

Queen Jezebel and the Quest for Qabalah – Part 2

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Shabbat Shalom Family,

This week we are going to have the second part of last week's article on Qabala.

Queen Jezebel and the Quest for Qabalah

by Stephen P. Dehnke

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(NOTE: In the prior article, "The Quest for Qabalah: Uncovering the Intents of the Heart," we learned of the author's discovery of the dark secret that a Torah-observant friend had kept hidden. Following the friend's sudden death, his collection of a vast number of occultic objects was found in his home, showing that he had engaged in esoteric practices prohibited by the Bible. Evidently, his occultic practices were an extension of his deep interest in Jewish mysticism, known as the Qabalah — otherwise spelled "Kabbalah" or by numerous other variations of the Hebrew term qoph-beth-lameth-hey. Whereas in that article, the author sought to determine the nature of this mysticism, here the connection between Qabalism and the spirit of Queen Jezebel is explored.)

A warning is given in Rev. 2:20-24 over willfully allowing "that woman Jezebel" to seduce the saints go into idolatry. When we compare what is said here to the antics of this notorious harlot queen of the northern kingdom of Israel in the books of 1st and 2nd Kings, we see an evil force at work designed to destroy the faith of YHWH's people.

Who is Jezebel and is she singled out for special attention here in this prophetic book? Is her spirit still at work in these times? What must we do to overcome her evil?

Historically, Queen Jezebel, through the acquiescence of her husband, King Ahab, led the northern kingdom of Israelites to forsake the worship of the Elohim (G-d) of their Hebrew forefathers for Ba'al, the Canaanite storm god.

King Jeroboam had already introduced pagan syncretism into the northern tribes when the Israelite kingdom was divided, following the death of King Solomon. Jeroboam reintroduced the worship of the golden calf, establishing national shrines at Bethel and Dan.

A Phoenician princess, Jezebel, was instrumental in leading both the northern and southern kingdoms into full-blown paganism with her devotion to the Canaanite mighty ones Astarte (1) (the evening star goddess later identified with Ishtar, Easter, and Venus) and Ba'al (a common Hebrew term that simply means "lord," "master," "owner," and even "husband.") Ba'al was known to be a rain-making fertility god. Many of the surviving statues of him show him with his arm raised as if using a whip. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, the idol is depicted as the main rival to the one true Elohim, YHWH.

Jezebel symbolizes apostasy among YHWH's people toward false religious practices and paganism. Jezebel hates the worship of YHWH and is intent on destroying it however she can. The Jezebel spirit is the main adversary to the end-time Elijah ministry, which is preparing the world for the advent of the Messiah, just as John the Baptizer did to prepare the Jewish people for the coming of the Messiah, Yah'shua of Nazareth, Mat. 11:14.

Jezebel's legacy lives on. (2) Easton's Bible Dictionary summarized her life with the following description, "Jezebel has stamped her name on history as the representative of all that is designing, crafty, malicious, revengeful, and cruel. She is the first great instigator of persecution against the saints of (Elohim). Guided by no principle, restrained by no fear of either (Elohim) or man, passionate in her attachment to her heathen worship, she spared no pains to maintain idolatry around her in all its splendour." (3) To read her story, peruse 1Kg. 16-21 and 2Kg. 9.

The marriage between King Ahab, son of the dynastic House of Omri, and Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Phoenician coastal city Sidon, created a political and commercial powerhouse. For the northern Israelite kingdom, it helped strengthen it against the growing threats to the east, namely from the Syrians and Assyrians.

According to the Torah, however, this royal wedding never should have occurred. Exd. 34:15-16, and repeated in Jdg. 3:6 and Ezr. 9:12, an Israelite was not to be given in marriage to a foreigner who is not a worshipper of YHWH, lest they lead the people into idolatry. Jezebel led more than just her husband into idolatry, though. She attempted to seduce all of Israel away from the worship of YHWH.

Jezebel is considered "a harlot queen" in that she caused the Israelite kingdoms to fall to idolatry. As part of its fertility rites to ensure agricultural productivity, the Ba'al and Astarte worship was known for its sacred prostitution. This is indicated in Rev. 2:20-25,

"Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all

the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come.” (NKJV).

By “eating things sacrificed to idols,” YHWH’s people have consumed the paganism of the world so that it becomes part of their deep-down essence. By enticing Bible believers into unScriptural practices, the Jezebel spirit seeks to lead them away from YHWH’s presence and turn them over to the control of the enemy, Satan.

When studying the life of Queen Jezebel, one can see immediately that her agenda was to replace the worship of YHWH with that of Ba’al. Standing in her way, though, was the prophet Elijah. We know, of course, from Mal. 4:5 that Elijah will return at the end of the age to herald Yah’shua’s return. Perhaps he also will adopt the role of one of the two witnesses who will oppose the Anti-Messiah’s bid for global dominance.

Interestingly, the contemporary feminist spirit has come to see Jezebel in a radically new light. In one instance, in her book “Jezebel, The Untold Story of the Bible’s Harlot Queen,” (4) author Lesley Hazleton engages in Biblical revisionism of the worst kind. She casts Jezebel as the heroine while Elijah, Elisha, and Jehu are the supposedly evil fundamentalist monotheistic villains.

In Hazleton’s eyes, pagan idolatry, which she refers to as polytheism, is peaceful and tolerant, while the monotheistic worship of YHWH is bloodthirsty, fanatical, male-dominated, and unwilling to permit divergent religious beliefs in its midst. On that last point, I would agree.

She also compares Biblical Yahwism with modern Muslim jihadist fundamentalism: “Behind all the Orientalist fantasies, the real woman called Jezebel was as dedicated to her many gods as Elijah was to his one. She was a powerful, complex woman whose courage and dignity (!) even her fiercest detractors would have no option but to acknowledge. Her fatal flaw was the arrogance that led her to underestimate the dangers posed by the ascent of radical fundamentalism – the same dangers we face in today’s world, with the same disastrous potential.” (5)

Makes me wonder if the book’s author might not have a bad case of the Jezebel spirit herself and felt possessed to defend the harlot queen’s soiled reputation.

And if that’s not sufficiently exasperating, she continues with the following comments: “If Jezebel’s pragmatic pluralism had held sway, it may well have saved the Kingdom of Israel from being swallowed by the Assyrians. It may also have averted the consequent fall of the Kingdom of Judea into exile. But of course if that had been the case, most of the Hebrew bible (note her telling lower case usage here) as we know it would never have been written.”

Of course, if Queen Jezebel had her way, with her progeny sitting on the thrones of both the northern and southern Israelite kingdoms, she probably would have re-united them under the

Ba'al worship and outlawed the worship of YHWH. Jezebel would have begun a matriarchal dynasty with flagrant idolatry at the core of its foundation.

Theoretically, had this occurred, the Israelites, including the Jews, probably would have merged with the Phoenicians and the Canaanites and become a mingled heathen people. Think how much different history would have turned out. There would be no Bible and no Jewish legacy. There would be no Judeo-Christian culture. Life today would be far, far different — and much, much worse. The freedoms we enjoy today in the West are derived primarily from the Word of YHWH.

As we have seen, Jezebel has her defenders, just as Practical Qabalism has its defenders too. While there can be no doubt that from the Bible's perspective, Jezebel is a symbol of the recurring apostasy that has occurred among YHWH's people. Although Queen Jezebel lived and died nearly 3,000 years ago, her evil spirit still exerts an influence on our lives today, perhaps more than we realize.

