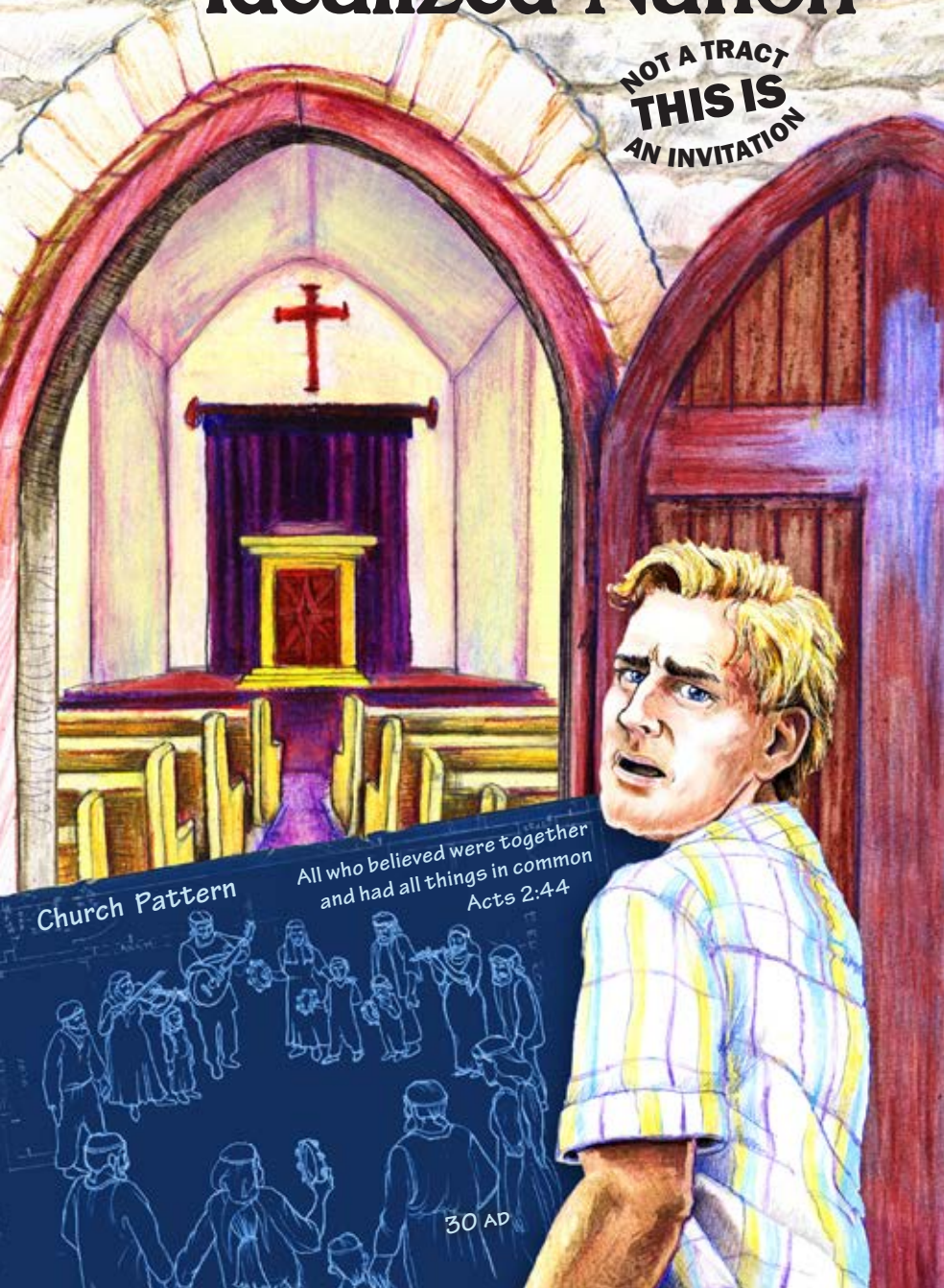


A Twelve Tribes Freepaper

FREE

The Idealized Nation

NOT A TRACT
THIS IS
AN INVITATION



Church Pattern

All who believed were together
and had all things in common
Acts 2:44



30 AD

We All Live Together!


We who wrote this paper actually live together like an extended family, sharing all things in common, just as the first disciples did in the first century. The Bible plainly says regarding the first church, *“All who believed were together and shared all things in common”* (Acts 2:44). It goes on to describe how they were of one heart and soul, and that there was not a needy person among them, for they gave up all their possessions to meet the needs of their spiritual brothers and sisters (Acts 4:32-35). Some people say this was only for back then, but we’ve been living this way for over 40 years. You can come and see for yourself at any of our addresses, which are printed in the back of this paper and on our web site, www.twelvetribe.org.

Living in Households

In each of our communities, there are one or more houses in a cluster, some in cities and some on farms. Several families and single people live together in each house, according to the size of the house. We like large houses because we like to live together. Married couples have their own rooms, plus as many adjacent rooms as needed for their children. The single men share one or more rooms, as do the single women. We all share a common kitchen and dining room, where we take our meals together *“with gladness and sincerity of heart.”*¹

Gathering Daily

In at least one house in the cluster we have a large gathering room where we gather together every morning and evening to worship our Creator in song and dance as in Psalm 150, using the prescribed musical instruments that we are learning to build and play. We are all free to speak from our hearts the things we are learning, as our heavenly Father teaches us through one another, according to the gifting and

A group of people, including children, smiling and clapping outdoors. The background is filled with green foliage, suggesting a park or garden setting. The people are dressed in casual attire, and the overall atmosphere is joyful and communal.

grace given to each person.² As a spiritual priesthood, we pray together for the pressing needs of our people and for our Father's will to be done on earth.

