

*Master,
What Good
Thing Shall I Do,
That I May Have
Eternal Life?*

(Matthew 19:16)

“Master, What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” This question, posed directly to the Messiah in Matthew 19:16, is fundamental. The answer given in the very next verse may surprise you:

“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Yahusha¹ (Jesus) replied. “There is only One who is good. **If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.**”

Despite this simple statement (from Messiah Himself!) in response to a direct question, many churches teach that “the Law”, instructions for living given by the Most High through Moses and recorded in the first five books of scripture (known as the Torah), does not apply to 21st century believers. Instead, we are told that these instructions were “only for the Jews”, or were “nailed to the cross”. This argument is based entirely on passages from Paul’s letters, such as Colossians 2:13-23:

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, Elohim² (God) made you alive with Messiah³ (Christ). **He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. **Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Messiah.** Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as Elohim causes it to grow. **Since you died with Messiah to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.”**

But Paul also wrote, in Romans 2:13 - **“For not the hearers of the Law are just before Elohim, but the doers of the Law shall be justified.”**

Either we’re misinterpreting Paul’s writings, or he isn’t being consistent. The confusion began almost 2,000 years ago. Look carefully, and you’ll find an interesting dynamic at play throughout the New Testament. Paul’s interaction with the church at Jerusalem was limited, and sometimes confrontational; they were not always “of one accord”. Acts 21 makes it evident that this resulted from Paul’s teachings about the Law - the church at Jerusalem asked Paul to demonstrate that he does NOT teach against the Law, and that he himself obeys the Law. In response, Paul did what they asked:

Acts 21:20-26

When they heard this, they praised Elohim. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, **and all of them are zealous for the Law. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs.** What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. **Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the Law.** As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that **they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols**, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality." The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

The instructions for Gentile believers included abstaining from food sacrificed to idols, and dietary restrictions straight out of Leviticus. The reason for this is that like Messiah, the first century church at Jerusalem taught that the Law remains our guide for how we should live, and the standard by which we define sin. "Everyone who sins breaks the Law; in fact, sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4) **Why then does Paul indicate that it's permissible to eat food sacrificed to idols, even in a pagan temple**, so long as it doesn't offend the conscience of a "weaker" brother?

1 Corinthians 8:4-13

So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no Elohim but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one Elohim, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Yahusha Messiah, through whom all things came and through whom we live. But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to Elohim; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. **For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple**, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Messiah died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Messiah. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

If there is any doubt, we must test our interpretation of Paul's writings against the rest of scripture, and especially the words of Messiah. If it seems that Paul and Messiah do

not agree, then we're left with a choice -- whom will you follow?

Yahusha is Consistent

Yahusha not only kept the Law Himself – so that he would qualify as a sinless sacrifice to atone for our sins – He consistently taught His followers to obey the Law, and to teach others to do the same.

Matthew 5:17-20

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.** For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, **but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.** Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' **Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'**

The King James Version ends this passage with “ye that work iniquity” instead of “you evildoers”. The Greek word translated “iniquity” is “anomia”; and it has a very specific meaning: lawlessness, or, “without Torah”.

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Yahusha came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Mark 9:42-47

"And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of Elohim with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into

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hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

Mark 10:17-27

As Yahusha started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. **"Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"** "Why do you call me good?" Yahusha answered. "No one is good—except Elohim alone. **You know the commandments:** 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." Yahusha looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Yahusha looked around and said to his disciples, **"How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of Elohim!"** The disciples were amazed at his words. But Yahusha said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of Elohim! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Elohim." The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" Yahusha looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with Elohim; all things are possible with Elohim."

Luke's version of this exchange (Lk 18:18-27) is nearly identical. Messiah says plainly, to inherit eternal life, keep the commandments.