The Jezebel spirit is the force behind the current preoccupation with occultism. One author summarized its influence as follows:

“She is the power behind the rebirth of witchcraft in our culture. She calls to millions of teenagers via popular music and movies, telling them that new age witchcraft will give them power. She is the force behind the psychic hotlines, which control and manipulate millions.” (6)

Undoubtedly, the Jezebel spirit is behind much of the fascination with the Qabalah too.

PRACTICAL QABALAH: QABALAH AS PRACTICED

In trying to understand how my departed Torah-observant friend had succumbed to the practice of witchcraft, I also began to wonder how it is that pagan practices became part of the Jewish Qabalistic “received tradition.” After all, weren't the Jews selected to be a set-apart people and a light unto the nations (Gentiles), Isa. 49:6; Acts 13:47?

Many of us left the Church after discovering the pagan infiltration into Christian beliefs and practices. Some looked to Judaism for guidance, thinking that it had remained mostly true to the heritage given in the Hebrew Scriptures. Nevertheless, as many of us explored our Hebraic Roots, we eventually observed that Judaism has many of the same types of problems as in the Church, sometimes even worse, as in Jer. 3:6-11.

My conclusion from my research is that the occultic practices were allowed to creep in as Jewish Qabalah adherents ventured farther and farther away from following the written Word. The farther they distanced themselves from the written commandments forbidding such practices, the more they found reasons to rationalize pagan, occultic, and magical practices.

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” Isa. 5:20.

Already, the notion had been established in the Talmud, the written-down codified Oral Tradition of the Pharisees, that rabbinic tradition takes precedence over the Written Word. So,

in their errant reasoning, some observant Jews were led to believe that even though the Torah plainly forbids occultic practices, it does not really mean what it says. Regrettably, this faulty thinking has gripped some who have come to use the PaRDeS system of Bible interpretation.

Likewise, the more my friend studied Qabalah, the more he exposed himself to arguments that ran counter to plain statements in the Scriptures. If he was encouraged by certain teachers or rabbis within the Hebraic Roots movement to proceed further into Qabalistic study, he may have felt he had the permission he needed to cross the line into the occult. Surely, he may have thought, these persons have more knowledge than him on the subject and were qualified to advise him in these areas. Sadly, it seems he allowed a Jezebel spirit to deceive him.

Somehow, it was like Satan's temptation of Eve in Gen. 3 was played over again. Instead of the serpent promising "You shall be like Elohim," the bait was set out with a slight difference: "You shall have supernatural powers like elohim." This is the lure of the occult: to have supernatural knowledge and abilities like a god or goddess.

As Jehu said to Jezebel's son King Joram in 2Kg. 9:22, "How can there be peace as long as the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother, Jezebel, are all around us?" (NLT).

We see that Jezebel not only calls herself a prophetess in Rev. 2:20, but that she also is an idolater and witch. She wishes to draw believers into the "depths of Satan," Rev. 2:24, apparently into esoteric doctrines and away from the Scriptures. Thus, it is evident that she uses religion to mislead and control others. As long as the spirit of Jezebel continues to cause spiritual havoc, there can be no peace among the body of believers.

Jezebel is a deceiver and seductress. This is evident in her final hour as she attempted to put on her best face, so to say. "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her eyes, and attired her head, and looked out at the window." 2Kg. 9:30.

Although author Lesley Hazleton maintains that Jezebel wished to go to her death with her regal dignity intact, she also presents archaeological information that suggests that the queen intended to resemble Astarte, as depicted in Phoenician artwork found in the northern kingdom's palace at Samaria, when she looked through the window at Jehu. Perhaps she intended to save her own life by deceiving Jehu into thinking that he was going up against a goddess endowed with supernatural powers.

Possibly, Queen Jezebel even felt she was invincible. After putting the mighty prophet Elijah to flight, perhaps she saw herself as the ultimate winner in the contest on Mt. Carmel between YHWH and Ba'al, 1Kg. 18.

Driven by his zeal for YHWH, Jehu gave no heed to her enticement or to her apparent attempt to look like a goddess. (7) Calling on others to stand behind him, two or three eunuchs – people also immune to her seductions – put an end to her evil and cast her down to her death. Likewise, when believers can resist the temptations put forth by this spirit, they have the ability to bring down this demonic stronghold.

In essence, Jezebel is a witchcraft practitioner who also calls herself a prophetess. Thus, we see that she combines religion with occultism, as do many Qabalists. In her pride, she refuses to repent of her evil deeds, Rev. 2:21.

Those who are cast into bed with her commit spiritual fornication by embracing her pagan and occultic practices. YHWH will bring these works into judgment. Those who do not repent of “her works” will face tribulation and see the death of their children, Rev. 2:20-23. Whether the passage speaks symbolically here, we do not know for sure. In any event, we do know, however, that will go badly for those under her control.

In the Apostles’ ministries, it would seem that a Jezebel spirit also controlled the sorcerer Simon Magus, (8) who sought to buy the Holy Spirit as a means to impress others with his supernatural abilities. In response, Simon Peter sharply rebuked him, telling him “For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” Acts 8:23.

So too are those who fall victim to the Jezebel spirit: deep down they may have a hateful, nasty attitude and are enslaved to sin. Employing the kind of guile and trickery as Jezebel used to have righteous Naboth falsely accused and murdered for his vineyard, 1Kg. 21, those exhibiting this spirit are relentless in their pursuits. By the threats breathed against Elijah, 1Kg. 19:2, they are filled with contempt for YHWH’s servants whom they are unable to control and dominate.

“By their fruits, ye shall know them.” Yah’shua said in Mat. 7:16a.

Knowing that the Scriptures warn against false brethren, beware of whom you associate with, Mic. 7:5; 2Co. 11:26; Gal. 2:4. Even Yah’shua acknowledged that there was a devil among His disciples — Judas, the traitor, John 6:70. As indicated in Rom. 1:28-32, when a believer turns from YHWH’s commandments and gives himself over to the Devil, whether by dabbling with the occult, rebellion, persistent sin, or through evil companionships, a turn for the worse will occur in that person’s character.

When believers delve into the demonic realm, they show signs of ‘turning to the dark side,’ so to say, and become like their “father,” the Devil, John 8:44. Like Jezebel, they may become accusatory, adversarial, conniving, liars, and slanderers. Within their hearts is a blood thirst for revenge and even murder. Driven by their determination to always get their way, they may resort to character assassination to take out anyone who opposes them. Possessed with the spirit of anti-Messiah, they stand against Yah’shua and His assembly of believers. From within, they endeavour to undermine it, using prevarications and recriminations as their weapons of choice.

“But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of (Elohim); holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power therefore. From these also turn away. For of these are

they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." 1Ti. 3:1-7.

Does this description remind you of anyone you know? Paul prophesied that these characteristics would be prevalent at the end of the age.

So, why would my friend accept a deck of Tarot cards from a "fellow believer" and engage in spell casting and candle magic when the Scriptures plainly tell us otherwise: "prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil." 1Th. 5:21-22? It would seem that he allowed "that woman Jezebel" not only to deceive him, but also to bewitch him.

The Torah speaks clearly on the subject in Deu. 18:10-12, "There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiseth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto YHWH: and because of these abominations YHWH thy Elohim doth drive them out from before thee."

Aside from the reference to passing sons and daughters through the fire, as done in the worship of Molech, some would say this passage accurately describes practices found within Practical Qabalah – and also within classic witchcraft for that matter. Note how the passage describes those who do these things are an "abomination unto YHWH." It seems He doesn't even want to have to look at such people before Him.

