

# “Let a Man Examine Himself”

Modern Christianity teaches that Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach died for you and that all you have to do to be saved is to say a little prayer, "accept Jesus into your heart," and let Him become the "God of your life." Salvation is a quick and easy affair because Jesus "has done it all for you." We are also told that Communion or the "Lord's Supper" is a love feast and "an occasion for bringing believers together in unity rather than in disharmony" anytime it is observed (*The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, 1993, p. 467). This sacramental practice is said to symbolize "the combination of solemn remembrance of the Lord's Death and joyful communion with him" (p. 467). It is merely a ritual to participate in as an outward show of faith.

This is a popular and appealing teaching and very Easy to accept! It conveys a message that little is required on our part beyond "accepting" the sacrifice Ha'Masyach made for us. However, such teachings are *deceptive* and *misleading* because they *completely over look* clear and important biblical instructions regarding what Yahuwah holds us accountable for in the process of salvation! The Bible plainly reveals that Amanuwal did NOT do everything for us!

To enter the Kingdom of Yahuwah, there are specific things we must **do-on** a regular basis.

## Examination Required!

In the Apostle Sha'ul's first letter to the Corinthians, written around the time of the spring Holy Days of Unleavened Bread (cf. 5:7-8), he makes a sobering statement about preparing properly *before* partaking of the Memorial Service. Sha'ul asserts: "Whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Master in an *unworthy manner* will be guilty of the body and blood of Yahuwah" (11:27). An "unworthy manner" involves approaching the Service as a matter of routine, lacking proper respect for what is involved and failing to prepare for this important annual event. To help us prepare ourselves for a meaningful Service, the apostle instructs, "Let a man *examine* himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup, for he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment (Condemnation) to himself, not discerning the Master's body" (vv. 28-29).

The *required* self-examination is to be more than just saying, "I'm sorry I'm not the person I should be." This *annual spiritual check-up* should instead be a thorough, yet positive, examination of our motives, actions and attitudes. The Greek

word *dokimazo* means to examine, test, discern or approve. We are to analyze, investigate and scrutinize what we are doing and why. We are to do this with the idea of striving to live more in harmony with the teachings and example of Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach. Our goal is to bring our attitudes and actions closer to the standards outlined in the Word of Yahuwah for every facet of our lives (Matt. 4:4).

The self-examination process is designed to help us *detect* and begin to *eliminate* thoughts and actions that hinder our growth in becoming more like Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach. This requires time and effort, prayer, study, meditation, and fasting. To be effective, it requires *more* than a few quiet, contemplative moments while waiting for the Service to begin. Properly done, this examination will involve systematically searching through our lives for ways that we can *grow in righteous character*: asking Yahuwah for help to see what we need to change and studying biblical guidelines for conducting our lives in a righteous manner.

It is not surprising that I Corinthians mentions a number of important areas of our lives that are worth examining as we approach the Passover Season. The Days of Unleavened Bread provide *additional* time for identifying and eliminating the spiritual leaven we uncover and *replacing* that leaven with more righteous attitudes and actions.

## Impact of Your Example

One of Sha'ul's first comments in his letter concerned the prevalence of contentious partisan factions in the congregation (1 Cor 10:6-16), which he strongly condemned. People were taking sides on various issues and lining up behind ideas promoted by certain individuals. Sha'ul urged, "Now I plead with you brethren, by the name of our Aluhym Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach, that you all speak the same thing and that there be *no divisions* among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the *same mind* and in the *same judgment*" (v 10). How does this apply to you? What sort of influence do you exert in the Assembly, in your local congregation in your family? Are you a divisive force or a unifying agent? Are you busy promoting your own ideas about doctrine and the way things "should" be done? Are you always looking to hear or spread some "new idea"? Or are you a solid, stabilizing factor-a pillar?

Sha'ul mentions how the ideas and actions of some were causing others to stumble in their attempt to grow in The Way (8:9). He provides biblical answers to those leveling unjustified criticism at the ministry (9: 1-14). He points out to those caught up in heretical ideas how they were wrong and misinformed (15:12-14).

Now this is not to say that every disagreement you have with the Assembly's position on some point of doctrine means you have embraced heresy. Yahuwah has not seen fit to explain every facet of His plan to us at this time. As Sha'ul said, we now "see through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12 KJV). There can be legitimate disagreements, but not in areas of core, **foundational Scriptures** (Beliefs). And if we do disagree on certain **peripheral** points, it serves no one to "make a big deal"

of it. This only sows discord among brethren—something that does not please Yahuwah (cf. Prov. 6:16-19).

Sha'ul himself was a unifying and stabilizing influence on the Assembly. And he urged the Corinthians to grow in this same direction, writing, "Therefore my beloved brethren, be *steadfast, immovable*, always abounding in the work of Yahuwah, knowing that your labor is not in vain" (v. 58). Do you take liberties with Yahuwah's way that could undermine the faith of others? The Assembly today, as in the first century, faces many of the same problems. Your example can be divisive or unifying! We either promote Yahuwah's Work or we play into Satan's agenda.

