

# The First Christians

**and what they believed**





# The First Believers

*and what they believed*



Were the Early Believers wrong?



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## Were the Early Believers in Christ wrong?

"For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it. Matthew 7:14

"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Matthew 15:9

Did the early followers of Christ worship the way we worship today?

After all, these early believers had Christ while He was on this earth and later the Holy Spirit with the word of God, including the apostles of Christ, as their guides.

If these early brothers and sisters in Christ were to return to the earth today, what do you think would be their reaction to all the different denominations, beliefs and practices in the various modern churches of today ?

Would they even recognize "*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*" as mentioned in Jude 1:3 ?

Could their understanding of the scriptures and religious practices be out-dated since they lived so long ago? Is our understanding of the Bible and religious practices so much more enlightened thousands of years latter in our modern age?

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Please ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and understanding as you read through this site and that your eyes will be opened to the truth contained in God's word.

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## Jesus and the early Christians

The disciples and a small group of the first believers that followed Jesus when he was on this earth knew that He was the Messiah, the son of the Living God.

There were also a few gentiles who also believed in the power of Christ and showed great faith in Christ's authority such as the Roman centurion in Matthew 8:5-11

And when he was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

And he saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed,

Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven:

You will notice that Jesus says in Matthew 8:11 that many will be in the Kingdom of Heaven not just the Jewish believers. This mercy of God to the gentiles was mentioned before in the old testament where they were called "strangers" such as in the books of Leviticus and Numbers:



But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. Leviticus 19:34

One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. Numbers 15:15

One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you. Numbers 15:16

God accepted people outside of the Hebrew race as long as they worshiped Him and followed His laws and commands. These obedient "strangers" were considered as if they were born into that race which are God's chosen people.

Paul in Romans 11:17 says the gentiles were "grafted in" to the chosen people of God.

"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

In Mark 7:25-29 Jesus proclaims that the gifts of God are for His children and will not be given to those who are not. Those outside of God's family were called "dogs" and pagans" and they were considered unclean. This Greek gentile woman's faith in Jesus and her humble response reveled her heart which impressed Jesus and her request was granted.

For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it

unto the dogs.

And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

It is interesting to note that "Christians" originally were not called by that name, but were simply known as "people of the Way" or "followers of the Way." The earliest followers of Christ only became known as "Christians" later in the first century A.D. in the large, ethnically diverse, Syrian capital of Antioch as seen in (Acts 9:2, 11:26 , 24:14).

Acts 9:2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to "the Way", men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

Paul says in Acts 24:14,

But this I confess to you, that according to "the Way", which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,

They were called "followers of the Way" in reference to their lifestyle which was the way of life they lived. In other words, it was their lifestyle that identified them as being followers of Jesus Christ, not only their words.

The early "people of the Way" were not called that because they were pious folk who lived morally superior lives with a condescending attitude toward their fellow man. They were called "followers of the Way" because they imitated their leader, Jesus Christ and His commands and teachings.



## What does it mean to be a follower of the Way?

Jesus taught from the Old Testament to the people. Throughout the Gospels, we find Jesus bringing up many of the accounts and teachings in the Old Testament, such as the destruction of Sodom and the death of Lot's wife (Luke 17:29, 32) the murder of Abel by his brother Cain (Luke 11:51), the calling of Moses (Mark 12:26), and the manna given in the wilderness (John 6:31–51) with many more not mentioned here. The first followers of Christ, Jew and Gentile, were being taught how to live righteously according to God's word and commandments in the Old Testament as Jesus states in Matthew 5:17-19

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

They all followed Christ as He preached and taught on the Mosaic Law as written in the Torah which is the first five Books of the Old Testament. They worshiped on the Sabbath, observed the New Moon, celebrated the spring and fall feasts, only ate the foods that were considered clean and everything else that was commanded by the word of God. As Jesus said in John 15:10:

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

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## Jesus and the old Testament

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalms 119:11

The holy chronicles which the Old and New Testaments of the Bible contain are given to man by God our creator. God revealed his plan of saving mankind in these records of His dealings with men, the world at large, and especially His chosen people.

We should study the Old Testament because the Bible contains the story of God's interaction with mankind and the world. The Old Testament records are the beginning of that story. God reveals His nature and His purpose throughout His written word. To ignore the Old Testament is to ignore a written account of the workings of God. God is the same in the Old Testament as He is in the New, and studying the Old Testament enables us to know His ways better and to fully understand our duty as His children and our place in His plan.

Shortly after the account of creation in Genesis, the Bible tells us of the incredible damage humans can inflict on themselves and the world as a result of disobedience and sin. Having lost our relationship with God after Adam and Eve's fall in the Garden, mankind slid into continual sin and assured destruction.

In Genesis, believers in Christ find their identity: an anchor for our understanding of the beginning of all things. We find in Genesis our origins: that human life is not an accident but a purposeful creation, an act of God, and that we are all made in the image of God. We also learn from Genesis that our lives original purpose was to live in the presence of God our Heavenly Father as cherished children in the most perfect place we can imagine, the garden of Eden.

Finally, Genesis reveals that God declares sin and



disobedience will not be the final fate of mankind and the serpent's demise is a certainty. God's initial intention for humanity will again be attained when we are saved by the blood of the Lamb Jesus Christ, obey His commands, and again walk in unrestrained fellowship with Him.