Working Together

After our morning gathering we have breakfast together and then go to work in our various places, doing the deeds prepared for each one of us.³ We work together in our own cafés, farms, cottage industries, and trades, not as independent contractors or employees of outside companies. All income from our various endeavors goes into a *common purse* from which all of our needs are met equitably. We don't have our own independent income or debts to carry by ourselves, except for the debt of love we owe to our Savior, which we repay by loving and caring for one another.

Raising Our Children

We love and cherish our children. We teach them at home, using a curriculum we are developing ourselves, to give them the basic skills they need to read, write, and speak effectively, to live together in peace, and to fulfill their created purpose. Our children's training goes far beyond the classroom, however, as they are fully integrated into every aspect of our socially and spiritually rich tribal life. They learn to cook and sew, build and farm, care for animals, sing and dance, play musical instruments, and most importantly, extend hospitality to the constant flow of guests who are drawn to the light of our life of love.

Together we are experiencing and demonstrating the restoration of all things spoken of by the prophets of old,⁴ and by our Master Yahshua,⁵ whose life, death, and resurrection make this life possible. ✨

¹ Acts 2:46 ² 1 Corinthians 14:26; 1 Peter 4:11; Romans 12:6 ³ Ephesians 2:10 ⁴ Isaiah 49:6; Jeremiah 30:20; 31:1,4,13,14; Malachi 4:5-6 ⁵ Matthew 5:17-19; 17:10-11; 22:37-40; Luke 1:17; 24:44 (*Yahshua* is the original Hebrew name of the one called *Jesus* in most English Bible translations; see "The Name Above All Names" on p. 29)

PARABLES OF FASCINATION

FASCINATION, noun — a powerful or irresistible influence on the affections or passions; unseen inexplicable influence. The ancients speak of two kinds of fascination: one by the look or eye, the other by words.

The Son of God challenged His listeners with these two parables of fascination:

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

(Matthew 13:44)

The man who found the treasure was a special man. He had enough faith to search. Maybe he'd heard people speak of a great and hidden treasure, and it awakened what he knew deep inside, that there must be something worth more than his eyes could see. He believed enough to search until he found it. Who knows how long it took? But he didn't give up. Then, when he finally found it, he hid it again to make sure he wouldn't lose it. All of his possessions couldn't compare with this new-found treasure.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

(Matthew 13:45-46)

The merchant had spent his whole life collecting this, collecting that... It all had some value to him. But he was searching for something. His life continued on as usual until something of far-surpassing value captured his at-

tention: that pearl of great price. He'd never encountered anything like it before, and somehow he knew he never would again. He'd been around and seen a lot in his life, but never anything like this pearl...

What exactly did the men in these two parables see that caused them such fascination? What rarity was so valuable that they felt compelled to sell *with joy* everything else they had? What did their eyes perceive? What could have been worth everything they had? Why didn't the man just "add the treasure" to his life, or why didn't the merchant just "add the pearl" to his collection? What was so *fascinating* about the treasure and the pearl that their other possessions couldn't even compare?

Have you ever found anything like that?

I have. I was like the man who found the treasure. I was like the merchant. Here's my story:

I was twenty-two, almost done with college. Everything was going well. I'd survived the parties of my youth and was looking forward to growing up and trying to do good.

I did all sorts of things to be a better person. I got up early in the morning instead of sleeping in. I ate organic