Luke 6:46-49

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Luke 10:25-28

On one occasion an expert in the Law stood up to test Yahusha. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered: **"Love Yah your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** "You have answered correctly," Yahusha replied. **"Do this and you will live."**

Again when Yahusha is asked the key to salvation, he does not say "believe" -- he says "do". And do what? The Law, as recorded in Deuteronomy 6 (Love Yah your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind) and Leviticus 19 (Love your neighbor as yourself). These are not new

commandments in place of the Law, they are a summary of the Law, taken directly from the Law.

John 15:1-17

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. **He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit**, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.

The Apostles Agree

The teachings of the apostles and the church at Jerusalem, as recorded throughout the New Testament, are consistent with Yahusha's teachings.

James 1:19-27

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that Elohim desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.** Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. **But the man who looks intently into the perfect Law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.** If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that Elohim our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

James was not an apostle; but he was the brother of Messiah, and the head of the church at Jerusalem. He knew his brother's teachings as well as anyone. He makes it very clear that only believing is not enough. We are called to fulfill the Law – not just avoiding “bad” conduct, but actively pursuing “good” – love your neighbor. Love is an active verb, not a feeling.

James 2: 14-26

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. **You believe that there is one Elohim. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.** You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed Elohim, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called Elohim's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

1 John 2:1-8

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Yahusha Messiah, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. **We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, Elohim's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Yahusha did.** Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

2 John 1:5-11

And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. **And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands.** As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Yahusha Messiah

as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Messiah does not have Elohim; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

1 Peter 1:1-2

Peter, an apostle of Yahusha Messiah, To Elohim's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of Elohim the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, **for obedience to Yahusha Messiah** and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

1 Peter 1:13-21

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Yahusha Messiah is revealed. **As obedient children**, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." **Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.** For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Messiah, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in Elohim, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in Elohim.

Peter also teaches that belief alone will not atone for a life of sin. We must live according to Elohim's Law, and Peter directly warns us against lawlessness:

2 Peter 3:17-18

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, **be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yahusha Messiah. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Paul stands alone in teaching that the Law was "nailed to the cross". Messiah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, and Jude all taught that we should follow the Law. Are there other reasons we should doubt Paul?

Paul's Conversion

The story of Paul's conversion is recorded three times in Acts, in Chapters 9, 22, and 26. We'll compare two of the tellings.

Acts 9:1-19a

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. **He fell to the ground** and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Yahusha, whom you are persecuting," he replied. **"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."** **The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless**; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Yahusha, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Acts 26:9-23

"I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Yahusha of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. **We all fell to the ground**, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? **It is hard for you to kick against the goads.**' Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' 'I am Yahusha, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. **I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from**

darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Elohim, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to Elohim and prove their repentance by their deeds. That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. But I have had Elohim's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

Chapter 26 records that Paul AND his companions fall to the ground; while his companions remained standing in Chapter 9. This is a relatively minor inconsistency, but interesting. The greater concern is that in the first telling, Paul was sent to Damascus to receive his mission from Ananias. In the second version of events, Paul claims that he received his commission directly from Yahusha on the road; there is no mention of Ananias! Paul is not a reliable witness, because his story has changed. Note also that Messiah told him "it is hard for you to kick against the goads". Goads are tools used to keep an animal under control – remember this phrase, we'll return to it a little later. For now, let's compare Luke's version of what happened right after Paul's conversion, recorded in Acts 9, with Paul's version, in Galatians 1.

Acts 9:19b-28

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Yahusha is the Son of Elohim. All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" **Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews** living in Damascus by proving that Yahusha is the Messiah. After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. **When he came to Jerusalem**, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. **But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles.** He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Yahusha. **So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.**

Galatians 1:11-24

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Yahusha Messiah. For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of Elohim and tried to destroy it. I was

advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when Elohim, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, **but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. I assure you before Elohim that what I am writing you is no lie.** Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. **I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea** that are in Messiah. They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised Elohim because of me.