To fully comprehend the arrival of Christ, we must read and understand the history of the Israelites, later to be known as Jews, in the Old Testament following up to the birth of Christ in the book of Matthew. The story of Christ begins with Abraham in Genesis and continues throughout the Old Testament to the rebuilding of the Temple in the days of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Habakkuk.

The prophets predicted the culmination of God's work in our history. First, the coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; Isaiah 53:3-7; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 22:16-18), then the end times (Daniel 7-12). It is the Old Testament that gives us the context for Jesus' birth, ministry, teachings, crucifixion, and resurrection.

While the New Testament is a record of approximately sixty years of history, plus prophecy of the end times. The Old Testament shows the character of God interacting with His people over millennia.

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## Jesus and the Church

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. Matthew 24:11-14

After the death and resurrection of Christ, the apostles received the power of the Holy Spirit as promised by Jesus in John 14:26

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The early believers, who were mostly all Jews, continued to worship God as before by honoring the Sabbath, the feasts, and following the Law of Moses under the direct supervision of the apostles who were guided by the Holy Spirit.

Approximately sixty years later, Nero with the Roman government begins their persecution of the early Christians. As the early Christian congregations grew, they began to be seen as competition to both the pagan religions of Rome and to the orthodox Jews who rejected Christ and His teachings.

Early Christians in the Roman Empire were initially tolerated as just another Jewish sect, but as the faith spread among a vast number of Gentile converts the Roman civic authorities became alarmed and turned against the Christian community. Christians were accused

of refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of Caesar and participation in the Roman pagan festivals.

Under the rule of Nero, Peter, James and Paul had been executed in Rome by the year 67 AD. The gospels, in written form, had already begun to be circulated by 70 AD. The Gospel of Mark was probably written first, followed soon after by the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Paul's various letters that were originally written from around 50-60 AD were also beginning to be circulated.

Paul preached the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles, and Paul tirelessly pursued his calling at all costs. The Book of Acts seems to indicate that the early Jewish believers under Peter and James were not actively witnessing to the Gentiles, but mostly to the Jews, until Paul came into the picture.

This lack of initiative towards the Gentiles demonstrated by Peter and the other Jewish Believers was corrected by Peter's vision by God with the unclean animals challenge in Acts 10:1-11:18

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to



pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or

unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Act 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard

them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.



Reading the account in Acts 10:1-11:18 shows this vision from God is about Peter and the Gentiles and not about Peter suddenly being allowed to eat unclean foods for the first time in his life.

The early Christian congregations were being infused by a large number of once pagan Gentiles. After a while, some of these Gentile converts, as well as Roman opportunists, were trying to introduce some of their own ideas into these groups and gain power.

Paul writes in Acts 20:29-30 and Galatians 1:6-7

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

After Nero the Christian persecution continued under emperor Domitian in approx 81 AD. Domitian enforced the practice of 'Lord's Day' which was when all citizens of the empire had to declare 'Caesar is Lord' or face terrible punishment. Around the time of 95 AD, Apostle John was banished to Patmos by Roman officials where he received the Revelation from Jesus Christ. A few years later Apostle John, the last of Christ's apostles and the last writer of any of the books of the New Testament, left this earth to be with his Master and Savior.

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## Jesus and the Sabbath

Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. Exodus 31:16 9

And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath." Luke 6:5

Most denominations teach that honoring the Sabbath is now not biblical and was part of Old Testament Jewish law as found in the Law of Moses. That is simply not true according to the word of God as seen in the scriptures. The first mention of the Sabbath was in Genesis 2:3

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Notice that God made a distinct action in "blessing" and "sanctifying" the Sabbath Day.

God sanctified this day as the supreme lawgiver and as the Creator. The Sabbath command was one of the only two commands given in the Garden of Eden and was an element of obedience.

In Exodus 16:23,30 we see the Sabbath also was in place before the Law of Moses

"Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD...So the people rested on the seventh day". Exodus 16:23,30

Jesus kept the Sabbath and repeatedly taught on the Sabbath and emphasized that the Sabbath was not just for rest, but also a time to do good and a time to learn

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. Luke 4:16

And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And

he was teaching them on the Sabbath, Luke 4:31

And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" —so that they might accuse him. He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Matthew 12:10-12

Jesus also said that He was Lord of the Sabbath

"So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath". Luke 2:28

Also notice Christ's prophesy on the last days clearly warning His future believers to pray this

And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be Luke 2:28

The Sabbath was also still in place after the death of Christ

Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment Luke 23:56

The Bible shows that Paul and the apostles also did keep the Sabbath

...the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. Acts 13:42-44

It is abundantly clear that all throughout the New Testament the Sabbath was kept by Christ, the Apostles, and the Jewish and Gentile believers.

In 321 A.D. Sunday was declared to be the official day of rest and worship instead of the true Sabbath which was



commanded by God. This was done to appease the Roman pagan population who were used to worshipping their false sun god Sol Invictus on that day.

Here are some interesting quotes

***“Sunday is a Catholic institution and its claim to observance can be defended only on Catholic principles...From beginning to end of Scripture there is not a single passage that warrants the transfer of weekly public worship from the last day of the week to the first.”*** Catholic Press, Sydney, Australia, August 1900.

***“Sunday is our mark or authority...the church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact.”*** Catholic Record of London, Ontario, September 1, 1923.