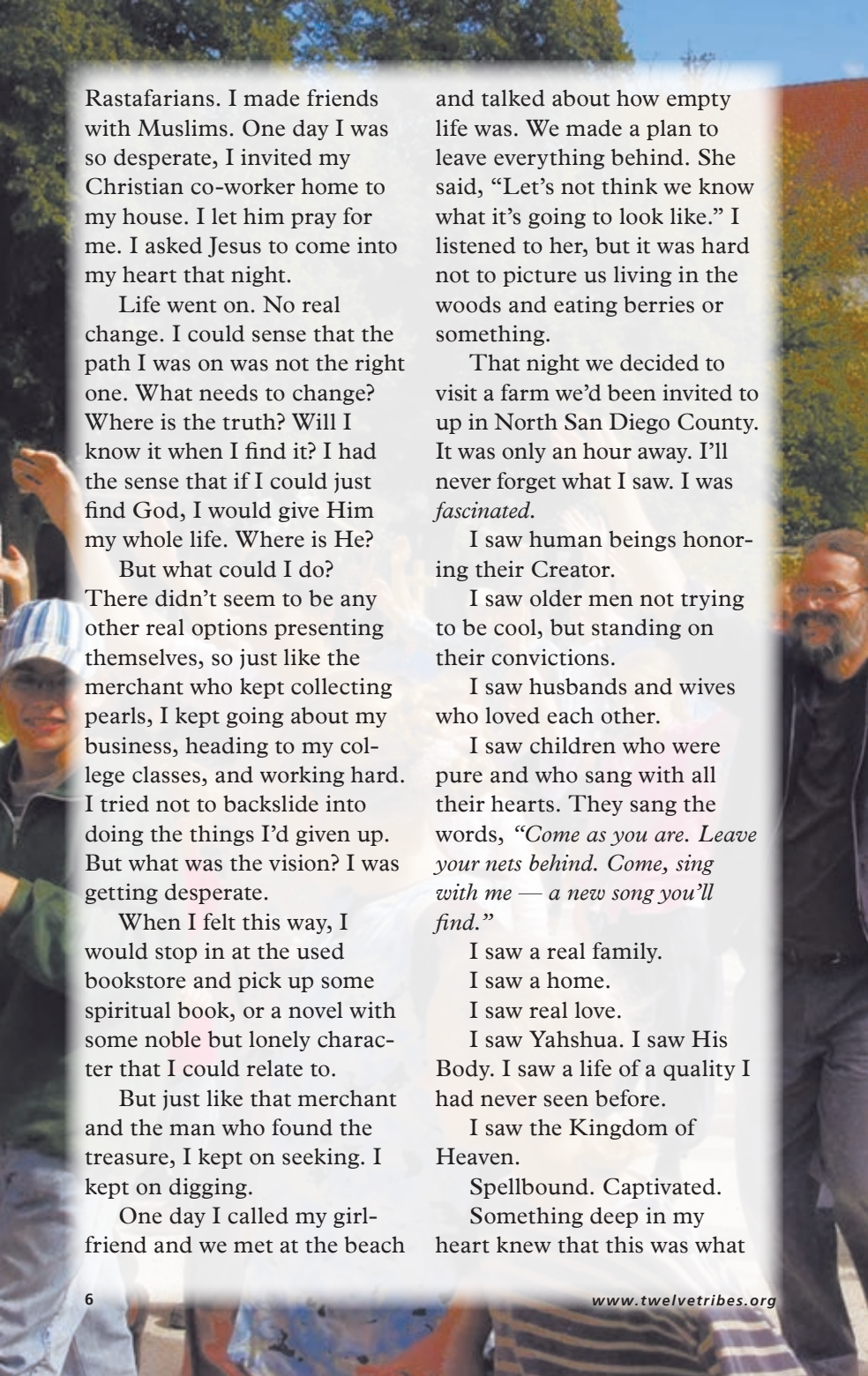
food. I decided to tell people the truth the best I could. I studied hard, and really tried to make it to work on time. I wasn't perfect at it, but I was getting better.

I told my girlfriend that I wanted to commit to her, and that I wasn't going to leave her behind to go to South America, which had been my previous plan.

I became a teacher's assistant in college, and when someone asked me to change his test so he could pass, I told him I couldn't do that.

I spent time with religious people and tried to understand who God was. I even went jogging sometimes to be healthy. I was nice to people at work. Oftentimes, on my way home from work, I would take left-over food and ride my bike down to the pier where all the homeless people sat, and give it to them. I was really trying to do good things.

But I remember one day, jogging through the beach town I lived in, thinking about my life. "Is this it? Is this all there is to doing good? Why do I still feel so empty?" I tried all sorts of religions. I chanted with Hindu monks. I meditated with Buddhists. I hung out with Taoists. I paid for Yoga classes. I hung out with



Rastafarians. I made friends with Muslims. One day I was so desperate, I invited my Christian co-worker home to my house. I let him pray for me. I asked Jesus to come into my heart that night.

Life went on. No real change. I could sense that the path I was on was not the right one. What needs to change? Where is the truth? Will I know it when I find it? I had the sense that if I could just find God, I would give Him my whole life. Where is He?

But what could I do? There didn't seem to be any other real options presenting themselves, so just like the merchant who kept collecting pearls, I kept going about my business, heading to my college classes, and working hard. I tried not to backslide into doing the things I'd given up. But what was the vision? I was getting desperate.

When I felt this way, I would stop in at the used bookstore and pick up some spiritual book, or a novel with some noble but lonely character that I could relate to.

But just like that merchant and the man who found the treasure, I kept on seeking. I kept on digging.

One day I called my girlfriend and we met at the beach

and talked about how empty life was. We made a plan to leave everything behind. She said, "Let's not think we know what it's going to look like." I listened to her, but it was hard not to picture us living in the woods and eating berries or something.

That night we decided to visit a farm we'd been invited to up in North San Diego County. It was only an hour away. I'll never forget what I saw. I was *fascinated*.

I saw human beings honoring their Creator.

I saw older men not trying to be cool, but standing on their convictions.

I saw husbands and wives who loved each other.

I saw children who were pure and who sang with all their hearts. They sang the words, "*Come as you are. Leave your nets behind. Come, sing with me — a new song you'll find.*"

I saw a real family.

I saw a home.

I saw real love.

I saw Yahshua. I saw His Body. I saw a life of a quality I had never seen before.

I saw the Kingdom of Heaven.

Spellbound. Captivated.

Something deep in my heart knew that this was what

I had always been looking for. I saw God's love filling the souls of human beings.

My girlfriend saw the same thing I did. We knew we had to be a part of it.

I was *fascinated*. I couldn't look away. Even when I went back to my regular life after the time I spent at this farm, I couldn't forget what I saw.

Of course, there was a cost, but now I could only see my life and possessions in the light of my new discovery. They all paled in comparison to my treasure, to my pearl. So I gave it all up.

I dropped out my senior year of college, after going for five years.

I quit the best job I'd ever found at an organic food co-op.

I gave up my hopes of being a famous writer, just months after getting a short story published.

I gave away the library of books I'd accumulated over the years. They were all pointing towards this decision anyway.

My laptop and cell phone went, too, along with the \$5,000 left in my bank account.

I gave up the image of myself I had so painstakingly carved.

I gave away notebooks of all

the things I'd written: poems, songs, stories. Where were they leading people, anyway?

Along with all that, I gave up my life of sin which had really hurt people — immorality, self-righteousness, greed, self-centeredness, passivity, back-biting...