The book of Hebrews sternly warns those who backslide into sinning willfully after having learned Scriptural Truth,

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. A man that hath set at nought Moses law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of (Elohim), and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And again, (YHWH) shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living (Elohim)." Heb. 10:26-31.

In my research, I was astonished to learn that Tarot has a strong correlation to the Qabalah, namely to the concept of the Sefirotic Tree, or Tree of Life. Even the word "Tarot" may have been derived from Hebrew and might even be related to the word "Torah." If so, what a wicked twisting of the Truth that would be.

In Tarot, the 22 trumps of the Major Arcana correspond – as with the pathways in the Sefirotic Tree – to the Hebrew alphabet. The four suits – wands, cups, swords, and pentacles — also correspond to the supposed four worlds. In the Minor Arcana, there are 10 numbers: Ace through 10, as within the numeric suites in a standard deck of playing cards. This corresponds

to the 10 emanations in the Sefirotic Tree, as discussed in the prior article examining Qabalism.

As one Tarot expert noted, though, the correlation between the Tarot and the Sefirotic Tree is thrown off by the placement of the Fool card:

“But what of the Fool, number Zero? Do we place the Fool at the beginning? If we do place him in this position, then all the following numbers become misplaced. The place of the Fool has remained a problem for all those who seek a kind of Tarot orthodoxy.” (9)

Yes, YHWH certainly does have a sense of humor in confounding the wicked!

So, if one accepts the Sefirotic Tree as valid, it follows then that the Tarot system also is valid. Thus, one thing leads to another. Once one gets on the slippery slope of justifying occultism, then it is only a matter of time before that person becomes a full-blown witch – and with no broom in hand to sweep up the spiritual mess that comes with it.

The situation reminds me of 2Pe. 2:20, “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of (the Master) and Saviour (Yah’shua the Messiah), they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first.”

Can any good come from such a belief system so riddled with unBiblical influences? Some people I’ve spoken with on the subject assert that all Qabalism is evil — regardless of how it’s spelled — and that there is nothing good whatsoever about it. They maintained that no good could come from its study and certainly none from its practice.

As for me, my basic position on the Qabalah has remained the same over the years: that the Qabalah should be viewed similarly as other non-canonical writings that may help elucidate a better understanding of the Scriptures. Whereas there may be some important information contained within them, these books are not inspired by the Holy Spirit. Thus, they fail the “absolute truth” test. In that sense, they are not to be taken too seriously.

Among other valuable Biblically related writings are Jewish rabbinic texts including the Talmud, the Apocrypha, Pseudipigrapha, Histories — such as those by Josephus, Eusebius, and Herodotus – and the writings of the Church Fathers. There are numerous Bible study tools available, including commentaries, concordances, dictionaries, lexicons, and exegetical books.

Despite the value of these other writings, there is only one exclusive source of Truth: Sola Scriptura, the Scriptures alone.

Moreover, one’s focus should be on primarily studying the Scriptures, not other writings. They serve to supplement Scriptural understanding but should in no wise draw away our main attention from the primary text necessary for our spiritual edification, the Bible.

Paul warns us about those who would try to derail our Bible-based Faith:

“But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in (Messiah Yah’shua). Every scripture inspired of (Elohim) is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of (Elohim) may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.” 1Ti. 3:13-17.

Once, I recall discarding a Bible commentary after discovering that they were written by liberal scholars espousing Higher Criticism. Coming from that mindset, nothing in the commentary seemed to be of any value. It seemed like it was written simply to discredit what the Bible says. Good riddance!

Not everything in the writings mentioned above would be considered edifying. In some cases, as with my discarded Bible commentary, probably hardly anything might be found to be agreeable. Nevertheless, even in those cases, there might still be something of value in them.

For me, of particular interest in the subjects considered part of the Qabalah is gematria, pronounced with a “j” sound, as in “gem.” “Gematria is a form of biblical interpretation in which each Hebrew letter has a numerical value. The gematria of a Hebrew word is used to show its connection to another word of the same numerical value. This method of interpretation dates as far back as the Talmud.” (12)

Space doesn’t permit going into detail here with several examples. One example, though, that interests me regards the Name of the Messiah and its connection to Biblical gematria. The prevailing view in the Hebraic Roots and Messianic movements is that the correct transliteration for the Messiah’s Name is Yeshua, or Y’shua, both spelled in Hebrew yotheshin-waw-final ayin. The respective gematria numeric equivalents for each letter would be: 10 (yothe) + 300 (shin) + 6 (waw) + 70 (ayin) = 386.

I understand, however, that certain Church Fathers maintained that the actual Name of the Messiah, rendered from Hebrew into Greek as “Iesous,” was the same as Moses’ successor, Joshua. In Num. 13:16, we see where Moses called Hoshea son of Nun by the name Joshua, Strong’s H3091, yothe (10) – hey (5) –waw (6) – shin (300) – final ayin (70). Here the gematria would be 391, reflecting the additional letter hey, missing in “Yeshua.”

While the scribal vowel pointing indicated that the Name is to be pronounced Yehoshua, there is reason to believe the true pronunciation was deliberately obscured. Thus, based on the root word H3467, yasha’, it would seem the actual pronunciation was “Yah’shua” — or possibly without the syncopation of the middle vowel: “Yahushua.” In either case, the gematria would remain the same.

While there does not seem to be any great word correlations to either 386 or 391. However, when 391 is broken down into the sum of individual digits, 3+9+1, the result is 13. With the superstitions surrounding the number 13, some might think that this is an unsuitable number to correspond to the Messiah. In Biblical numerology, 13 is the number of rebellion.

Nevertheless, it might be said that this number actually has certain symbolic applications to Yah'shua. For one, to surrender all and follow Yah'shua is the ultimate form of rebellion against the "god of this world," 2Co. 4:4. Also, Yah'shua paid the price for mankind's rebellion against YHWH by His death of the tree.

Some of the meanings for the number 13 in gematria based just from the book of Genesis include the following two correlations: (13) These suggest that Yah'shua came once and will be coming back a second time. (14)

- "I came," Gen. 48:5
- "shall come," Gen. 49:10

Moreover, the gematria of YHWH is 26, a number that is the double of 13. This correlation suggests the Elohim relationship between the Father and Son. Some Bible commentators have attempted to argue that Yah'shua is not YHWH Elohim. However, gematria would suggest the He indeed is, while also affirming Yah'shua's statement in John 14:28 that "the Father is greater than I."

Of course, the main problem with using gematria is the user's own subjectivity. This is even admitted by the rabbis. One commented "(W)hoever wants can devise (gimatriya interpretation) for good or for evil." Thus, it has been acknowledged that gematria can be twisted into meanings that run counter to the spirit and letter of the Scriptures based on the individual's particular views and biases. (15)

Admittedly, in gematria and perhaps also with some other aspects of the Qabalah, there are some things of interest that may be worthwhile to investigate further. Nevertheless, each teaching must stand on its own merits, specifically as to whether it is in agreement or disagreement with Scripture. In all things, we must be Berean about our Faith, searching the Scriptures to confirm that our beliefs and practices line up with the Word, Acts 17:10-11. (16)

Obviously, anyone who uses gematria or any type of Biblical numerology as a means to engage in divination or fortune telling would be in violation of plain statements in Scripture prohibiting such actions.