***“It is well to remind the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and all other Christians, that the Bible does not support them anywhere in their observance of Sunday. Sunday is an institution of the Roman Catholic Church, and those who observe the day observe a commandment of the Catholic Church.”*** Priest Brady, in an address reported in The News, Elizabeth, New Jersey, March 18, 1903.

***“Protestants...accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the change...But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that...In observing the Sunday, they are accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the Pope.”*** Our Sunday Visitor, February 15, 1950.

Note that God says the Sabbath will be kept in the Millennium according to Isaiah 66:23

**And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD.**

As we can see from the word of God, the Sabbath is not

simply an outdated law from the Old Testament and the Ten Commandments. The Sabbath is a eternal command existing from the creation of man to the Millennium and on to eternity.

The Sabbath day rest is truly forever !

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## Yeshua is the Memra

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John 1:1,14

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. Act 5:29

### Who is Yeshua?

Yeshua is the real name of Jesus. The name "Jesus" comes from the Latin Iesus, which comes from an Anglicized form of the Greek name Yesous.

The name 'Jesus' did not yet exist during the the time that Jesus or the Apostles were alive.

In Hebrew Yeshua means "He is salvation". The name Jesus has no intrinsic meaning in Hebrew whatsoever.

Before the 12th century, the letter ( J ) did not exist in the Old English language. The sound the letter ( J ) makes has never existed in the Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek or Latin languages. This fact is why no one in Yeshua's day could have accurately pronounced the English name Jesus.

The name "Jesus" is actually an invention of man. The name "Jesus" came into existence when it was first published in the 1611 King James version Bible, which means the name Jesus is only around 400 years old !

The early believers used the real true name "Yeshua Ha-Mashiach" when talking about their Saviour. Ha-Mashiach means "The Anointed One" in Hebrew.

### What is Memra?

Memra is an Aramaic word, translated into the greek as



"Logos", and english as "the Word".

Memra is found hundreds of times in the Aramaic Targums (the translations into Aramaic and paraphrases of the Hebrew Scriptures used in synagogues for centuries around the time of Yeshua).

The Memra was the instrument of creation as recorded in Genesis 1:3

Gen 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

"And God said"..... Everything God created, He did so by use of His Memra, by means of His Word. So without the Memra, nothing would exist that now exists.

The memra was also the instrument of salvation.

Whenever God saved throughout the history of the Old Testament, whether physical like the Exodus out of Egypt, or spiritual salvation, God always saved by means of His Memra - by means of His Word.

So, is God's word enough? Proverbs 30:5-6 says

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Unfortunately many denominations, and outright cults, teach that the Word of God is not enough. They claim that the Word of God is insufficient without the aid of their non biblical traditions and writings by men who are not even mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.

They do so at their own peril. Yeshua says in John 12:48

He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

And in Matthew 15:9

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the

commandments of men.

Never does Yeshua refer to oral traditions in a positive way. Every time he defends truth he refers to the scriptures.

Yeshua and the apostles constantly appealed to the Word of God as the final authority. This they often did by the introductory phrase, "It is written," which is repeated some 90 times in the New Testament.

Yeshua used this phrase three times when appealing to Scripture as the final authority in His dispute with Satan (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10).

What is more, Yeshua made it clear that the Bible stands on its own, exalted above all tradition.

God also says in Deuteronomy 4:2

"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you."

And in Revelation 22:18-19

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

This simply cannot be coincidence that Revelation 22:18-19 is at the very end of the Bible, Sola Scriptura (Latin for: by Scripture alone) could hardly be stated more emphatically !

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## The Church after the Apostles

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Matthew 23:9

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Matthew 15:9

After the death of Apostle John, a group of church leaders known as "the Early Church Fathers" became prominent and by the seventh century, there were over 160 of these men on historical record.

Many of these men taught and published teachings which separated the Gentiles from the Jewish believers in Christ. They preached replacement theology as they claimed to be the "New Israel" whereas the Jews were deemed the murderers of Christ and forsaken by God. This theology of replacement, which also evolved later into a theology of displacement, stated that the Jews had lost what God had given them and now the gentile Christian Church was the new rightful recipient to the promises and blessings of God. For example:

Ignatius A.D. 30-107 in his letter to the Philippians wrote:

*"If any one celebrates the Passover along with the Jews, or receives the emblems of their feast, he is a partaker with those that killed the Lord and His apostles."*

An influential letter written in the time period between 100 – 131 AD was the Epistle of Barnabas. The writer said that the Jews no longer had a covenant with God and the agenda of "replacement theology" is clearly stated. This is totally contradictory to the Bible, which says God's covenant with Abraham is everlasting in Genesis 17:7-8

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy

seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

In the Epistle of Barnabas, Barnabas writes:

*"Indeed it is ours; for Moses had hardly received it when they (the Jews) forfeited it forever."*

The gentile Christian Church, however, did not make a claim on the Old Testament commandments of God in a literal sense, but rather "spiritualized" them. They adopted the gnostic false teaching that God's literal everlasting commands were no longer in effect and void. They rationalized and twisted Colossians chapter 2 by saying that Jesus completed and abolished the law while forgetting what Christ said in Luke 16:17

**But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.**

Continuing to observe and honor the Sabbath, the circumcision, the feasts, the dietary laws, or anything Jewish, was considered foolishness and anyone caught doing so was labeled as a "Judaizer".