Just like the man who found the treasure, and just like the merchant who found the pearl, I'm so thankful I had the opportunity to give up all I had. What if I had lived my whole life and never seen something worth giving it all for?

So, just like them, for joy I gave up all that I had to gain the Pearl. Yahshua is the Pearl. He is worth giving up everything!

If my story touches your heart, please come and visit us. The woman who was my girlfriend is now my wife, and we have three very special children.

Jon





The Pattern

I love patterns. As a little girl, I used to gaze at the wallpaper in my room, tracing it with my finger, each section an exact replica of the one beside it. My cat had a similar swirling pattern on her back. No one printed her in a machine, I thought. Or the ladybugs' wings either. Bright red with black spots. Not necessarily as symmetrical as my wallpaper, but nonetheless fascinating. Every summer they would mate at the roots of a particular maple in our front yard, swarming up and down the stiffly rippled bark. There was some information they had that told them to come there year after year. I would watch for them with anticipation and wonder.

Is this Part of the Pattern?

There was another pattern I grew up looking at, too. Every Sunday it would recur:

- Hang up your coat;
- Shake hands with the pastor;
- Sit down in the pew;
- Listen to the sermon;
- Go out to IHOP after it's over.

It was nice, actually, to know that I had a place to come to every week with people who knew my name and had a smile for me. It was comfortable.

I remember the year I turned seven. My pastor sent away a single mother and her unkempt and unruly children, explaining that he was very sorry but there was no way



he could help her. "I guess this must be part of the pattern," I thought. I didn't say anything, but something in me was disturbed.

Another time several years later, a man stood up in the back of the sanctuary and started speaking when, all of a sudden, the ushers grabbed him and dragged him outside before anyone could hear what he was saying. "Oh, so this is how God is..." My little mind reasoned to fit this one into the pattern.

But somehow it didn't seem to go along with another pattern deep inside my heart. That pattern inside of me made me ask, "Is this a kind and good act? Does God prefer that we keep quiet?"

Would I ever get the courage to ask my questions? Would anyone have the courage to answer them? If anyone else had questions, they certainly didn't ask them in front of me. And no one tried standing up in church again, either.

There was definitely only one person allowed to speak like that: *the preacher*.

A New Pattern

Many years later I was invited to an open forum at a café in Vista, California, called *The Yellow Deli*. The warm atmosphere of the room was almost touchable — every aspect from the soft, amber glow of the lights to the tea and cookies set out for us on the table, but especially the kind smiles of the men who were there to guide the discussion. They began reading to us from a verse in Luke 14, asking, "What did the Messiah mean when he said, 'Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple?'" At first there was silence while the men gazed around, eagerly and expectantly, at our faces.

One by one, we began to speak. It was a little miracle. I remember looking around and being in awe that we were actually speaking our hearts about something deep and spiritual. We weren't talking about movies or gossip. We were talking about truth, and I realized

that these men longed to hear what was in our hearts. They listened to each one, considering what each one said, adding something or posing another question.

Some people in the room said challenging things; some people denied that what the Messiah said was valid; others said it was an impossibility to be obedient to it nowadays. But these men were never threatened and never intimidated to speak what they believed was true. They encouraged the more quiet ones, beckoning them to share their thoughts. Because of the value that these men placed on the little each one gave, the stronger ones learned to listen to those that didn't always have much to say.

This was the one I had
What a relief!
new pattern



a different type of pattern than
seen going to church on Sunday.
There is a different pattern! This
I was witnessing must be the true

No Talking



one from our Creator. It wasn't empty and meaningless worldly conversation. It wasn't oppressive religious rigor. Nor was it mere emotional zeal. It was simple and genuine. We looked at one another. We listened. We spoke what was in our hearts.

How could I ever dream of going back to the other pattern? Every week I was falling more in love with this new pattern. One week I found out that all of those that worked in the *Yellow Deli* actually lived together like a family. They shared all their possessions and income. They raised their children together; they worked together and rested on the Sabbath



together. They gathered twice a day, every day, in the morning and evening to worship their Creator and talk about His great purpose for mankind.

As more of the pattern was revealed to me, I saw there was a whole life behind it. Something, some entity, some force was causing them to want to live together and share everything. Living together was not a burden or a labor to them. It was a deep desire fulfilled. Sharing everything was not an oppressive law. It was a manifestation of their love and care for one another. Just like the ladybugs, they had a source, and that source was informing them of the way to live and flourish.

They invited me to come and be part of their pattern. "Me? Part of the pattern?" Secretly, I had hoped they would ask. I was so good at *watching* patterns, studying them, but to be *part* of the pattern was quite a different pattern for me. I really did love their pattern. I loved to watch it, study it. It brought quietness to my soul.

"What do I have to do?" I asked. The answer was so simple. I just had to give up the old pattern and come to the new one. That sounded like such a good idea to me. More than that, it sounded like life and peace.

So I gave up everything. I was washed of the old pattern and baptized into the new one. Now I live every day with my friends. We are restoring the pattern to the way the church was when it was called the Way. As it turns out, the church in the first century actually started out with this same pattern, but somehow it got distorted along the way. It was copied wrong so many times that it became something unrecognizable.

Now is the time of the restoration of the original pattern. And in case you were wondering, we are not just trying to keep it all to ourselves. You can come and see it. You can even be a part of it, if you want to. We would love to meet you!



Stolly

What is the Savior of mankind worth to you? What would you give to gain eternal life? Or is there really nothing we have to do, considering

everything He did? “All you have to do is accept Jesus into your heart and believe.” Okay, so what does it mean to believe? Salvation is a free gift, but who does He give it to?