Personally, I am content to wait to learn the mysteries of the universe from the Master of the Universe Himself. That way I will know that I am receiving the right stuff. I don't mind waiting. In the meantime, I have more than enough materials to use in studying the Bible that could keep me occupied for several lifetimes.

In my opinion, instead of rushing off into the study of Bible mysticism, the serious Bible student would be better served spending years mastering Hebrew and learning the relationships between words and subtleties of syntax in the original tongue. In this regard, the Jewish people have a huge advantage, many having learned elementary Hebrew at an early age. And if that's not enough to keep one busy, there's always Greek and Aramaic to be learned too. Why are people so quick to want to learn the advanced-level mysteries of the Bible when they have barely grasped the fundamentals of their faith?

Because there seems to be so much in the Qabalah, as received, that is not in harmony with plain Biblical teachings, we must ask ourselves the question: should Bible teachers also currently be teachers of the Qabalah?

The answer may rest in Mat. 18:6, Mark 9:42, and Luke 17:1-2. In the latter passage, Yah'shua makes the following statement,

“And he said unto his disciples, It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble.”

To teach the Qabalah to someone who is insufficiently grounded in the Faith only then to see that person become confused and depart from the Faith would indeed be tragic — for both teacher and student.

Even in Judaism, general restrictions were placed on those who could study the Qabalah. According to tradition, students must first be well-schooled in the Torah (i.e. Talmud), stable, and at least 40 years old. It was also thought that they should be married because of the sexual imagery involved in study of the Zohar. As shown in the movie “Yentl,” based on a short story by Isaac Bashevis Singer, women were not allowed in the past to be taught either Qabalah or Talmud. Much has changed in this regard during the past century.

Within the Hebraic Roots movement, I am sad to say that I have not always observed good fruits and positive spiritual attitudes coming forth from fellow believers who engage in Qabalistic study. In some instances, it seems a persistent spirit of “Wannabe Judaism” has emerged. Several persons, even entire congregations, have ended up denying Yah'shua as their Savior and have gone headlong into converting to rabbinic Judaism. This should come as a great shock to everyone in the Hebraic Roots movement.

Lest I be misunderstood, we can be grateful to the Jewish people for the many treasures they have bestowed on the world — most of all, the Holy Scriptures, Rom. 3:2. However, the same cannot be said regarding Judaism's many rabbinic traditions, several of which are not in agreement with the Scriptures. If this was a major concern for our Messiah, shouldn't it also be a concern for you and me?

Perhaps the greatest personal piece of wisdom I learned in my younger years from a certain Torah teacher was “Never defend error.” I trust all those who read this article would agree.

HILUL HASHEM: PROFANATION OF THE NAME

One of the common elements between Qabalists and many in the Hebraic Roots Movements is a propensity for using the name of the Almighty, YHWH. Both recognize the awesome nature and importance of His Name. With Qabalists, however, they view it as the most

powerful of the names of power. “The Tetragrammaton (YHWH) was held in great awe for its power over all things in the universe, including demons.” (17)

Many realize that the Third Commandment has been wrongly understood throughout the ages. While the King James Version (KJV) stated that we were not to take His name “in vain,” there was some question as to what exactly that entailed. Many people figured maybe it just meant that they weren’t supposed to swear or cuss using certain words that referred to the Almighty inappropriately.

While that is most certainly true, there’s more to it than that. The word “vain” in Hebrew is shav’, Strong’s H7723, and means emptiness, vanity, falsehood, nothingness, and worthlessness. It is derived from H7722, show’, which means to ravage, desolate, ruin, or wreck.

In attempts to protect the Name of YHWH from desecration, Judaism actually reversed the meaning of the commandment to mean that the Name was not to be used whatsoever. Thereafter, the Name was declared “ineffable” – not to be pronounced. The scribes assisted by obscuring the texts so the correct pronunciation could not be readily determined. Substitutes such as “Adonai” (“my Sovereign,” also translated as “my Lord”) and “HaShem” (literally “The Name”) were used in place of YHWH.

Pronunciation of the Name was restricted to being uttered but once a year: only by the High Priest and only on the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur.

Otherwise, it’s usage was strictly forbidden. Those who spoke the Name were liable to be accused of committing what the religious authorities considered the Unpardonable Sin. When Stephen was accused before the Sanhedrin of blasphemy, they may have “stopped their ears” in Acts 7:57 as a response to his pronouncing the Name of YHWH. Immediately afterward, they rendered their verdict and had him taken away to be stoned.

The Hebrew Scriptures indicate repeatedly that YHWH’s people are to call upon His Name, especially in times of trouble. Ruth 2:4 indicates the greeting “May YHWH be with you!” was likely a common saying in those times. Archaeology also has indicated that the Name may have been used commonly as late as around 600 BCE. (18)

At some point, Qabalists realized that there was enormous power in using the Name. Thus, they began to use it in a way that was not Scripturally intended, namely in magic, spells, incantations, and to command angels and demons.

Prayers featuring various permutations of the Name were devised. It would seem that the Qabalists viewed the Name not as something to be treasured and handled with great care and reverence. Instead, it became like a magic key, something that could be misused to unlock doors to the supernatural realm. Whereas the Name may command power over angels and demons, it is not for us to command them to do our self-serving bidding. (19) Sadly, some could not resist misusing the Name for this purpose.

In his examination of the growing fascination for Qabalism, J.K. McKee commented on the methods attempted by Qabalists to communicate with the Almighty:

“True communion with (Elohim) is described as something that is simply unattainable by mankind, and so humans must use esoteric and mystical methods to commune with Him. These include radical reinterpretations of the Scriptures, taking entire portions of the Hebrew Scriptures, perhaps putting pages of the Bible through some kind of numerical chart to determine one’s future, and even using séance-type techniques to communicate with the Higher Power. Certainly, while the study of Jewish mysticism is very complex, when one with a discerning eye looks at some of the practices of them, immediately the Holy Spirit inside the person should be convicting him or her that this is wrong.” (20)

Evidently, the mystics felt their prayers were not being answered so they resorted to more mystical means of communication.

With the growing interest in the Hebraic Roots movement in restoring the Name of YHWH to its rightful usage, there may be some who are drawn to using the Name for magical purposes. Hopefully, they will seriously contemplate their motives before ever engaging in such actions.

Misusing the Almighty’s Name for personal self-aggrandizement is tantamount to inviting a dreadful curse upon one’s self. Just as Elisha’s servant Gehazi was struck with leprosy when he used pretence to take something from Naaman that was not intended for him, 2Kg. 5:21-27, so too we can expect to invite repercussions upon ourselves if we misuse YHWH’s Name for our own selfish vanity.

Yah’shua told us that our Heavenly Father cares dearly for us. If we are in need of something, we should humbly ask in the Messiah’s Name for provision from On High. Too often, though, people ask selfishly, desiring to indulge themselves in personal pleasures. They then find that their prayers go unanswered, James 4:1-10.

During his reign as king over Israel, Saul departed from righteousness. In so doing, he cut himself off from our Heavenly Father’s favor. Instead of humbling himself, he became set in his wayward ways. YHWH could no longer work with him. David, a man after His own heart, was chosen to replace him as king. Acting as YHWH’s messenger, the prophet Samuel relayed to Saul YHWH’s verdict:

“And Samuel said, Hath YHWH as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of YHWH? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of YHWH, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” 1Sa. 15:22-23

“YHWH is far from the wicked; but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.” Prv. 15:29.