## Do You Value Your Calling?

Another issue Sha'ul addresses is how Assembly members view their calling. Apparently some in Corinth failed to appreciate the rare and priceless opportunity Yahuwah was offering them. Even today, many are being told that their calling isn't that "unique" since there are untold millions of Christians in the world in any number of different "denominations"—believing any number of different doctrines. But we are not Christians and this is *not* what the Bible reveals! Sha'ul states, "For you see your calling, brethren, that *not many* wise according to the flesh, *not many* mighty, *not many* noble, are called. But Yahuwah has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise... that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1:26-29). Amanuwal taught, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44). He also referred to the Assembly as a "*little flock*" (Luke 12:32). Conversely, the Apostle John was inspired to write that Satan has *deceived* the "whole world" (Rev. 12:9).

Sha'ul explains to the Corinthians that what they understood about the plan of Yahuwah is a *mystery* to the world (1 Cor. 2:7-8). Their spiritual understanding was the result of repenting and receiving Yahuwah's Spirit (vv. 10-14), which is only given to those who obey the laws of Yahuwah (Acts 5:32). That Spirit enables those of THE WAY to really understand the Bible (John 16:13). Some of us, no doubt, tried to convert our friends and relatives after we ourselves discovered Yahuwah's Truth. But while millions profess an Almighty Aluhym, the Scriptures reveal that "if anyone does not have the Ruwach of Yahuwah, he is not His" (Rom. 8:9). And the *only* way to receive the Ruwach is to be called, to repent, to be immersed, to receive the laying on of hands and to live in obedience to the laws of Yahuwah (cf. Acts 2:38; 8:17-18; 5:32).

Do you grasp just how privileged your calling really is? Do you place a high *value* on that calling? Are you doing your part to regularly nourish Yahuwah's Spirit within you (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16) or are you slowly letting it be quenched? (1Thess.5: 19). Do you desire to be constantly *led* by Yahuwah's Spirit (Rom. 8: 14) or are you always seeking your *own* way, resisting or resenting what Yahuwah instructs in His Word? (v.7). The only way to grow as begotten children and become instruments in Yahuwah's hands is if we see and value our calling, nourish and use His Ruwach,

and resist the temptation to do our own thing. As you prepare for Amanuwal's Memorial and the Days of Unleavened Bread, reflect on the fact that the death of Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach made your forgiveness, your calling and your access to Yahuwah's Ruwach possible. And think about what you are doing with that opportunity.

## Promoting Peace or Strife?

Amanuwal said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of Yahuwah" (Matt. 5:9). The Bible outlines both the way to peace and the causes of strife. Those of THE WAY are to develop skills in practicing and promoting peaceful interpersonal relationships. Yet Sha'ul has to remind members of the Assembly of their *lack of growth* in this vital area. He writes, "You are still carnal - for where there is envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?" (1 Cor. 3:3). Sha'ul points out that we must *build* on the foundation we have been given, and what we build will be *tested* by trials (vv. 10-14). We must learn to be peacemakers in real-life situations. Are you an "in-your-face" kind of person? Or have you learned that "a soft answer turns away wrath"? (Prov 15: 1). Do you still bristle and try to solve problems by confrontation, shouting down your opponent? Or are you easy to approach? (James 3: 17-18). Have you learned how to be a conciliator? Are you able to pour oil on troubled waters when the occasion arises? Have you learned to work smoothly with your neighbor—leading where you can contribute and following when others are given the lead? Or, perhaps, are you constantly seeking to control others and get your own way—which is Satan's approach? The more skill we develop in applying Yahuwah's principles, the more peace we will engender and enjoy (Prov. 16:7). Amanuwal taught that we should attempt to peacefully resolve differences before coming to Yahuwah (Matt. 5:23-24). The season before Passover is a time to carefully evaluate our tendencies in this area.

## Family Values

Sha'ul's epistle reveals gross immorality within the Corinthian Assembly that was bringing reproach upon THE WAY of life (5: 1-2). As an apostle, he took strong measures to deal with this situation (vv. 7, 13). One reason for the congregation's tolerant attitude toward immorality was its prevalence in the city of Corinth—though admittedly, the particular sin in this case was unacceptable even in this society (v.1). Nevertheless, societal influence was a contributing factor. In fact, to "corinthianize" became a term meaning to indulge in life's pleasures without restraint!

Like the Corinthian brethren, we too must resist the pulls of the society we live in with its ever-present emphasis on the enticement and appeal of immoral behavior. As begotten children of Yahuwah we must learn to "hate evil" and "love good" (Amos 5:15), while living in a society that prefers to "call evil good and good evil" (Is. 5:20). This is

why Sha'ul repeatedly warns the Corinthians against sexual immorality (1 Cor. 5:9; 6:9, 18; 7:2).