The "church father", Tertullian, wrote concerning the Sabbath and circumcision:

*"It follows, accordingly, that, in so far as the abolition of carnal circumcision and of the old law is demonstrated as having been consummated at its specific times, so also the observance of the Sabbath is demonstrated to have been temporary."*

This statement is also contrary to the word of God as written in Exodus 31:16

**Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.**

Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Trypho around the year 140 A.D. declares that the Jews were commanded to

keep the Sabbath and feasts because of their wickedness:

*"For we too would observe the fleshly circumcision, and the Sabbaths, and in short, all the feasts, if we did not know for what reason they were enjoined you - namely, on account of your transgressions and the hardness of your hearts."*

Irenaeus was the bishop of Lyon in the second century. He also wrote that the Jews were disinherited from the grace of God. But Paul wrote that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable in Romans 11:29

**"For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable".**

Paul also states that the "mystery of Messiah" is revealed by the Spirit of God uniting Jews and Gentiles in the Body of Messiah in Ephesians 3:4-6

**"When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel".**

The false teachers inside the early Christian Church liked to use the verses of Paul's letters out of context as a means to justify their false doctrine. Their favorite section of Paul's letters taken out of context is Colossians 2:14

**"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross"**

According to these false teachers; when Christ died on the cross, He abolished the laws of God delivered by Moses to the Children of Israel, "nailing it to the cross".

Actually, Paul is saying that the curse of sin and death, which is exposed by the law of God, is nailed to the cross by Christ's sacrifice, along with the Old Testament



sacrificial law, as Christ was now the sacrifice for our sins.

Paul in Romans 8:2 states;

"For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

Paul also stated in Rom 2:13;

"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

And in Rom 7:25 Paul says;

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

Also consider Acts 28:17;

"And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans."

Paul made this statement to the Jewish leaders in Acts 28:17 of *not forsaking the customs of our fathers* ( following the torah ) at the very end of his life before he was be-headed. Paul made this statement ten years after the Jerusalem council as recorded in Acts chapter 21 and after decades of being in the ministry !

By his own words, Paul never stopped following the Law of God.

Apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:15-16 about those who teach and twist Paul's words;

"And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the

ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures".

This negative attitude towards the Jewish Believers, along with annulling the laws and commands of God, caused the saved in Christ Jews to leave the early Christian Church and worship on their own in groups. This cultural divide, led by the early church fathers of these times, then tried to erase the Jewish believers with heavy restrictive measures imposed by the Christian Church against all Jewish people.

In the three centuries from 300 to 600 AD, a host of rules were passed containing discriminatory provisions against the Jews in the now "Christian" Roman Empire which began with the reign of emperor Constantine.

In 321 A.D. Sunday was declared to be the official day of rest and worship instead of the true Sabbath which was commanded by God. This was done to appease the Roman pagan population who was used to worshipping their false sun god Sol Invictus on that day.

In 325 A.D. Constantine summoned the First Council of Nicaea which, among other things, established the unbiblical celebration of Easter to replace the Jewish Passover.

There were also the Laws of Constantine in (399 AD), the Laws of Theodosius II (439 AD) and the Laws of Justinian (531 AD).

Eventually anyone who continued to worship on the Sabbath or kept the Passover, and was caught doing so, was put to death.

The original early congregations began as Jews who followed the teachings of Christ and His disciples led by the Holy Spirit. They in turn reached out to the Gentiles with this gift of salvation, but the pagan influences and false doctrines crept in and slowly twisted the original truths taught by Christ, as contained in the Scriptures.

There is no biblical record that Jesus or the disciples ever stopped worshipping on the Sabbath, ate foods that were unclean, forgot about the feasts, or ceased following the laws and commands of God as written in the Old Testament. They taught from the Old Testament and nothing to the contrary.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 1 John 3:4

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8

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## Clean and Unclean Food in the Bible

Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, Gen 7:2

God instructed Noah how many Clean and unclean animals to take on the ark before the Flood. Obviously this was before the Law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai, which means that Noah already followed the dietary laws of God, and this was not a commandment only for Jews.

God's people did not consider unclean animals as food and they were never mentioned as food anywhere, even in the New Testament where they are mentioned in a negative fashion

"Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. Matthew 7:6

And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. Rev 18:2

Notice in Rev 18:2, which is after the New Testament age and sometime in our future, birds and beasts still exist that the Bible considers to be unclean even today.

One of the commonly used biblical texts used to argue that eating unclean animals has been approved is Mark 7:18-23

Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all meats? And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the

heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man.

As you can see Jesus was talking about the wicked state of a man's heart defiles him. It did not even enter Christ's mind to consider or teach all animals are clean for food contrary to the word of God, nor did He ever eat any unclean animals as that would be against the Laws of God and Jesus was without sin.

Notice the similarity in these two Bible Verses

And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase. Deuteronomy 14:8

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. Genesis 3:3

It is interesting that the command, Ye shall not eat or touch it, is repeated in both these verses.

Another common biblical text used to argue that eating unclean animals has been approved is Peter's Vision in Acts 10:11-15

And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

But the whole biblical account in context should include the complete narration contained in Acts 10:1-11:18 which has nothing to do with unclean foods, but God telling Peter

that the Gentiles should be given the Gospel of Christ and that they are not unclean. Also notice that Peter confirms this in Acts 10:28 which is in white italics below at approximately the middle of this narrative

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter,



were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, **Acts 10:28 Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.**

Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of

the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Reading the account in Acts 10:1-11:18 shows this vision from God is about Peter and the Gentiles and not about Peter suddenly being allowed to eat unclean foods for the first time in his life.