Luke Says Paul... (Acts 9)

spent several days in Damascus
grew powerful (well known) by
teaching in the synagogues
stayed with the apostles (plural)
in Jerusalem

Paul Says Paul... (Galatians 1)

went immediately into Arabia
was personally unknown to the churches

saw only Peter and James
(Messiah's brother, not the apostle James)

Luke is known for being meticulous in his attention to detail. Had Paul left Damascus for Arabia, Luke would have recorded that in Acts. Instead, he notes that Paul stayed and preached in Damascus. And had Paul seen only one apostle in Jerusalem, Luke would have used the singular, not the plural. Paul's return to Jerusalem is recorded in Galatians 2, and Acts 15. We'll compare those as well.

Acts 15:1-2

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.

Galatians 2:1-2

Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. **I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders**, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.

Luke records that it was the question of gentile circumcision that brought Paul to Jerusalem; Paul claims it was "a revelation". And in the following verses, pay close attention to Paul's attitude about the apostles.

Galatians 2:6-7

As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; Elohim does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, **just as Peter had been to the Jews.**

But we read in Acts 15:7 --

After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago **Elohim made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips** the message of the gospel and believe."

Peter and Paul do not even agree about whether Peter's ministry is to the Jews, or to the Gentiles.

Galatians 2:8-10

For Elohim, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. **James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars**, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Paul's words about the leaders of the church of Jerusalem deserve careful consideration. These people were apostles, and Messiah's brother James. Men who walked with, talked with, ate with, studied with, and prayed with Messiah, throughout his entire ministry; those who watched Him die, and saw Him resurrected. Men chosen by Messiah to teach the world, personally given the Great Commission. Paul calls them: "those who seemed to be leaders", "those who seemed to be important", and "those reputed to be pillars"; and adds "whatever they were makes no difference to me", and "those men added nothing to my message". By Paul's own words, he set before them his own gospel, rather than learning what Messiah taught during his ministry, from those who witnessed it firsthand.

The Apostle Paul?

Throughout his letters, Paul refers to himself as an Apostle. He preaches what he claims was revealed directly from Messiah – and offers what evidence? Do others support his claim? "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid." (John 5:31). On the word of two witnesses is a thing established. (John 8:14-17, Deuteronomy 17:6 & 19:15) There is no other witness that Paul even went to Arabia, and even Paul himself did not record what was said there.

Romans 1:1

"Paul, a servant of Messiah Yahusha, **called to be an apostle** and set apart for the gospel of Elohim"

Romans 11:13-14

I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as **I am the apostle to the Gentiles**, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.

1 Corinthians 1:1

Paul, called to be **an apostle of Messiah Yahusha** by the will of Elohim, and our brother Sosthenes,

But Paul's own writings show that others, specifically the church at Jerusalem, do not agree with his claim:

1 Corinthians 9:1-6

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Yahusha our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? **Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you!** For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. **This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me.** Don't we have the right to food and drink? Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?

1 Corinthians 15:3-10

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. **Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also**, as to one abnormally born. **For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle**, because I persecuted the church of Elohim. But by the grace of Elohim I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of Elohim that was with me.

And as we saw in Galatians, the conflict between Paul and the church at Jerusalem is evident in his other writings:

2 Corinthians 11:4-6

For if someone comes to you and preaches a Yahusha other than the Yahusha we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. **But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles."** I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.

2 Corinthians 12:11-12

I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, **for I am not in the least inferior to the "super-apostles,"** even though I am nothing. The things that mark an apostle—**signs, wonders and miracles**—were done among you with great perseverance.

Signs and miracles? An encounter in the desert (Arabia?) A revelation in the inner room? Being surrounded by flashes of light on the road? Our Messiah specifically warned us about all of these.

Matthew 24:24-28

For false Messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great **signs and miracles** to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, '**There he is, out in the desert,**' do not go out; or, '**Here he is, in the inner rooms,**' do not believe it. **For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west,** so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-7

For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as men approved by Elohim to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but Elohim, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—Elohim is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Messiah we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.

Paul's words confirm that his disagreement is with those who, like Messiah, want to keep and teach the Law.