As we approach this season, we need to take stock of *our* thoughts and actions in this crucial area. Are we playing with fire in our own lives by what we desire to see or are willing to tolerate for entertainment? Are we tempted to "bend the rules" whenever our desires are involved?

Although our society clearly applauds immoral behavior as being macho, cool and "with it," the Bible pointedly states that individuals who willingly engage in such activities are *fools* pursuing their own *destruction* (Prov. 6:32: cf. Matt. 5:28). Yahuwah desires that His future son and daughter be "above reproach" (1 Tim.3:7). Therefore, the moral example we as begotten-children set is extremely important to Yahuwah and to those with whom we come in contact.

In an environment characterized by the pursuit of pleasure and material gain, loose morals and disregard for the laws of Yahuwah, marriage problems flourish and the toll on family life is high. Sha'ul emphasizes to the Corinthians the importance of maintaining strong marital bonds. He writes, "Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.... Do not deprive one another"; as this only leads to other problems (1 Cor. 7:1-5). Marriage vows are to be kept not dissolved as matters of convenience (vv. 10-13). The Bible reveals that the stability and influence of the home environment on children is of vital concern to Yahuwah (v. 14).

What is the state of your marriage? Do you still take seriously Yahuwah's instructions in Ephesians 5, Colossians 3 and 1 Peter 3, or do you regard these scriptures as out-dated?

As a wife, are you respectful and willing to be subject to your husband? As a husband, do you love and respect your wife? Do you work smoothly together as a team or do you each do your own thing? Do you continually work at maintaining strong marital and family bonds or have you let the cares of this world drive wedges between these relationships? Do you really care about your children-to guide them and set a righteous example for them? This too is a vital area to examine prior to partaking of Amanuwal's Memorial.

## Where Is Your Focus?

The first letter to the Corinthians describes members divided by personalities and individual doctrinal ideas, focused on envy and personal strife, critical of the ministry and other members - heavily influenced by the moral and religious corruption of their age and prone to marriage and family problems. These things seemed to be consuming their lives to the point where the glory of their personal calling was beginning to fade from view.

They were *focused on themselves* and on the concerns of their immediate physical world. They were losing their focus on Yahuwah; His commandments and His purpose for their lives. Not surprisingly, they were prone to depression when faced with trials because the Aluhym of the Bible was not as

real to them as He should have been (10:1-13).

We face the same challenge today. Scoffers abound! Controversies *rage* over minor doctrinal points! The problems and pulls of this world constantly besiege us. Unless we take the time to draw near to Yahuwah and determine to live

By His instructions – staying focused on Him – we too will begin to lose our focus and be swept along by the self-centered, secular tides that are carrying our modern society toward destruction.

Where is your focus? Is it on yourself? Is it on obtaining more personal possessions? Maybe it's on experiencing the latest thrill or sensation? Is it on walking with Yahuwah and being in His Kingdom? The Spring Season is a time to make vital course corrections!

Now for assembly members wrestling with the pulls of intellectual vanity, self-centeredness and physical lust, Sha'ul emphasizes a fundamental issue – love! Not the inward-oriented, self-gratifying "love" of this world, but the true love that comes from being motivated by Yahuwah's Ruwach. That love is expressed as unselfish, outgoing concern for others – wives, husbands, children and neighbors. Righteous love is patient, kind, and humble. It is not crude, rude, easily angered, bitter, resentful or conditional. It is positive, hopeful, consistent, enduring, forgiving, and truthful (13:4-7). This kind of love reflects the very nature of Yahuwah himself (1 John 4:8). It is reflected by the thoughts and actions that emanate from individuals who are utilizing and being led by Yahuwah's Ruwach (Gal 5:22-23). Developing this kind of love is our goal as begotten-children of Yahuwah.

In our modern world, as in ancient Corinth, we are exposed to many twisted and perverted ideas about love. It is equated with lust, sentimental feelings, idyllic romanticism, pure self-gratifications and self-serving associations. However, the Bible reveals the genuine love for Yahuwah involves keeping His commandments (John 145) – not taking those instructions lightly or regarding them as outdated and old fashioned. Real love for our spouse involves patience, respect, giving and caring (Eph 5:22-29) – as does love between parents and children (6:1-4; Col 3:19-20). Genuine love for our fellow man involves making the effort to live in harmony with him (Rom 12:18-21) – even being willing to be wronged by him (Matt 5:38-42). Spring is a good time to review what we understand and practice as real, righteous love.

This is what Yahuwah requires. And it is, no doubt, why Sha'ul was inspired to write that before we partake of Amanuwal's Memorial – the memory of the tremendous sacrifice that Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach made for mankind – we need to earnestly, humbly, and prayerfully examine ourselves in the light of Yahuwah's word. For only by letting Yahuwah show us what we need to change to develop more of His mind and character can we grow to become more like Him. So as we approach the Memorial Service, let's carefully and prayerfully prepare before partaking of its important symbols.