The book of Isaiah, ch. 66:1-24, is a prophecy of the new Heavens and the new Earth...a time after Jesus returns to rule all nations and set up his kingdom on Earth. Within that context God still condemns eating the flesh of pigs, reptiles, and rats:

"They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD. " (Isaiah 66:17)

It is not logical to conclude that God changed His dietary laws in the New Testament, and will start them up again during the Millennium.

There is no Biblical record of Jesus or the Apostles ever eating unclean creatures or saying that this command of God was abolished.

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## Christmas and Easter

Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. Jeremiah 10:2-4

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. Isaiah 1:14

Have you ever wondered how Christmas and Easter got so commercialized with Santa Claus, Christmas trees, the Easter Bunny and so on? It seems the real meaning of these holidays and their purpose has been forgotten by the non-church going crowd.

Every once in awhile you will see a sign on Christmas that says "Jesus is the reason for the season" trying to remind the heathen what Christmas is really all about.

Unfortunately, the unknowing ones with the Christmas tree, Santa Claus, the ham dinner and all the rest of the festivities are following the pagan traditions that Christmas was originally built upon.

There is not one word in the New Testament, or anywhere in the Bible, telling us to observe Christmas or Easter.

The Christians of the first century, under the inspired teachings of the Apostles, never observed these Holidays. The so called "early church fathers" of the first three centuries make no mention of them. There is no Scripture or command for their observance, but the word of God is not silent concerning these unbiblical holidays.

In Jeremiah's day. God's people were following the

customs of the heathen who cut down trees, shaped the wood into idols, decorated them with silver and gold ornaments as the verse above shows.

If you read the verses before Isaiah 1:14 you will see the Israelites are just going through the motions and living as hypocrites with their celebrations which were worthless to God. They were no longer serving God the way He wanted to be worshiped, they were going their own way and doing their own thing.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly ! they have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward. Isaiah 1:2-4

God is talking about the nation of Judah and the people who are being wicked and rebellious, not obeying God in the way they were living their lives.

In Isaiah 1:14 notice God says, **Your** new moons and **your** appointed feasts my soul hateth:

In Leviticus 23:2 God reveals His Holy days

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, The set feasts of Jehovah, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my set feasts.

The Sabbath

Lev 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of work: it is a sabbath unto Jehovah in all your dwellings.

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Lev 23:4 These are the set feasts of Jehovah, even holy

convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their appointed season.

Lev 23:5 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, is Jehovah's passover.

Lev 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto Jehovah: seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread.

Lev 23:7 In the first day ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work.

Lev 23:8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah seven days: in the seventh day is a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

### The Feast of Firstfruits

Lev 23:9 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,

Lev 23:10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest:

Lev 23:11 and he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Lev 23:12 And in the day when ye wave the sheaf, ye shall offer a he-lamb without blemish a year old for a burnt-offering unto Jehovah.

Lev 23:13 And the meal-offering thereof shall be two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah for a sweet savor; and the drink-offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin.

Lev 23:14 And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched grain, nor fresh ears, until this selfsame day, until ye have brought the oblation of your God: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

### The Feast of Weeks

Lev 23:15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete:

Lev 23:16 even unto the morrow after the seventh

sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meal-offering unto Jehovah.

Lev 23:17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth parts of an ephah: they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baked with leaven, for first-fruits unto Jehovah.

Lev 23:18 And ye shall present with the bread seven lambs without blemish a year old, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be a burnt-offering unto Jehovah, with their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings, even an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah.

Lev 23:19 And ye shall offer one he-goat for a sin-offering, and two he-lambs a year old for a sacrifice of peace-offerings.

Lev 23:20 And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits for a wave-offering before Jehovah, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to Jehovah for the priest.

Lev 23:21 And ye shall make proclamation on the selfsame day; there shall be a holy convocation unto you; ye shall do no servile work: it is a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

Lev 23:22 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them for the poor, and for the sojourner: I am Jehovah your God.

### The Feast of Trumpets

Lev 23:23 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,

Lev 23:24 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest unto you, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.

Lev 23:25 Ye shall do no servile work; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.

### The Day of Atonement

Lev 23:26 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,

Lev 23:27 Howbeit on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation



unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.

Lev 23:28 And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before Jehovah your God.

Lev 23:29 For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day; he shall be cut off from his people.

Lev 23:30 And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people.

Lev 23:31 Ye shall do no manner of work: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Lev 23:32 It shall be unto you a sabbath of solemn rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye keep your sabbath.

### The Feast of Booths

Lev 23:33 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,

Lev 23:34 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto Jehovah.

Lev 23:35 On the first day shall be a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work.

Lev 23:36 Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah: on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah: it is a solemn assembly; ye shall do no servile work.

Lev 23:37 These are the set feasts of Jehovah, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah, a burnt-offering, and a meal-offering, a sacrifice, and drink-offerings, each on its own day;

Lev 23:38 besides the sabbaths of Jehovah, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill-offerings, which ye give unto Jehovah.

Lev 23:39 Howbeit on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruits of the land, ye shall keep the feast of Jehovah seven days: on the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest.