1 Timothy 1:1-7

Paul, an apostle of Messiah Yahusha by the command of Elohim our Savior and of Messiah Yahusha our hope, To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from Elohim the Father and Messiah Yahusha our Lord. As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than Elohim's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. **They want to be teachers of the Law,** but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

1 Timothy 2:5-7

For there is one Elohim and one mediator between Elohim and men, the man Messiah

Yahusha, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time. **And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.**

This is now Paul's third assurance that he is not lying. Is it because the church at Jerusalem is critical of his teachings, and skeptical of his qualifications? Paul repeatedly emphasizes that his apostleship comes from Elohim, instead of being recognized by the other apostles. But did Messiah consider Paul an apostle?

Matthew 10:2-4

These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

The same list is also found in Mark 3, and again in Luke 6. Paul isn't on it. Did Paul replace Judas?

Acts 1:18-26

With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood. "For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms, 'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,' and, 'May another take his place of leadership.' Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the **men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Yahusha went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Yahusha was taken up from us.** For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." Then they cast lots, and **the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.**

Clearly, Paul was not qualified to join the ranks of the apostles. Not only was Paul not with Messiah throughout his ministry, there is no evidence that Paul even saw Messiah firsthand before His ascension. Matthias, not Paul, was chosen to replace Judas. Perhaps after Matthias there was a 13th apostle added to the group?

Matthew 19:27-28

Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Yahusha said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, **you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

Revelation 21:9-14

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from Elohim. It shone with the glory of Elohim, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. **The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

In Revelation, John records the words of Yahusha and visions of heaven after the other apostles (and Paul) had died. Yahusha is clear that there are only twelve apostles, not thirteen. What about Paul, author of the epistle to the Ephesians?

Revelation 2:1-2

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, **that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.**

THE OTHER WRITERS

Are there other warnings in scripture against Paul, and his teachings of lawlessness?

2 Peter 1:1-21

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Yahusha Messiah, To those who through the righteousness of our Elohim and Savior Yahusha Messiah have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of Elohim and of Yahusha our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Yahusha Messiah. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. **Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Yahusha Messiah. So I**

will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Yahusha Messiah has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. **We did not follow cleverly invented stories** when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Yahusha Messiah, but **we were eyewitnesses of his majesty**. For he received honor and glory from Elohim the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from Elohim as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Paul was witness to none of the events Peter describes in verses 16-18. Peter's reference to "cleverly invented stories" is pointed directly at Paul.

2 Peter 2:1-22

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed **these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up.** Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. For if Elohim did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, **a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men** (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was **tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds** he saw and heard)—if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish. They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is

to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood! **They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam** son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—a beast without speech—who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness. These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. **They promise them freedom**, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Yahusha Messiah and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. **It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.** Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

2 Peter 3:1-18

Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and **the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.** First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by Elohim's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of Elohim and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. **So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.** Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that Elohim

gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. **His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.** Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, **be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yahusha Messiah. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Jude 1-25

Jude, a servant of Yahusha Messiah and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by Elohim the Father and kept by Yahusha Messiah: Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. **For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our Elohim into a license for immorality and deny Yahusha Messiah our only Sovereign and Lord.** Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, **reject authority** and slander celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them. Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; **they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error**; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Yahusha Messiah foretold. They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But

you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in Elohim's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Yahusha Messiah to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only Elohim our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Yahusha Messiah our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Jude and Peter both refer to the error of Balaam. His story is found in Numbers.

