
Preface

The purposes of this book are to provide a sure and true foundation for the examination of traditions that have been handed down, sometimes for centuries, to establish criteria for ascertaining the truthfulness of these traditions, and to establish a proper framework to ensure our beliefs and practices are in line with and consistent with the Bible, the written Word of God.

It seeks to fairly represent differing opinions and traditions and to openly compare and contrast those with the Word of God. The goal is not to shame or blame but to reveal the absolute truth. It is about establishing the validity of the content of our faith and practices, something that should be welcomed by all honest seekers of truth.

It is also important to note that this work is not presented as an exhaustive expose and rebuttal of the various issues presented. It is merely an overview of many errors in the traditions of men and seeks to offer reasoned answers from the Scriptures for the various issues being addressed. Each sub-topic is deserving of an entire book to fully examine and explore the issues. That

is beyond the scope of this work. That is not to say that an honest presentation and refutation are missing from this work. In fact, many additional resources are listed herein and in the bibliography that invite the reader to dive into the deep end of the pool to find a treasure trove of material and significant scholarly opinions to satisfy a quest for the truth. As is often said, this work stands on the shoulders of giants.

A few words about bias . . .

A bias is an inclination or tendency toward or against a person, group of people, or an idea or opinion. We often use the term prejudice in describing bias. Unfortunately, in so doing, we attribute negativity to the concept. It is possible to have a “positive bias” towards things or people or ideas and opinions. I have a positive bias towards eating healthy foods, at least I try to. I have a natural bias in avoiding dangerous situations or people, if within my control. Bias is ultimately about choosing. It is the basis of that choice that is important. If my choice is based on prejudgment, hasty generalizations, or sloppy research and hearsay, it follows that my conclusions will hardly pass the test of objective scrutiny and will most likely lead me to erroneous and incorrect practices. If I can demonstrate that my reasoning is

based on fairly represented objective standards that can be seen as honest and fair, then I can accept that particular bias.

Let me give you a few examples of my personal bias.

I believe that the Bible is the inspired written Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16,17 states: “Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that each person who belongs to God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Here is a passage that establishes the truth that I believe and demonstrates what I have been saying about bias. Many, if not most, Christian commentators claim this verse applies to the so-called New Testament (Matthew through Revelation). It does apply to that also but several issues of bias need to be addressed here. The Apostle Paul (Rav Shaul) is using the term “every” or “all” Scripture. The Greek term “graphe” refers to that which is written. This is important to distinguish this from the Oral Torah. Paul was not asserting that divine authority rests on any so-called Oral Torah. More on this later.

Furthermore, Paul was referring to the only existing written authority in his day, the Tanach, including the Torah. There simply was no other written authority. He was not referring to the gospels or the New Testament; they had not been written

down yet! Many modern commentators miss this important point. Do you see how bias works?

Some of my other biases include:

I am a Messianic Jewish believer in Yeshua as the promised Messiah of Israel. I am resolved and fearless in my faith in Messiah, the Hope of Israel.

I believe in the inerrancy of the Bible. This refers to the historical and scientific accuracy of the Scriptures. Hebrews 6:18 and 2 Peter 1:20-21. This means to me there are no discrepancies between the facts of science and the Word of God. There are certainly discrepancies between man's theories about those facts of science and man's theories about the Word of God.

I believe in the infallibility of the Bible. The word infallible simply means not breakable. There exists a divine character of Scripture which necessitates its truthfulness. 1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9, 2 Timothy 2:11, 1 Corinthians 7:25.

I believe that the Bible is our absolute standard for the content of our faith and for the practice of that faith. Isaiah 55:10-11, Hebrews 4:12.

My "statement of faith" is actually quite extensive and can be found on my website www.torahforall.org. It is not necessary to reproduce it in its entirety here. The purpose here is to establish some of my bias points which will help the reader understand my approach in addressing and resolving issues and conflicts

between the traditions of men and the written Word of God. The actual approach will be addressed in Chapter One.

All Scripture quotations in this book are from The World Messianic Bible. It has also been known as the Hebrew Names Version (HNV) and the World English Bible: Messianic Edition (WEB:ME).

The acronym Tanach or Tanakh is from three Hebrew words: the T represents Torah or the five books of Moses, the N represents Nevi'im or the Prophets and the CH or KH represents Ketuvim or the Writings. These represent the threefold division of what is called the Old Testament.

Yeshua is the Hebrew name that is transliterated as Jesus. Since there is no letter J in Hebrew or Greek and only recently in English for that matter, it is linguistically proper to use the correct name for the Messiah. No one in the first century in the land of Israel heard the letter J pronounced, so names like Jesus, James, or Jehovah are incorrect.