Lev 23:40 And ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days.

Lev 23:41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto Jehovah seven days in the year: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations; ye shall keep it in the seventh month.

Lev 23:42 Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths;

Lev 23:43 that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God.

Lev 23:44 And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the set feasts of Jehovah.

It is well known that Christmas has pagan origins, the Encyclopaedia Britannica states:

*"Christmas (i.e., the Mass of Christ). Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church . . . ." It was not instituted by Christ or the apostles, or by Bible authority — it was picked up afterward from paganism.*

The Encyclopedia Americana says:

*"CHRISTMAS. It was, according to many authorities, not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian church, as the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the death of remarkable persons rather than their birth . . ." (The "Communion" which is instituted by New Testament Bible authority, is a memorial of the DEATH of Christ.) ". . . a feast was established in memory of Christ's birth in the fourth century by the Roman Catholic Church. In the fifth century the Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol, as no certain knowledge of the day of Christ's birth existed."*

Notice the word "Mass" in religious usage means a "death sacrifice." Saying, "Merry Christmas", is literally saying "Merry death of Christ!" Furthermore, when Santa laughs boisterously and says, "Ho ho ho, Merry Christmas", he is mocking and laughing at the suffering and bleeding

Saviour, who died for our sins ! Then we go on to eat Christmas dinner complete with a freshly baked ham !

Charles Spurgeon who is known as the "Prince of Preachers" wrote:

We have no superstitious regard for times and seasons. Certainly we do not believe in the present ecclesiastical arrangement called Christmas: first, because we do not believe in the mass at all, but abhor it, whether it be said or sung in Latin or in English; and, secondly, because we find no Scriptural warrant whatever for observing any day as the birthday of the Savior; and, consequently, its observance is a superstition, because not of divine authority. -- Charles Spurgeon, Sermon on Dec. 24, 1871.

There is no question why God would reject this unbiblical celebration as God cannot abide with this mixing of iniquity and substitution of His holy and appointed times.

Jesus specifically mentioned that Christians were to observe the Passover as He did in Luke 22:14-20.

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

In 325 A.D. Constantine summoned the First Council of Nicaea which, among other things, established the unbiblical celebration of Easter to replace the Jewish Passover.

According to Eusebius' Life of Constantine, Book III chapter 18, the Roman emperor Constantine declared:

*Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way.*

It seems that Constantine forgot that Jesus and His apostles were Jews and that Christ is the King of the Jews !

You see; All of God's feast days are Holy Rehearsals. Jesus fulfilled the spring feasts down to every last detail and Jesus is coming back to fulfill the Fall feasts in the exact same manner.

For a detailed chart that shows biblically how Christ and the seven holy feasts of God interact

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## The Millennium and the Bible

"For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory" Isaiah 66:18

Have you ever read in the Bible how life in the Millennium will be?

Everyone shall know the truth and see God's glory

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem Micah 4:1-2

We will be living lives of worship from month to month and Sabbath to Sabbath.

And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.

From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD. Isaiah 66:21-23

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. Zechariah 14:16

Is it not strange that church leaders have told the peoples of the ages for nearly 1900 years that the "Jewish" Sabbath, Feasts, and laws of God are not for the Gentile Christians when the Bible says that in the Millennium we will all honor these commandments of God?

"Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.

My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait.

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.

"Listen to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings.

For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations." Isaiah 51:4-8

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## How the Bible was Created

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2 Timothy 3:16

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. Isaiah 55:11

The Bible is the inspired, infallible, and eternal word of God, which was penned by the servants of God, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. Mattheu 24:35

The first instance of God's Word in writing was when God Himself wrote it down in the ten commandments on the stone tablets as recorded in Exodus 24:12

And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

The first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy are called the "Torah"

Approximately 500 BC, the 39 Books that make up the Old Testament were completed, and continued to be preserved in Hebrew on scrolls.

Jesus and the apostles read and taught from the Old Testament that was written on these scrolls.

After the resurrection of Christ and the death of the apostles around the end of the First Century AD, the New Testament had been completed. It was preserved in the Greek language on papyrus,

These groupings of papyrus are called a “codex”

As copies of these manuscripts have been collected over the centuries, they have formed two groups.

The ‘Majority Text’ makes up 95% of 5,300+ existing manuscripts that are in agreement with each other and form the basis for the Textus Receptus which is also called the ‘Received Text’. The Textus Receptus is the text which the King James Bible translators used.

The ‘Minority Text’ consists of only 5% of the existing manuscripts. The main texts, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, contradict each other over 3,000 times just in the gospels alone, and they disagree with the ‘Majority Text’ in 13,000 places.

Amazingly, modern Bible versions like the NIV and ESV are based on these ‘Minority Text’ manuscripts.

The first hand-written English language Bible was produced in 1383 AD by John Wycliffe, an Oxford professor, scholar, and theologian. Wycliffe was well known throughout Europe for his opposition to the teaching of the organized Church of that era. The Pope was so infuriated by his teachings and his translation of the Bible into English, that 44 years after Wycliffe had died, he ordered the bones to be dug-up, crushed, and scattered in the river.

In 1525 the Tyndale New Testament by William Tyndale became the first printed edition of the scripture in the English language to use the printing press. This enabled the distribution of several thousand copies. Tyndale was a gifted linguist and was fluent in French, Greek, Hebrew, German, Italian, Latin, and Spanish, in addition to English.