Did He not ask, “What would a man *give* in exchange for his soul?” Why did He say things like:

“No one can be my disciple unless he gives up all his own possessions.”
(Luke 14:33)

*“Whoever loves father, mother, son, or daughter more than me is **not worthy** of me.”*
(Matthew 10:37)

Certainly there are no works that a person can do to *earn* salvation, but can't we be like Paul and all the other believers in the New Testament churches who saw the futility of the material manifestations of their own works? They were eager to abandon it all when

What Is He Worth to You?

they discovered the “Pearl of Great Price.”¹ Only if you see His worth as greater than everything else is that possible.

Would it even enter the mind of someone who truly hates his life in this world² that giving up his possessions is “works salvation”?³

Paul joyfully suffered the loss of all things, counting them as *dung*, for the surpassing value of knowing and following the Messiah.⁴ Has Messiah diminished in value since Paul's day?

It seems that one who truly believes unto salvation will willingly give up all he has to gain eternal life. Then, by daily caring for and serving his brothers and sisters, whom he lives with, he will gladly follow Messiah to pay the great debt of love that he owes to Him — a debt so great that it takes a lifetime to pay, or perhaps all of eternity.

He is either worth everything to you or He is worth nothing.

He is worth *everything* to us! ❀

¹ Matthew 13:44-45; Mark 10:28

² John 12:24-26

³ Luke 14:26,33

⁴ Philippians 3:8

The Pearl *of* Great Price



The “Treasure Hidden in the Field” and the “Pearl of Great Price” are two of the many parables which are given in the Scriptures to explain the Kingdom of God.¹ When the man found the hidden treasure, he was so filled with joy over it that he sold all he had to possess it. The man searching for beautiful pearls finally found one of great value and sold all that he had to obtain it.

Let me tell you about my search. I actually didn’t know what I was looking for, but I did know that I hadn’t yet found it. When I became a Christian, I stopped committing the obvious outward sins, but there were still hurtful ways in me that I was powerless to change no matter how many times I “went down to the altar,” was re-baptized, or changed churches.

Yahshua, the Son of God, earnestly cried out, “He who has ears to hear, *let him hear!*” He persistently taught in parables about the Kingdom of God. When His disciples asked Him about this, He told them that He would reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom to them but not to those outside their circle, because they don’t see or hear with hearts to obey, which would give them understanding.² In another place

¹ Matthew 13:44-46

² Matthew 13:9-15

Yahshua told His disciples that it was given to them to know the mysteries, but to those outside, all things were in parables.³ That disturbed me because I didn't know whether I was inside or outside his circle, but I did know that there were many things in the Bible that I didn't understand.

When Paul went to Colossae, he talked about mysteries and was concerned that the Colossians would understand the mystery of both the Father and of Messiah, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.⁴ In Corinth, he also referred to the wisdom of God as being a mystery from before the ages, and that the deep things of God could only be revealed to someone by His Spirit.⁵

The Ethiopian eunuch, a man of high position, was reading the book of Isaiah while on his way to worship in Jerusalem. Though he was an educated, righteous man, he could not gain understanding by just reading the Scriptures, and humbly admitted that he needed someone to explain it to him.⁶ Peter also warns us that Paul's writings are easily misunderstood and get twisted, just as the rest of Scriptures do, by untaught, unstable people who are causing their own destruction because of it.⁷ Paul warned the Corinthians not to be deceived as Eve was and lose their simple devotion to Messiah. He told them they were accepting a different gospel, a different Yahshua, and a receiving a different spirit from the one he preached to them.⁸

I mention all these examples because it shows quite clearly that there is a real danger of misinterpreting Scripture and misunderstanding the mysteries intentionally hidden from the insincere who are unwilling to pay the cost of being a disciple.

³ Mark 4:11

⁴ Colossians 2:2-3

⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:7-10

⁶ Acts 8:27-31

⁷ 2 Peter 3:16

⁸ 2 Corinthians 11:3-4

It is recorded in John's Gospel that when Yahshua spoke, many people believed in His name but He didn't entrust himself to them because He knew all men and what was in them.⁹ He also said that if anyone had His commandments and obeyed them, He would love them and manifest or reveal himself to them.¹⁰ I had been a Christian for 23 years, but somehow I didn't feel as if I really knew him. After searching all those years, I started praying daily that God would reveal both Himself and His Son to me, so I could figure out how to serve Him and know that I was pleasing to Him.

Another time, when Yahshua was teaching and many were believing in Him, He said, *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."* So only after we live according to His teachings will we know the truth that will set us free. I considered myself a believer but I had never thought of myself as a disciple.

Someone told my husband and me about the Twelve Tribes and we were interested in meeting them. We thought we knew the Scriptures well enough not to be led astray by any false doctrines they might have. We came several times a week to watch and listen in their gatherings and share a meal with them afterward. Each week we would see and hear things that caused a stir in our hearts. They were telling us things we had never heard before and we didn't know whether we could believe them.