We can conclude conversely from this verse that the prayers of the wicked are not answered as are the prayers of the righteous. Because the wicked have turned away from YHWH’s

righteous way of living, He in turn has rejected them. So, they look to other means TO RECEIVE – the meaning of “Qabalah” — communication from the supernatural realm.

In Saul’s obsession, he consulted the witch of En-Dor in a desperate attempt to contact Samuel for some crucial advice before proceeding into battle. The results were disastrous: he died on the battlefield hours later. Afterward, his body was hung on display by his enemies as they reveled in victory.

Like Saul, people who see their prayers go unanswered turn to the occult for guidance instead of humbling themselves before the Almighty. Because of their unrepentant sinful state, the Scriptures no longer provide the guidance they seek. So, they turn to demons to give them the illusion that they have supernatural powers.

By turning to witchcraft, however, they have signaled their rebellion against YHWH’s throne. Through their actions, they have openly declared their allegiance to Satan. Henceforth, unless they repent, they will be counted among the enemies of the Most High.

ATTEMPTS TO ‘JUSTIFY’ PRACTICAL QABALAH WITH THE TORAH

There was a time not so long ago when good church-going folks knew instinctively not to get involved with things that seemed occultic. Perhaps it was a spirit of discernment that warned them, or possibly it was just an understanding from the Second Commandment that one was not to engage in anything spiritual that was not of the Almighty, even if no graven images were involved.

As the Judeo-Christian foundations of the West continue to crumble, those days are becoming ever farther distant from us. Regrettably, it seems that spiritual discipline and discernment has been clouded over in these times as the “do your own thing” mindset gains greater currency. (21) As people are leaving churches and embracing new spiritual affiliations, they are opening themselves to new beliefs and practices, and also, not surprisingly, new religious traditions.

Sadly, my departed friend was one of those people who ventured down the dark road into Practical Qabalah — essentially into witchcraft. Being a professed Torah keeper, how did he justify reading Tarot cards, casting spells, performing candle magic, and the other occultic stuff he was doing?

Good question.

Tarot card reading is typically presumed to be a form of fortune telling, or soothsaying. But defenders would say that Tarot is used primarily as a means to bring clarity to situations. Regardless of whether that may be its intended purpose, reading Tarot cards is still a form of divination, which involves inquiring into the supernatural realm. Divination literally means to be “inspired by a god.” (22)

How do purported Bible believers inclined toward witchcraft justify divination? Sadly, they twist the Torah to make it say what they wish it to mean. (23)

To begin with, the occultist may point to Gen. 44:15. While confronting his brothers in Egypt, Joseph claimed to have the ability of divination: “And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? Know ye not that such a man as I can indeed divine?”

In this passage, Joseph had not yet made his identity known to his brothers. He may have been stretching the truth in this instance as part of his overall ruse to test them to see whether they had changed since he had last seen them. Whereas he had the gift of prophetic dreams and the ability to interpret the dreams of others, there is no indication in the text that he actually used divination. Nevertheless, it seems he wished to impress upon his brothers that he commanded supernatural abilities, something they rejected earlier with his ability to have prophetic dreams concerning their family.

While Joseph may have set an example of righteousness throughout his life, there can be no doubt that the “evil reports” he brought to his father against his brothers did not help bring peace to an already dysfunctional family. Whereas he surely did not deserve to be sold into Egyptian slavery by his brothers, yet perhaps there is more he could have done previously to establish peace between him and them.

Another example from the Torah that may be used in attempts to justify occultic practices is that of Balaam, the foreigner who claimed to be a prophet of YHWH, who was called upon in Num. 22-24 by Balak, king of Moab, to pronounce a curse upon the Israelites. In his desire for collecting “the rewards of divination,” Balaam apparently revealed the Israelites’ weakness for “perverseness” in his prophetic statement in Num. 23:21.

The word “perverse,” however is also used to describe Balaam’s character. In the part of the story after Balaam’s donkey warns him of the death angel who is poised to slay him, we see that the angel tells him “behold, I am come forth for an adversary, because thy way is perverse before me.” Num. 23:32b.

As Jezebel is the undisputed baddest of the ‘bad girls’ of the Bible, Balaam ranks among its most notorious fallen prophets. In 2Pe. 2:16, Balaam is likened to a madman. He accepted Balak’s offer to reward him if he would just curse what YHWH had blessed. Where was his fear of the Most High? It seems he figured that somehow he could still score a big fat paycheck if he would do his prophetic-utterances-thing long enough to say something that Balak would like. Was he so blinded by greed that he really thought he could go up against El Shaddai, the Almighty and win?

Sure enough, using the information provided by Balaam, Balak directed the Moabite women to entice the Israelites into a sexually explicit type of idolatry at Ba’al Peor. As a result, 24,000 Israelites died from the plague that swept through the camp.

Following the mention of Balaam in the Torah, Balaam is specifically named eight times later in the Scriptures. Three times he is mentioned in the NT, each time he is cited as an example of wickedness: 2Pe. 2:15; Jude 1:11; Rev. 2:14. (24)

While Balaam may have had the ability to engage in divination, he certainly is not held up as a righteous example for our emulation. In Num. 31:8, his death comes at the hands of the Israelites in battle as he fought alongside the Midianites.

While Balak sought to hire him to curse YHWH's people, in the end he seemed to have cursed himself and paid for his evil deed with his life.

Qabalists, as with the practitioners of Satanism, black magic, and voodoo, also have been known to speak vindictive curses on their enemies. Shrouded in secrecy, Qabalists at various times have reportedly pronounced on their perceived enemies a *Pulsa diNura* curse, an Aramaic word meaning "lashes of fire."

In so doing, they ask the angels of destruction to inflict the curses found in the Bible upon the "sinner" to be cursed. The intention of the curse is to bring about the person's death and damnation. Perhaps not surprisingly, a *Pulsa diNura* appears in the Zohar and also is mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud. (25)

Among those who reportedly have had this curse placed on them was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the linguist primarily responsible for restoring the Hebrew language in the modern state of Israel. Evidently, in his efforts, he offended certain religious Jews, who targeted him with a curse, much like the Jesuits did with their damning "Bell, Book, and Candle" pronouncements against Protestant dissidents branded as "heretics" during the Inquisition.

Other targeted persons include Israeli prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin, before his assassination in 1995, and Ariel Sharon, before he lapsed into a lengthy coma in 2006. It is utterly despicable for supposedly Torah-observant people to resort to such witchcraft.

Sadly, there are certain ultra-Orthodox Jews who feel it is their religious duty to stand against the modern state of Israel and its leaders. However, if the Most High considers Israel, the daughter of Zion, to be "the apple of his eye," then those who oppose it surely stand on dangerous ground. Going against Israel at the end of the age will be like going against Almighty YHWH Himself!

"For thus saith YHWH of hosts: After glory hath he sent me unto the nations which plundered you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For, behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall be a spoil to those that served them; and ye shall know that YHWH of hosts hath sent me," Zec. 2:8-9.

As in the story of Balaam, YHWH forbade him to curse those He has not cursed. To do so would be to bring a curse upon one's self, as per Gen. 12:3. (26) Those who engage in such actions risk provoking the Almighty's retaliation against them.

What did Yah'shua say on the subject? "But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." Luke 6:27-28.

Paul repeats the thought in Rom. 12:14, "Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not."

It is not easy to show such kindness to those who are spiteful, sarcastic, and verbally abusive, whose mouths spew forth venomous remarks, whose tongues are quick to slander and defame, denigrate and disparage. Nevertheless, this is exactly what is required of us. We are to turn the other cheek. Perhaps through our sufferings they will repent of their malicious words and deeds and undo the hurtful damage of their hate speech.