Numbers 22:21-41

Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab. But Elohim was very angry when he went, and the angel of Yah stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. When the donkey saw the angel of Yah standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road. Then the angel of Yah stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides. When the donkey saw the angel of Yah, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat her again. Then the angel of Yah moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of Yah, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff. Then Yah opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?" Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now." The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?" "No," he said. **Then Yah opened Balaam's eyes**, and he saw the angel of Yah standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown. The angel of Yah asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? **I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me.** The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her." Balaam said to the angel of Yah, "I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back." The angel of Yah said to Balaam, "Go with the men, **but speak only what I tell you.**" So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the Moabite town on the Arnon border, at the edge of his territory. Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send you an urgent summons? Why didn't you come to me? Am I really not able to reward you?" "Well, I have come to you now," Balaam replied. "But can I say just anything? I must speak only what Elohim puts in my mouth." Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth. Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep, and gave some to Balaam and the princes who were with him. The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal, and from there he saw part of the

people.

Numbers 24:14-17

Then he uttered his oracle: "The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of one whose eye sees clearly, the oracle of one who hears the words of Elohim, who has knowledge from the Most High, **who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened**: "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth.

Numbers 31:1-16

Yah said to Moses, "Take vengeance on the Midianites for the Israelites. After that, you will be gathered to your people." So Moses said to the people, "Arm some of your men to go to war against the Midianites and to carry out Yah's vengeance on them. Send into battle a thousand men from each of the tribes of Israel." So twelve thousand men armed for battle, a thousand from each tribe, were supplied from the clans of Israel. Moses sent them into battle, a thousand from each tribe, along with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, who took with him articles from the sanctuary and the trumpets for signaling. They fought against Midian, as Yah commanded Moses, and killed every man. Among their victims were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba—the five kings of Midian. **They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword.** The Israelites captured the Midianite women and children and took all the Midianite herds, flocks and goods as plunder. They burned all the towns where the Midianites had settled, as well as all their camps. They took all the plunder and spoils, including the people and animals, and brought the captives, spoils and plunder to Moses and Eleazar the priest and the Israelite assembly at their camp on the plains of Moab, by the Jordan across from Jericho. Moses, Eleazar the priest and all the leaders of the community went to meet them outside the camp. Moses was angry with the officers of the army—the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds—who returned from the battle. "Have you allowed all the women to live?" he asked them. **"They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from Yah in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck Yah's people.**

Moses, who delivered Elohim's Law to the Israelites, had destruction of Balaam and his influence as his last divine task before he died. Balaam...

Had a divine encounter on the road,
Had his eyes opened,
Delivered a legitimate message (oracle) from Elohim,
Later fell and led people astray.

Remember that Paul recorded, "it is hard for you to kick against the goads", a reference to the tools Balaam used to guide his talking donkey. What was Balaam's error?

Revelation 2:12-17

To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives. **Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.** Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

The picture is now complete, accurate to the last detail. Just as Paul, Balaam gave approval to eat food sacrificed to idols. The parallels between Balaam and Paul are uncanny, but we're not finished yet.

WOLVES

Matthew 7:15-20

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious **wolves**. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

More than a general warning, this is a specific prophecy. Messiah is warning us about Paul. The keys to understanding it are in the scriptures to which Messiah alludes by his use of the term "ferocious" or "ravenous" wolves.

Ezekiel 22:23-31

Again the word of Yah came to me: "Son of man, say to the land, 'You are a land that has had no rain or showers in the day of wrath.' There is a conspiracy of her princes within her like a roaring lion tearing its prey; they devour people, take treasures and precious things and make many widows within her. **Her priests do violence to my Law and profane my holy things; they do not distinguish between the holy and the common; they teach that there is no difference between the unclean and the clean; and they shut their eyes to the keeping of my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. Her officials within her are like wolves tearing their prey;** they shed blood and kill people to make unjust gain. Her prophets whitewash these deeds for them by false visions and lying divinations. **They say, 'This is what the Sovereign Yah says'-when Yah has not spoken.** The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the alien,

denying them justice. I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign Yah."

The bolded section describes perfectly the church of today, under the influence of Paul's teachings – pastors and priests teach that Elohim's Law no longer applies, unclean foods are served at church suppers, the Sabbath has been replaced by Sun-Day worship, and Yah's Feasts (Passover, Unleavened Bread, FirstFruits, Weeks, Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles) have been lost, in favor of Easter and Christmas (both of pagan origin). The tie is completed in Genesis 49, when Jacob prophesies to his children, who will father the twelve tribes of Israel, about the role of their descendants to come.