Back in Yahshua's time, the people felt the same way about the things He was saying. Some said He was true, but others said He was a deceiver. Yahshua said that His teachings were not His own, but they came from His Father, the one who sent Him to speak. He also explained that if anyone was willing to do God's will, then he would know whether the teaching was coming from God or

⁹ John 2:23

¹⁰ John 14:21

was from Himself. He went on to say that he who speaks from himself is seeking to draw people to himself, but he who seeks the glory of the One who sent him can be trusted, because his motive is not selfish.¹¹

In a kingdom there is a king and there are laws that govern how he wants his people to live. God has made our Master Yahshua king over the Kingdom of Heaven, but the kingdom of this world is still under the rulership of the evil one. I knew there were two kingdoms and I was struggling to be in God's kingdom while at the same time living in the kingdom of this world, which according to Scripture is under Satan's sway.¹² Paul says that the believers in Yahshua are delivered out of the power of darkness and transferred or conveyed into the kingdom of His Son.¹³

The Pearl of Great Price and the Treasure Hidden in the Field are mentioned only once in the Bible, but those two verses actually explain the gospel of salvation that transfers us out of the kingdom of this world and into the Kingdom of God. It's also a reoccurring theme throughout the Scriptures, which is not taught in Christianity and therefore goes unnoticed by those studying them.

One very clear example is in the Book of Acts. After hearing the preaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, three thousand people believed what they heard, were baptized, and then stayed together, sharing all things in common. None of them returned to their old lives, but sold their possessions and provided for those who had need. They were together every day and even ate their meals together.¹⁴ A short time later, the apostles were again speaking the Word of God and another large number of people responded in the same way by selling their houses and lands and distributing to

¹¹ John 7:12-18

¹² 1 John 5:19

¹³ Colossians 1:13

¹⁴ Acts 2:38-47

anyone that had need.¹⁵ From the very beginning the response to the Gospel was the same as in the parable of the Pearl of Great Price.

However, a couple named Ananias and Sapphira were baptized, sold a property that belonged to them, but then deceitfully held back some of the money as a “safety net” in case things didn’t work out. They were afraid to be honest about their lack of trust, and God took their lives as an object lesson for the community, so that others would fear doing such a thing.¹⁶

The apostles weren’t *demanding* that everyone sell everything, but in a true baptism the normal response was to not want to leave those who rescued them from the kingdom of darkness. They couldn’t go on in their old life with all their possessions and also be fully immersed into this new life. Apart from giving all one has, he cannot obtain the Pearl of Great Price, which is His life in us drawing us into a new life in Him. It’s the only way to enter into his kingdom, into the Body of Messiah where he rules as king.

The so-called “rich young ruler” was a good religious man who lived a righteous life according to the commandments. If he lived today, he would probably be in church every Sunday. It’s recorded that he came to Yahshua to find out how to receive eternal life. Our Master lovingly told him that he needed to sell all that he had, give it to the poor, and then come follow Him, so that his only treasure would be in heaven. However, he went away sad because the Gospel required more than he was willing to give. He must not have seen the Pearl of Great Price, since he was unable to part with the comforts of his old life.

Upon hearing Yahshua’s conversation with this man, and how hard it was for a rich person to be saved, Peter said to Yahshua, “*See, we have left all and followed you, therefore what shall we have?*” Yahshua reassured him, saying, “*Truly, I say to you,*

¹⁵ Acts 4:31-37

¹⁶ Acts 5:1-11

*there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.*¹⁷ The Pearl of Great Price can only be obtained by forsaking all else.

One day our Master was teaching his disciples not to be anxious about food and clothing. He warned them in Luke 12:22 not to seek after them like the people of the nations, since their heavenly Father would provide for their needs if they would seek first His kingdom. Thinking that was the end of His teaching on trust, I had never paid attention to the following verses, ending with, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”¹⁸

Another time, Yahshua was teaching in parables and unexpectedly turned to the crowds and said, “*If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters and yes, his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*” Then a few verses later He clearly states, “*So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple.*”¹⁹ I was shocked at how clear it was.

Yahweh is gathering His people, His chosen ones, a royal priesthood and a holy nation.²⁰ Those with ears to hear are those He reveals Himself to because they are willing to do His will. As one goes down into the waters of baptism he is making a covenant to die to and no longer live for himself; then he is raised up from death, as it were, into new life in Messiah. To be “in Messiah,” one must be in the place where He dwells, which where His followers live together and share all things in common. They are His Body on earth.

That is what Yahshua meant when he told Nicodemus that he must be born again. He couldn’t

¹⁷ Mark 10:29-30

¹⁸ Luke 12:22-34

¹⁹ Luke 14:26,33

²⁰ 1 Peter 2:9

enter the Kingdom with his old life, but had to give it all up in baptism and start a whole new life. Yahshua said, *“He who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.”*²¹ And, *“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, let him follow me, and where I am, there my servant will be also.”*²² A dead man doesn’t own anything, but in the Kingdom we have all that we need.

So the Kingdom of God is a place you can see. It is the place where Yahshua rules as king and His subjects spend all their hours loving God with their all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. It is the only place where it is possible to obey all the commands of Yahshua, their king. It is in this world but not of this world. It’s a spiritual nation with its own customs and traditions, which are different from the ways of the world. It’s where the love, acceptance, and forgiveness is so incredible that one would give up all he has to obtain it. It’s the Way of Yahweh that brings healing and changes us into the image of our Master Yahshua. It’s where the Holy Spirit enables us to love each other enough to stay in the conversation and not divide from each other.

We invite you to come and *see* the Kingdom being built by those who have forsaken **all** to do their Father’s will and serve their King by laying down their lives daily for Him and for each other. We would love to meet you and share our life with you. You can find us at any of the places listed on the back cover of this paper, where you are welcome to visit us any time!