While on the subject of curses, let us not forget the death curse Jezebel pronounced upon Elijah in 1Kg. 19:2, causing him to flee for his life. Evidently, he expected that she would stand down and concede defeat after hearing the outcome of Elijah's contest on Mt. Carmel against the priests of Ba'al. Nothing of the sort! Instead, she only came to despise him with all the more fervor. Despite the evidence at Mt. Carmel that YHWH, not Ba'al, was the true Mighty One, she went into denial mode and remained relentless in her desire to eradicate the Yahwistic worship. Both Jezebel and Balaam are cited as spiritual antagonists in the letters to the seven assemblies in Rev. 2-3, thus sealing their evil reputations for all time.

In the end, it is Elijah's curse against Jezebel in 1Kg. 21:23 that is fulfilled. As Elijah prophesied, most of her body was eaten by dogs, 2 Kg. 9:36-37.

It seems that even Jezebel's name was prophetic. Various definitions have been proposed, such as "virgin to the lord," "chaste," "modest," or "without cohabitation" based on the apparent original form, Itha-Ba'al (Isha-Ba'al?). Evidently, a Hebrew wordplay was used in which the name was changed in the Bible to I-zevel, or "woman of dung." (27)

The irony did not escape even an ardent admirer: "Jezebel has been submitted to abjection not once but three times: she has been thrown to the dogs, then eaten by them, then execrated by them. The degradation has finally reached its limited...Now the dogs' dung will dry in the sun, to be eroded by the wind into dust, invisible to the human eye. There will be nothing left of Jezebel – no tomb, no monument, no shrine. In the minds of the biblical authors, the gods she represents have been overthrown and trampled, devoured and ejected, to be erased from human memory."

A most fitting end, I say, to an unrepentant murderous villain!

"Rise up, O YHWH, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee." Num. 10:35b.

Some have drawn symbolic comparisons between the harlot queen, Jezebel, and the harlot who rides the beast, Rev. 17. Protestant commentators have long been fond of saying the harlot points to the Roman Catholic Church. Certain similarities are evident between Jezebel and the harlot. This suggests that there also is a connection between the Jezebel spirit and the Anti-Messiah spirit, both of which intend to stamp out the worship of YHWH and His people. For the two to work together, along with the False Prophet of Rev. 16:13, 19:20, spell terrible times of persecution ahead for believers.

A SCRYING SHAME!

Another occultic art favored by Qabalah practitioners is scrying: that is, gazing at crystals or other similar objects as a means of divination or fortune telling. It would seem that some might justify this practice with the Urim and Thummim used by the Levitical High Priest for receiving directions from On High in matters of great importance.

Urim means “lights.” The Urim were connected with the breastplate worn by the High Priest. The Scriptures do not provide the details, but somehow the Urim gave answers or revelations to the questions submitted to it.

Thummim means “perfections.” Thus, by combining the words, Urim and Thummim, it would suggest that a perfect solution to the problem posed could be expected when they were used.

Lest anyone be mistaken, the Urim and Thummim was not some Magic Eightball type of toy, where one could get answers to trivial concerns, like whether rain was expected later in the week, or whether a job promotion was forthcoming, or the highly unlikely prospect of whether the Chicago Cubs would finally win the World Series this year. The High Priest was essentially handling the Light of Truth. Only he was allowed to consult it. It was imperative that before doing so that he was in an absolutely purified state. Anything less might court disaster – as when Nadab and Abihu offered “strange fire” in the Tabernacle unto YHWH, Lev. 10:1.

And disaster is what people, especially professed Bible believers, are inviting upon themselves when they engage in these esoteric Qabalistic, New Age, and occultic practices — especially when they should know better.

And don't think for a moment that the interest in the Qabalah is just a “Jewish thing.” There is also a centuries-old mystical system known as Christian Qabalah (usually spelled “Cabala” to differentiate it from other Qabalistic systems). Lately, there has been a resurgence of interest among churches in esotericism. Emergent theology, New Age ideology, and practices such as yoga and eastern meditation also are making a profound impact. Not being grounded in the Torah, many churches are vulnerable to this onslaught of occultism. Some Christians may even think that they are covered by grace to venture into these forbidden realms and dabble as they please.

Of course, Christianity has its supernatural deceptions as well. There are those who have received a counterfeit Holy Spirit and seek to impress others with their supposed ability to perform healings and miracles. Some claim that they have a special connection to the Almighty that others don't have. They attempt to corroborate this assertion by speaking in unknown languages. They may also claim to have received a word from the Most High to share with others. What may really be happening, though, is that Satan has created a deception from the demonic realm to counterfeit the Holy Spirit, 2Co. 11:14-15. (29)

If those persons truly have been given these gifts, then it follows that the fruits of the Holy Spirit are also abundant in their lives.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of (Messiah Yah'shua)

have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.” Gal. 5:22-25.

Of course, if these fruits aren’t evident, then it would seem that they have received a counterfeit Ruakh HaQodesh and perhaps should even be shunned for their falsehood.

The list of Qabalistic occultic practices hardly ends at those ones mentioned above. Among the other practices and paraphernalia linked to Practical Qabalah are astrology, amulets, incantations, spell casting, red string bracelets, (30) evil eye talismans and jewelry, and using names of power to command angels. Qabalistic magic was said to even be used to create life, as in the legendary tales of golems, monstrous Frankenstein-like creatures made supernaturally from mud to serve a specific purpose, good or bad.

So, this is what one can expect if he or she were to practice Practical Qabalah. Pretty wicked stuff, wouldn’t you say?

Nevertheless, for some people, they simply must have their idols and bow down to them too. Essentially, this is the history of the Israelite people: a history of recurring idolatry, of adopting the pagan practices of the nations around them and making those practices their own. Is there anything new under the sun?

ILLUMINATED WITH DARKNESS

As with other occultic practices, emphasis in Qabalistic practices is accorded the use of candles, evidently to symbolize divine illumination. While I’m personally not opposed to candlelight dinners and emergency candles for when the electricity goes out, using candles ceremonially is another matter. Some research on the subject will show that candles are used for a plethora of ceremonial purposes among pagan and occultic religious systems but not in the Biblical worship of YHWH. (31)

While some Bible translations use the word “candlestick” to describe the construction of the seven-branched oil-burning candelabrum commanded in Exd. 25, the word in Hebrew is menorah, H4500, and refers to the word nir, Strong’s H5216, which means “lamp” or “light.” In Biblical times in the Holy Land, oil lamps, not candles, commonly were used.

With this new understanding came the realization that it would be best not to use candles for my weekly in-home ceremonies to welcome the Shabbat, Kabbalat Shabbat (“Reception of the Sabbath”), and to mark the end of the Shabbat day, Havdalah. For the blessing of the lights, I now use oil lamps. The light symbolizes the Written Word, Psa. 119:105, which is to be our daily guide through life.

Of course, critics may say that I’m accommodating tradition by holding these Shabbat beginning-and-ending ceremonies. It is true that nowhere do the Scriptures command such ceremonies. Nevertheless, they are held in observance of the commandment to keep the Shabbat holy, or set apart, Exd. 20:8; Deu. 5:12. Thus, they complement the commandments without violating them, as required to be a beneficent tradition.