One of Tyndale's famous quotes was, *"I defy the Pope, and all his laws; and if God spares my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!"* Tyndale's works were burned as soon as the Bishop could confiscate



them, but the printing press continued to print Tyndale's New Testament with one copy even ending up in the bedroom of King Henry VIII.

The Catholic church declared the Tyndale New Testament contained thousands of errors as they torched hundreds of these New Testaments which were confiscated by the clergy, when in fact, they actually contained no errors at all. Anyone caught with a copy of Tyndale's Bible was put to death by burning at the stake.

In 1536, after being hunted as a fugitive for many years, Tyndale was caught and condemned to be burned to death at the stake. Tyndale was strangled to death while tied at the stake, and then his dead body was burned.

In the 1550's, the Church at Geneva, Switzerland, was very sympathetic to refugees like Myles Coverdale and John Foxe (publisher of the famous Foxe's Book of Martyrs), as well as Thomas Sampson, William Whittingham and John Knox, who determined to produce a Bible that would educate their families while they continued in exile.

Their work known as the Geneva Bible was first published in 1560. The Geneva Bible was the first Bible to add numbered verses to the chapters, so that referencing specific passages would be easier.

In 1604 King James 'authorized' a new translation to be read in churches in England and beyond after it was first published in 1611 A.D. Later known as the 'Authorized Version' in 1814, the King James Version became a standard among English-speaking Christians.

The King James Version is considered one of the most accurate English translations in existence. A skilled committee of 54 translators worked for 7 years to carefully complete the King James translation project. They were "the best of the best" that England had to offer in Hebrew, Greek language studies, and biblical scholarship, with approximately a fourth of the translators being Puritans.

From approximately 1700 to 1950, the King James Bible was the preeminent book in England and America.

This page merely scratches the surface of the dedicated men of God who worked tirelessly, with some paying the ultimate sacrifice, to bring the Word of God to the common people.

Please visit our videos section for some very enlightening films on this subject.

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## The Real Church

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Hos 4:6

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Rev 14:12

There are many denominations that claim to be the ONLY TRUE CHURCH and some even state that if you are not a member of their "True Church" you probably will not be redeemed by Christ.

Not only is this thinking unbiblical but it is a massive deception.

Jesus said in John 4:23, 14:2 and 15:19

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:13-14, 25

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."

What we learn by these verses is that those throughout the ages, Jews and Gentiles alike, who keep the commandments of God according to the word of God, and have faith in Christ, are Christ's congregation.

The word "church" first appears in the writings of the early "Church Fathers" long after the death of the apostles and Christ.

The word church was used in place of the original Greek word "ekklesia," in the New Testament. Ekklesia is used 115 times in the original Greek scriptures, and is always translated as "church" even though the word "church" did not exist in the original languages of the Bible.

Translators that translated the Septuagint (the name given to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) used the word ekklesia as a Greek word replacement of the original Hebrew word: **`edah** (phonetic spelling: ay-daw') meaning the "gathering" or "congregation" of Israel.

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word **`edah** is a feminine noun fitting perfectly with the fact that Christ is our bridegroom and we are His bride !

The first time the word **`edah** or ekklesia is spoken in the New Testament is by Christ, in Matthew 16:18,

"...And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my **`edah** or ekklesia.....  
(congregation)"

Christ only used this word three times and only in the book of Matthew. The first believers knew that they were the "**`edah**" or "ekklesia", which is Christ's congregation and Christ's Bride.

The word "church" is just another creation of man and a term used centuries after the era of the first believers.

The Emperor Constantine also ruled that "the congregation" of Christians be called "the Church" giving the body of believers a physical definition and title so that



all the people would be under his control as Constantine then became the Emperor of the Church as well as Rome.

The first complete English bible was the Tyndale bible in about 1524, but that bible translation did not use the word "church" anywhere in its pages, it used the correct word "congregation."

When the King James version of the Bible was translated, King James made fifteen specific edicts for this translation. One of those mandates stated that this bible was to use the word "church" in the translation and not the true word "congregation."

This was very important for King James to use the word "church" because he had to have and retain control over "the church" just as Emperor Constantine in the past.

Curiously, they only used the word church for verses in the New Testament and did not bother with the identical verses in the Old Testament which the New Testament refers too.

For example, the New Testament scripture at Hebrews 2:12, quotes the Old Testament scripture at Psalms 22:22, word for word ;

**Psalms 22:22... I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.**

**Hebrews 2:12... Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.**

It is interesting to note that mostly all churches and denominations in the US have chosen to place themselves under the authority of the US Federal government with the 501c3 IRS status and are really corporations.

When a church or ministry files to become recognized as a tax-exempt organization under 501c3, it then becomes a corporation, according to the IRS, and a "creature of the State". The State is Sovereign over its Corporations .

According to Norton v. Shelby Co., a 501c3 organization/corporation is a "creature" of the legislature, created by the state and therefore controlled by the state. It has no constitutional rights except for a limited first amendment right to advertise; (Va. State Board of Pharmacy v. Va Citizen's Council or the "Ashwander Doctrine").

In other words, this fictional "person" has no rights. It only has privileges - which can be taken away at anytime by the state. In fact, all statutory organizations, (created by legislature) and known as "public entities" are controlled by the state.

So if you still believe your church is the true church with Christ at the head, under 501c3 the US Federal Government says otherwise.

