clothed in biblical terminology. This book is presented as an attempt to facilitate accurate understanding of the

concepts that are used widely in popular seminars pertaining to matters such as spiritual deliverance and emotional healing.



## **RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD**

Gerrie & Martie Malan

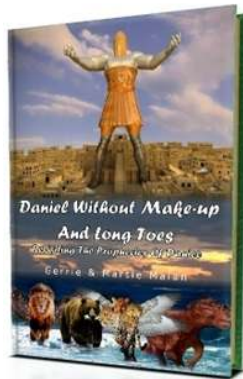
With this book the authors have focused on presenting a book for the average reader of the Bible, to facilitate a true and accurate understanding of the Scriptures. They discuss a number of basic, yet important principles to bear in mind when reading the Bible and point out the many distortions that pagan philosophical practices have led to, as well as errors flowing from subjectivity in translations of the Bible. A few important terms and expressions are discussed in the last chapter to illustrate why rightly dividing the word of truth is deemed so critical.



**SNY DIE WOORD REGUIT**

Gerrie & Martie Malan

This is the Afrikaans version of *Rightly Divide The Word*

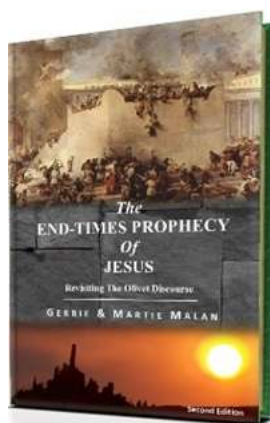


**DANIEL WITHOUT MAKE-UP AND LONG TOES**

(The Prophecies Of Daniel Revisited)

Gerrie & Martie Malan

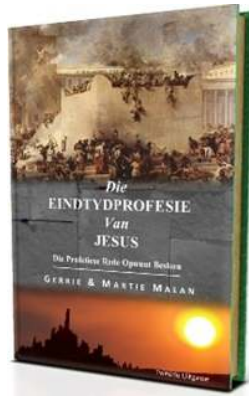
End-times prophecies have been brought to the people's attention by the electronic media to an extent never thought possible a few decades ago. And most of these are rooted in some measure, in the biblical book of Daniel. Even if you should eventually decide that you do not agree with the authors' view, you will find the search for the simple truth in the book of Daniel stimulating. They tried throughout their study to strip the Daniel message of the pollution by all kinds of philosophy through the centuries (the make-up) and also specifically identified artificial insertions (the long toes of the so-called 'church age'). Throughout, they weighed the Daniel prophecies against recorded history. In the process important distortions in modern end-times doctrines are exposed.



**THE END-TIMES PROPHECY OF JESUS**  
***(Revisiting The Olivet Discourse)***  
**GERRIE & MARTIE MALAN**

The electronic and other media have had a profound impact on the distribution of knowledge throughout the world. Knowledge of Bible teaching in various formats has been experiencing the same impact. One can specifically highlight the biblical end-times, in view of the numerous contemporary books and films or DVD's on such topics and man's natural interest in this regard

through the centuries. Because Jesus of Nazareth is on record as God's ultimate prophet, it is inevitable that His end-times prophecy would assume an important place in all the sermons, teachings, books and multimedia that have been created on these topics. With this book the authors have revisited the end-times prophecy of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. They have focussed on studying every section of the prophecy within the context that the original readers and audiences would have understood to be involved. At the same time their focus remained on presenting a relative concise book with the average reader as priority instead of a voluminous academic one. It is a book that is certain to stimulate a willingness to search for the biblical truth, especially in view of the many attempts to question the reliability of the Bible. The outcome might surprise many.



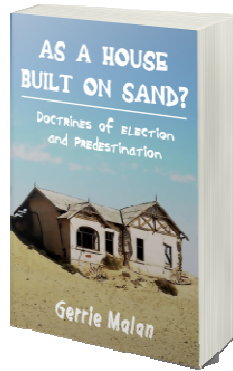
## **DIE EINDTYDPROFESIE VAN JESUS**

(Die Profetiese Rede Opnuut Beskou)

Gerrie & Martie Malan

This is the Afrikaans version of *The End-times Prophecy Of Jesus*.





## **AS A HOUSE BUILT ON SAND?**

Gerrie Malan

This new free book will be available for download from the authors' website end of November 2017. The book was written after a long and in-depth study of the election and predestination doctrine (that enjoy prominence in the Calvinistic church environment especially). Biblical texts on relevant concepts such as election and predestination formed the point of departure, followed by considering the content of existing doctrines. Several instances of Scriptures being twisted were identified in the process. This is a book that church leaders who are serious about the elimination of untruths in their teaching and preaching should consider reading.

Authors' Website: [www.hoseaconnection.org](http://www.hoseaconnection.org)

You can also visit their author page at:  
<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/hoseacon>