Genesis 49:1-2

Then Jacob called for his sons and said: "Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come. Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Israel...

Genesis 49: 8-12

"Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk...

This is clearly a Messianic prophecy – Messiah came from the tribe of Judah. The last brother, the last tribe, is Benjamin --

Genesis 49:27

"Benjamin is a **ravenous wolf**; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the plunder."

"In the morning he devours the prey" – Paul persecuted early Christians, sought them out, oversaw their executions. "In the evening he divides the plunder" – After his "conversion", he taught against Elohim's Law.

How do we know that Jacob was referring to Paul in his prophecy of a ravenous wolf? Paul writes in Romans 11:1, "I ask then: Did Elohim reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, **from the tribe of Benjamin.**"

And again in Philippians 3:4b-6, "...If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, **of the tribe of Benjamin**, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the Law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless."

Not everything Paul taught was wrong. Like Balaam, he may have had a divine encounter on the road, and been given a message to deliver. But he erred when he went beyond what he was given, and taught contrary to Elohim's word. So we must test his writings. When they are consistent with the rest of scripture, they can be used to explain, support, and apply Elohim's word. But if there is any conflict between the way we interpret Paul's letters and the rest of scripture – the Law inscribed in stone by Elohim's own finger, the prophets, the words of Messiah, and his apostles – we have no choice but to reject Paul's errors.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5

If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. **Yah your Elohim is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. It is Yah your Elohim you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against Yah your Elohim, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way Yah your Elohim commanded you to follow.** You must purge the evil from among you.

Remember Messiah's own words –

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.** For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:17-20

A note on names –

The New International Version was chosen for this study because it is readily available, extremely popular, and easy to read. It suffers a couple of major deficiencies, as do most English translations. First – use of the title “the LORD” in place of Yah’s name.

In the preface to the NIV, the authors state:

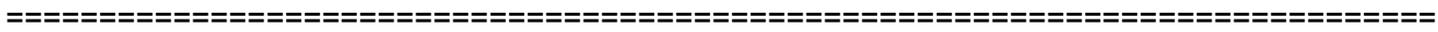
“In regard to the divine name YHWH, commonly referred to as the Tetragrammatron, the translators adopted the device used in most English versions of rendering that name as “LORD” in capital letters to distinguish it from Adonai, another Hebrew word rendered “Lord”, for which small letters are used. Wherever the two names stand together in the Old Testament as a compound name of God, they are rendered “Sovereign LORD”.

When translating, names should be transliterated (spelled in the target language with letters that recreate the sound of the name in the original language). While debate continues regarding the correct pronunciation of "YHWH", I can assure you that it sounds nothing like "the LORD". And "the LORD" is not a translation of YHWH, either. YHWH means "I AM". "the LORD" is a translation of a substitution ('Adonai'). This error has been corrected in this study by using the name Yah, as it appears in Psalm 68:4, in those places where "the LORD" was substituted by the editors of the NIV. "Lord" remains in the text where it is used as a title.

¹The NIV uses "Jesus" for the name of our Messiah. His Hebrew name was Yahusha, precisely the same as that of "Joshua", son of Nun, who led Israel across the Jordan River and into the promised land. "Jesus" is at best a poor transliteration; as there was no "J" sound in Hebrew, Latin, or Greek. The first known appearance of this spelling was the third (1629 AD) revision of the King James Bible. For this reason, Messiah's name appears as 'Yahusha' throughout scripture quoted in this study.

²Similarly, 'God' has been restored to the Hebrew title Elohim, in passages from both the New and Old testaments.

³The Hebrew term 'Messiah' (meaning anointed) is also used in place of the Greek term 'Christ' (meaning drugged).



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Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14

**Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear Elohim and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind.
For Elohim will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.**