The First Amendment provided for religious liberty. Christians in America have the opportunity to perform the great commission without restrictions from state or federal governments.

Even though the civil government made this offer, churches did not have to accept it. Since the ratification of the First Amendment, the federal government has never forced a church to incorporate or get 501c3 status. The Supreme Court still understands that the state cannot legally interfere with a church who does not willingly submit itself to the state.

Churches have existed long before being allowed to receive 501c3 status and can still obtain tax exempt status without going that route, should they choose to do so.

Most unregistered churches operate by the Internal Revenue Code (26 USC 170-B) which states that financial donations to an unregistered, unincorporated church are automatically tax-deductible as explained below:

*"I am not the only IRS employee who's wondered why*

*churches go to the government and seek permission to be exempted from a tax they didn't owe to begin with, and to seek a tax deductible status that they've always had anyway.*

*Many of us have marveled at how church leaders want to be regulated and controlled by an agency of government that most Americans have prayed would just get out of their lives.*

*Churches are in an amazingly unique position, but they don't seem to know or appreciate the implications of what it would mean to be free of government control." (from the Forward of In Caesar's Grip, by Peter Kershaw)*

*"It is impossible to have religious freedom in any nation where churches are licensed to the government. "*  
George Hansen, Member of Congress (ret.)

Christ's Ekklesia is a spiritual congregation that follows the laws of God, as taught by Christ, and not a physical organization or corporation that can boast of superiority or manufacture new laws and teachings made by mere men.

In the Book of Revelation it is written;

**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.**

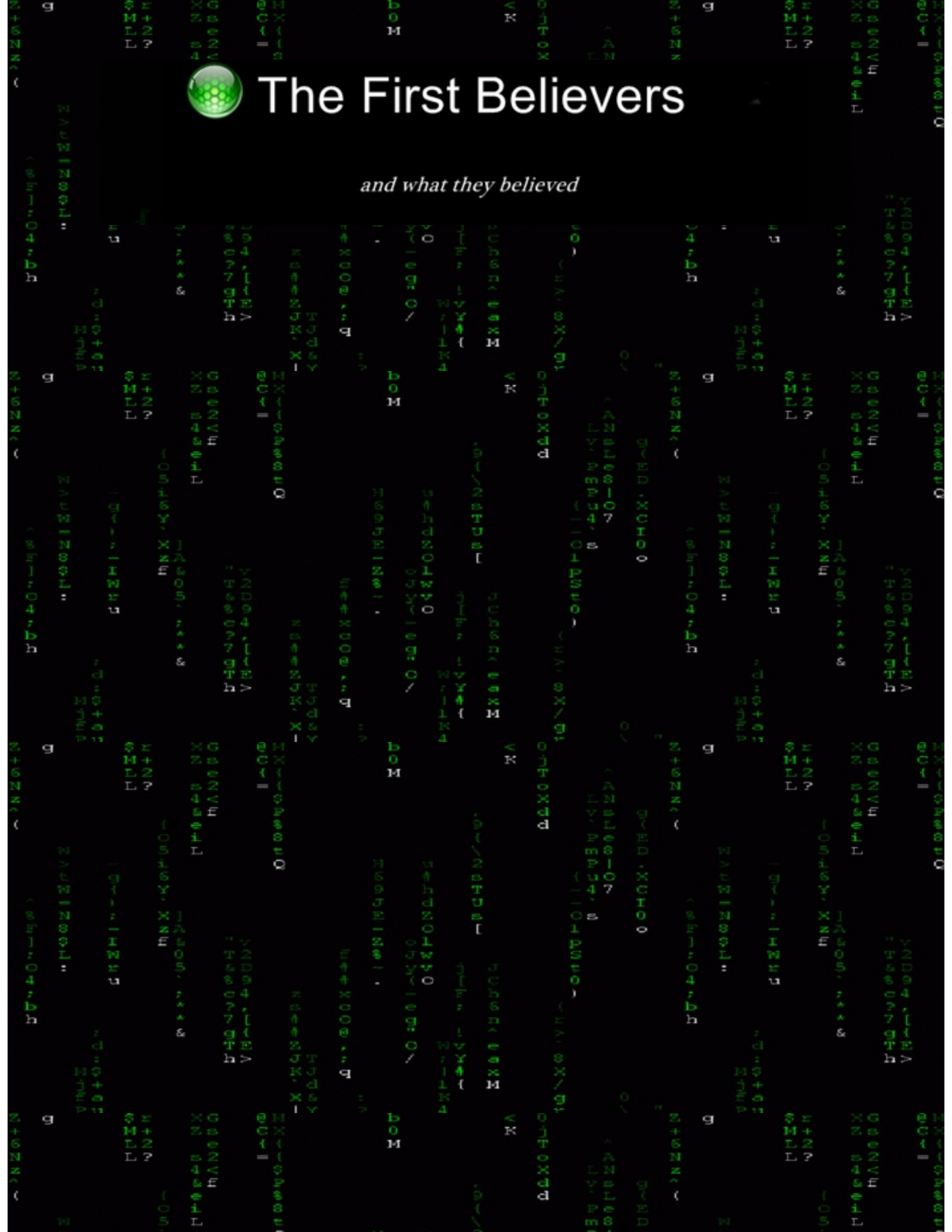
**Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.** Rev22:13-14

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# The First Believers

*and what they believed*





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