Samar

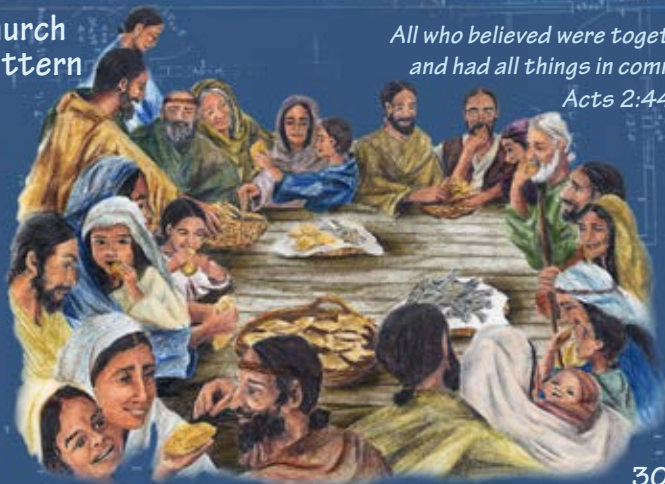


²¹ Matthew 10:38-39

²² John 12:24-25

Church Pattern

All who believed were together
and had all things in common
Acts 2:44



30 AD

The IDEALIZED Nation

Is community real or ideal, imaginary or actual, a utopia of the mind or a pattern for how the church should be?

Where can Christians look today to see believers living the same way they did in the first church in Acts 2 and 4? They may have a concept of this, but does the concept have any reality to it? Most refer to that chapter in biblical history as an unattainable ideal. The thought that this is the way the church is supposed to be has probably never entered the minds of most people.

It is also easy to read about the holy nation in 1 Peter 2:9 and think of it merely as an ideal. In this sense, an ideal is a concept with no reality attached to it, or one that exists in the imagination only (i.e., a mental image). Therefore, this holy nation is reduced to nothing more than a spiritual concept. But this is not the Word of God. In reality, that holy nation had a vibrant social life. It is disturbing that this life, so well documented in Acts 2 and 4, is today disregarded and even disqualified.

However, in 1 Thessalonians 2:14, Paul praised the church in Thessalonica as one that closely followed the true pattern that had been established by the apostles in Jerusalem and all the churches of Judea. That pattern was *community*, and it brought persecution. To Paul, it was more than just a spiritual ideal: it was the pattern for how the church was to be established in every place. This pattern cannot be imitated without the same Holy Spirit who formed it in the beginning. The Scriptures give no other model for the Body of Messiah to be expressed to the world than it was in the first century.



Why do you suppose there is no resemblance to this *archetype*¹ in the churches of today? There was only one designer of the original pattern — He was both architect and builder.² Have others been building without following the blueprints?³ If so, then the structure that has been built is of another design and from another designer and will not stand. Indeed, it cannot stand.⁴



¹ *archetype* — the original pattern, or model, from which all other things of the same kind are made.

² Hebrews 11:9-10

³ 1 Corinthians 3:10; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Corinthians 11:4,13-15; Romans 16:17-19

⁴ Matthew 7:24-27



The church, both today and for the past 1900 years, has not resembled that first pattern set forth in the Book of Acts. Yet continual excuses and debates are made as to why. This pattern, however, explicitly describes what life in the Body of Messiah was like — the life that came by the direction of the Holy Spirit. There is no other pattern described in the New Testament for the church’s foundation. In addition to the vivid description of this life in Acts 2 and 4, the evidence of its existence is found throughout the Epistles,⁵ sup-

porting the fact that it was the only true apostolic foundation upon which the church could be established.⁶ It was the first and only authentic pattern for how the Church was to be.

So where is this pattern today? If it cannot be located, then where is the Church? The first communities were called “the Way.”⁷ Therefore, the church of today can be no other way than the way it was when it was called the Way.

There is a false sense of security in considering this first pattern of the church as visionary, idealistic, or obsolete. If it is not real, then there is no accountability for not living that way. However, if it is real, and indeed all true believers are to live this way, then a sobering question must be asked: *have they ever truly heard the Gospel?*



Christians who merely dwell in their theological comfort zone of daily devotionals and weekly church services are not willing to ask this. It brings into question whether or not they are actu-

⁵ Acts 2:42-46; 4:32-37; 8:3; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2

⁶ 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:11-16

⁷ Acts 9:2; 19:9,23

ally saved. If they had heard the *same* gospel,⁸ would it not have brought about the same dramatic witness we read about in Acts 2 and 4? What standard are we to judge by? Is it by the Word of God or something else?

Being saved from our sins includes coming out of the world where sin reigned in us. That is what it means to be born again.⁹ We start life over when we are baptized into a new social and spiritual life through the community where Messiah reigns.

That is why on the Day of Pentecost Peter said, “Come out of this evil and perverse generation.”¹⁰ Those who believed and received his word responded accordingly. They literally came out of the life they lived in the world. They forsook friends and family who sought to prevent them from following Yahshua, the Messiah.¹¹ They moved into the community where this new social order was being formed. They were like pioneers, establishing a new society and a whole new culture on earth where Yahshua reigned as their sovereign king. The one who follows Yahshua is not capable of living outside the intimate fellowship of the Body of Messiah. It is impossible for a disciple to grow in spiritual health outside the context of community, just as a viable¹² seed is not able to live outside fertile soil. The church has to be that fertile soil for every disciple, and it takes a community to do this.

Yet some say that community was the early church’s first mistake. But how could this have been a mistake when abundant grace was upon them all and everyone’s needs were met?¹³ Oh, that such a mistake might be made again!