Paul speaks of such customs in 1Co. 11:2; 2Th. 2:15, 3:6. Obviously, he was referring to customs kept in accordance with the Hebrew Scriptures (TaNaK, or the OT). Those other traditions, the ones kept in accordance with Jewish Oral Law and not in agreement with the Written Word, are mentioned in Col. 2:8,

“Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after (Messiah).”

Additionally, from my research for this article, I no longer speak the L’cha Dodi (Come, My Beloved) pronouncement during my weekly Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony at home to begin the 24-hour Shabbat period. To my dismay, I discovered it had an underlying Qabalistic meaning in its use to welcome in the Queen of the Week, a Qabalistic allusion to the Shekhinah Presence. In Biblical allegory, though, the bride is not the Shekhinah, it’s the assembly of believers. So, this was another conflicted tradition that had to be rejected.

Purging out the hidden leaven is a year-around process, not just something done for Passover.

Candle visualization also is something to be wary of it. Different colored candles are used in witchcraft to wish for something specific, such as love, romance, health, happiness, purity, popularity, financial success, etc. As with the teachings promoted in the popular book and DVD “The Secret,” the key is to focus on the candle flame and mentally visualize the object of desire. When the candle flickers out, the request is delivered and the cosmos sets in motion a way to bring about that wish.

Many people who celebrate birthdays by blowing out candles on a birthday cake are unknowingly engaging a rudimentary form of candle magic. Little children are told to make a wish, visualize it (kavanah), and then if they blow out all the candles at once, their wish will come true. Seems harmless, doesn’t it? But then when Job’s children – who should have known better – were having a festive birthday celebration, destruction came upon them unawares, Job. 1:4-5, 13, 18-19.

DESTRUCTION

As it turns out, this article is being written during the week of Tisha b’Av, the ninth day of the month Av. This is the annual day when the Jewish people commemorate the destructions of the two Jerusalem Temples, both of which occurred during the same month and day, with fasting and solemnity.

The Bible records the destruction of the first Temple, the Temple built by King Solomon. YHWH allowed its destruction by the Babylonians of His people’s recurring idolatry. It seems the Jezebel spirit persisted on well after her death.

The second Temple was remodeled by Herod the Great during Yah’shua’s lifetime. While the Jewish people had put away their graven images, they embraced a new idol: rabbinic traditions, several of which contradict the Written Word. Yah’shua pointed this out to the

Pharisees repeatedly, with statements such as found in Mat. 15:3, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of Elohim because of your tradition?”

As we have seen, the teachings of the Qabalah, the mystical “received tradition,” along with the tradition of the Oral Law, later codified as the Talmud, were both in circulation during Yah’shua’s lifetime, prior to the Second Temple’s destruction.

Unwilling to give up their traditions, many of His own people rejected Yah’shua’s message. Whereas there are certain anti-Semites, many of them probably professing Christians who falsely believe that the Almighty allowed the Romans to destroy Herod’s Temple 40 years later, in 70 CE, as retribution against the Jews for supposedly being “Christ killers.”

From a Jewish perspective, the Second Temple was destroyed because of divisions and unwarranted hatred among Jews against one another. Perhaps the Jews would have prevailed in their struggle against the Romans had the people embraced Yah’shua’s Torah message to love YHWH and to love His neighbor as the two greatest commandments to be followed, Mat. 22:35-40. “On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.” (v. 40).

As symbolized by the two tables of stone Moses received, Yah’shua summarized the entirety of the Hebrew Scripture with two simple commandments, both united under the theme of projecting love from deep inside one’s self outward toward Elohim and toward one’s neighbor.

From a Nazarene perspective, the destruction of the Second Temple was a fulfillment of the warning in Deu. 18:18-19 for not heeding the message of “the prophet,”

“I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

That particular prophet, the prophet likened unto Moses, was none other than Yah’shua the Messiah. Most of his countrymen, it seems, chose not to hearken and obey. As a result, destruction came upon them 40 years later, the Biblical number of probation.

By their traditions, the people added to the Torah, which is expressly forbidden in Deu. 4:2. In so doing, they had broken the first great commandment. By the way they treated one another, they had violated the second. “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments;” — this is a recurring theme throughout the Bible, Exd. 20:6; Deu. 5:10, 11:13-28; Neh. 1:9; Prv. 4:4; John 8:42, 14:15, 15:10.

Sadly, though, YHWH’s love for His future bride often goes unrequited.

AFTERMATH: THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

This article is not intended to accuse and condemn certain believers for the direction away from the Torah they have gone. My purpose is to call those who have departed from the Way to forgiveness, to realize their error, and to repent of it before it is too late.

In a commentary I did earlier this year on an encyclopedia article on magic and witchcraft during Biblical times, I was surprised afterward with the apparent lack of interest among those who received it. It was almost as if many were unconcerned about the inroads that these foreign, unBiblical practices have made into the Hebraic Roots movement.

Recently, for the local Independence Day celebration in nearby Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a street festival was held downtown along the banks of the Susquehanna River. Several stages were set up for musical bands. There were carnival rides, vendors selling their wares, food stands, and the usual festive activities.

A headline in the newspaper's weekly entertainment guide previewing the event caught my attention: "Festival of India, A celebration of culture." (32) The listing reported the following:

"...(T)he second Festival of India will offer up to 1,500 free meals on a first-come, first-served basis as well as information about India's spiritual and cultural heritage. People can learn yoga and about Hinduism or try on traditional Indian clothing."

The event was sponsored by a certain institute. It was set to begin with a traditional Chariot Parade, or Rath Yatra.

A Web site address was provided for further information. When I looked it up, my initial suspicions were confirmed. This institute's objective was to teach "Krishna Consciousness." In other words, it was part of the Hare Krishna outreach. I encountered one of these types of events several years ago in Philadelphia while visiting a museum there. From the newspaper description, it sounded like a virtual duplicate of the event I witnessed.

One might think there would be some public outcry over a notorious cult setting up shop right alongside a festival area. Well, if there was any outcry from the public or from local churches, I surely didn't hear any. I imagine the 1,500 first-come, first-served meal patrons were only too happy to get themselves a free lunch.

Personally, I'm very fond of Indian cuisine, but I wasn't about to partake of food that more than likely was dedicated to idols, as we are warned against in Rev. 2:20. Yuk!

One of the newspaper articles shared the following information from one of the persons in charge of the food's preparation:

"'We will cook the food in a temple in Philadelphia and transport it to Harrisburg.' Much like kosher cooking, the manner in which the food is prepared is vitally important.

"'[The food] is prepared in a clean atmosphere, and those who cook it take part in a mental and physical cleansing beforehand,' (the spokesman) said. "As it is prepared, the mood is very reverent. We view it as gift to the people and to God; it is made with love.'

"'This tradition of mindful eating is called prasadam, which translated means "The Lord's Mercy" and is defined as food prepared with pure consciousness and ingredients as an act of reverence and offered with love to God.'"

Food prepared as a gift to god? Hmm... (No, not Mmmm!).

Here we see the importance of calling the Almighty by His Name YHWH and not by the title Ba'al, meaning Lord. "And it hath come to pass, in that day, An affirmation of YHWH, Thou dost call Me — My husband, And dost not call Me any more — My lord (ba'ali). And I have turned aside the names of the lords from her mouth, And they are not remembered any more by their name." Hos. 2:16, Young's Literal Translation (YNG). (33)

Anyway, I cited this event because of the way in which it was promoted: like another entertainment event, only with a free exotic meal thrown in. As far as I know, there was no outcry from the local churches. If anything, the local community seems only too quick to be supportive of such events since it shows recognition for an ethnic culture.

This is not to say we should as a rule be shunning cultural events. In this case, though, it seems to me that the event was more about deceptive religious proselytization than it was about promoting culture.

Nevertheless, is this event much different than what Bible believers are currently facing? This is an example of why we must be vigilant against the Jezebel spirit and not allow ourselves to be cast into a bed with her. (34) Committing fornication with her is symbolic for engaging in her sins, which YHWH looks upon with disgust, Rev. 2:20-25.

When the Jezebel spirit seduces us with new teachings and ways of practicing our faith, what do we do? As Paul observed in Berea, "they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." Acts 17:11b.

We should hold up every new teaching to the light of the Scriptures, as did the Bereans. Or do we let the "deep teachings" tickle our ears, so that we seek out even more with which to indulge ourselves while ignoring the fundamental lessons essential to our spiritual growth?

J. K. McKee writes: "If there is any lesson to be learned by the present infestation of mystical ideas in the Messianic movement, it is that we must reexamine ourselves to make sure that we have the proper motivations for being where we are today. Are we truly here so that we can become more Messiah-like, and grow and mature in our faith?" (35)

There's a popular saying, "People believe what they want to believe." Among Bible believers, I would hope the prevailing saying is "Be Berean" when it comes to putting our faith to the test. This is especially true in matters involving philosophy, mysticism, esotericism, and the occult. The Devil is using every trick in the book to wage war against us and then devour us. If he can cloak mysticism under the mantle of truth to overthrow us, he surely will.

Take heed that you be not deceived.

ENDNOTES

- (1) "Jezebel, The Untold Story of the Bible's Harlot Queen," by Lesley Hazleton. Doubleday, 2007. The book's author maintains that Jezebel also was an ardent worshiper

of Astarte, Ba'al's consort and may have even deliberately attempted to make herself look like Astarte according to images of the Canaanite goddess.

- (2) More about the acrimonious nature of the Jezebel spirit can be found in my article "Hatred among Brethren," proclaimliberty.info. Much of the material presented is cited from two of Bree

Keyton's books on spiritual warfare: "Jezebel vs. Elijah" and "Stripes, Nails, Thorns, and Blood."

- (3) "Jezebel" online article, Easton's Bible Dictionary.

(4) Hazleton.

(5) Ibid, p. 12.

(6) "The Spirit of Jezebel" online article by Jon Hamilton.

(7) This incident is reminiscent of Acts 12:21-23 in which Herod arrayed himself in royal finery and spoke as if he were a god. The passage says that as a result he was struck down by an angel and died a horrible death.

(8) For more about Simon Magus, see the Sighted Moon Newsletter article at https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/?page_id=662.

(9) "The Complete Illustrated Guide to Tarot" by Rachel Pollack. Element, 1999.

(10) Mark 9:47 would seem to support this conclusion.

(11) "The Effects of Mysticism and Gnosticism on the Messianic Movement" online article by J.K. McKee.

(12) "The Everything Kabbalah Book" by Mark Elber. Adams Media, 2006, p. 30.

(13) Cited from "The Spice of Life – Gematria" by Gutman G. Locks. Judaica Press, 1985.

(14) Interestingly, Gen. 49:10 also contains a Messianic prophecy: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh come: And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."

(15) Locks, introductory section p. XXIV. The quotation cites R. Abraham Ibn Ezra's Torah commentary, 1977.

(16) This statement is made in acknowledgement of William Schnoebelen's well-articulated defense of Qabalah study in his online article "Confessions of an 'Ex-Qabalist.'" In that my friend Bill is a former high-level Satanist, he has the advantage of being readily able to discern the pagan and occultic elements within the Qabalah that many others might not have to detect. My main issue with Qabalism among fellow believers is the teaching of its traditional belief systems and, of course, its occultic practices — not one's personal study

of it when used to further his understanding of the Holy Scriptures. True, “no one is forcing anyone to study Kabbalah,” as he says in his article. However, at the same time, I maintain that we also have a duty to warn fellow believers not to allow their Hebraic Roots curiosity to lead them to spiritual derailment.

- (17) “Kabbalah” article, The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft, Facts on File, 1989.
- (18) For instance, in 1979 Holy Land archaeologist Gabriel Barkay discovered within the Jerusalem vicinity a small silver item, possibly used as an amulet, that had a condensed version of the priestly blessing of Num. 6 in Paleo Hebrew letters. Of considerable interest and surprise was that the inscription also included the Name of YHWH.
- (19) Yah’shua has commanded us to cast out demons in His Name, which means “YHWH shall save.” See Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17.
- (20) McKee article.
- (21) This corresponds to the sad commentary of the times placed at the end of the book of Judges: “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Jdg. 21:25.
- (22) “Divination” entry, Online Etymological Dictionary.
- (23) This predilection is not unlike Satan’s propensity to misquote Scripture when tempting an individual to sin.
- (24) See the article “Deceiving and Being Deceived: Discerning the False Prophets among Us,” proclaimliberty.info.
- (25) “Pulsa diNura” article, worldlingo.com
- (26) More on the dangers of cursing can be found in the article “Blessings and Cursings” at proclaimliberty.info.
- (27) Hazleton, p. 2.
- (28) Ibid, p. 189.
- (29) For more about healings in the name of Satan, see the Sighted Moon Newsletter article at https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/?page_id=660.
- (30) During my most recent trip to the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem, I unexpectedly encountered someone along one of the pedestrian walkways who grabbed hold of my wrist and attempted to place a Qabalistic red string bracelet on it intended for warding off the effects of the evil eye. “Get your hands off from me!” I ordered, telling the person that wearing one as protection against the evil eye was unBiblical, not to mention that my permission was not even requested. The KJV has references to the evil eye in three passages: Prv. 23:6, 28:22; Mark 7:22. While a “scarlet thread” is mentioned on several occasions, it is never used in the Bible as a talisman against the evil eye. To my

amusement, after the red string bracelets were put on the wrists on people passing by, someone would then come up and request five shekels as payment. So, it would seem that their motives for putting the red string bracelets on others were not entirely altruistic.

- (31) Perhaps a good place to begin researching this subject is with the Wikipedia.org articles entitled “Candle” and “Ceremonial Use of Lights.” The Christian Website demonbuster.com asserts that demons are typically attracted to the use of candles and incense. Thus, they should not be used at all. It should be noted, though, that incense was used according to the Scriptures in the Tabernacle and in the Jerusalem Temples. There also is no prohibition against using candles for practical lighting purposes. For more information about the questionable use of candles within a Hebraic Roots context, see the Sighted Moon Newsletter article at https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/?page_id=322.
- (32) News stories by Alexis Dow Campbell and David N. Dunkle in the July 1, 2010 “Go!” “entertainment section of the Patriot-News, Harrisburg, PA.
- (33) To the astonishment of many, the deistic term “God” also is problematic. See the footnote for Gad, pronounced the same as God, in Isa. 65:11 in the most recent edition of the NKJV. Interestingly, the term used in several English translations is “Fortune.” If we connect God with Fortune, it would seem that the saying on U.S. currency could then read “In Fortune We Trust.” Essentially, for many in the U.S. that sums up the so-called American Dream – to make for themselves a financial fortune.
- (34) The Aramaic-English New Testament, compiled, edited, and translated by Andrew Gabriel Roth, 2008. The AENT uses “coffin” instead of “bed” in Rev. 2:22. Alternative translations from the Greek are “sickbed” or “bed of suffering.”
- (35) McKee article.