Eventually, the pattern of the Body of Messiah in Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-37 was abandoned by those who had left their first love and had soiled their garments.¹⁴ They chose a broader road to travel down.¹⁵ Due to their disobedience, the Holy Spirit was quenched and grieved, and eventually withdrew from their hearts.¹⁶ Divisions and schisms set in amongst all the churches, as it is to this day. Community life began falling apart, for it could not be maintained where love grew cold.

⁸ As opposed to a *different* gospel, as in 2 Corinthians 11:4.

⁹ John 3:3

¹⁰ Acts 2:40; Galatians 1:4

¹¹ *Yahshua* is the original Hebrew name of the Son of God; see page 29.

¹² *viable* — Capable of living, surviving and developing normally.

¹³ Acts 4:33-34

¹⁴ Revelation 2:4-5; 3:3-4

¹⁵ Matthew 7:13-14

¹⁶ Revelation 3:20

If they had judged the Body and themselves rightly,¹⁷ then the demonstration of God's love amongst them would have been an ongoing phenomenon for the whole world to see. But tragically, their light went out. Their lampstand was taken out of its place.¹⁸ They stopped living by revelation from the Holy Spirit¹⁹ and settled for a more comfortable lifestyle of ritual and tradition.²⁰ Religious form filled their gatherings.²¹ They were no longer the light of the world and the salt of the earth.²² No longer was Messiah there. No one could serve Him, for He was no longer making His home with them.²³ He could no longer entrust Himself to them.²⁴



The system that God hated took over — the Nicolaitan system of the clergy and the laity.²⁵ A new religious system was born out of this darkness of separation and unresolved division. The bishopric system and the Pope supplanted the Son of God.

So how does one get back to the foundation and original pattern of the early church as put forth by Yahshua and the apostles? John 12:25-26 is the only way and the only place anyone can both follow and serve Him:

He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him fol-

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 11:29,31

¹⁸ Revelation 2:4-5; a *place*, as in 1 Timothy 2:8 — a locality, a township, as also in Malachi 1:11.

¹⁹ Matthew 16:16-18; John 14:21

²⁰ 2 Timothy 3:1-5

²¹ 2 Timothy 3:5

²² Matthew 5:14-16

²³ John 14:23

²⁴ John 12:26; 2:24-25

²⁵ Revelation 2:6,15 — The term *Nicolaitan* is derived from *nikao*, "to conquer," and *laos*, "people," hence, "people conquerors." The Nicolaitan movement marks the beginning of the separation of people into the priest class and laity.



low Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

You must first hate your life in this world and obey His command to completely surrender all your own possessions.²⁶ Anyone who claims to love Him and desires to serve Him must *obey* Him.²⁷ Obedience to the Gospel²⁸ is the only way you can gain eternal life. All other promises and all other gospels other than the one first spoken by the apostles and Messiah Himself will eventually lead to disappointment.²⁹

Although the “rich young ruler” in Mark 10 came seeking eternal life, he didn’t trust the One whom he thought could give it to him.³⁰ It was soon evident that he loved his own life more than the eternal life he said he wanted.³¹ This rich young man asked what he had to do in order to have eternal life, and the Master gave him clear direction, but he would not do it. He didn’t trust, and no one can be saved without trusting. It would have been possible with God for this young man to enter the Kingdom if he had only trusted in God’s Son — but he didn’t, as revealed by his failure to obey Him.

In stark contrast, what Peter and the other disciples did has been preserved for all to read in Mark 10:28. This was the natural and fitting response from someone who recognized the worth of the Son of God. Verses 29-30 show that when the Gospel is obeyed, community comes into being. Obedience from the heart is the key — it makes a community.

²⁶ Luke 14:31-33

²⁷ John 14:21

²⁸ Acts 5:32; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17

²⁹ Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 11:3,4,13-15

³⁰ Mark 10:17,21,28-30

³¹ Mark 8:34-38



The Gospel has to be restored and defined according to the original pattern of the early church. Otherwise, there is no way to get back to the foundation set forth by Yahshua concerning the good news of salvation. If someone hears the Gospel and does not obey it, then he is judged unworthy of eternal life.³²

The way the believers live in these communities must be seen by a watching world.³³ The way they live together, caring for the needs of their brothers and sisters, proves that they are His disciples.³⁴ It also proves that God sent His Son, and loved the world, even as He loved His own Son.³⁵ These communities are located within towns so that people can see their daily life together.

Mark 10:29-30 paints a picture: homes full of disciples in a locality make up a clan or community, as in 1 Timothy 2:8. Many clans in a particular geographical area make up a tribe. The twelve tribes in their geographical areas make up the holy nation, in fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:1 and Malachi 1:5,11. They are not off in the woods or in some remote location, but on the contrary, they are where people can see their behavior and thus believe in their Savior.³⁶

³² Acts 13:47-48; John 3:18,36

³³ 1 Peter 2:12

³⁴ John 13:34-35; Acts 4:32; 1 John 3:14-17

³⁵ John 17:21-23

³⁶ Matthew 5:14-16

The Gospel makes no sense apart from living in community. Where else could all the commandments referred to in Matthew 28:19-20 be obeyed if not in the context of community?

In his “many other words”³⁷ on the Day of Pentecost, Peter explained all the requirements of the Gospel. Without hearing and receiving these words no one could be baptized into Messiah’s Body. What he said that day outlined discipleship³⁸ and the forgiveness of sins through baptism into the Body of Messiah.³⁹ This is what Peter himself had been taught by Yahshua. The result of his words was the formation of a community where *“all who believed were together and had all things in common; they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.”*⁴⁰

What a graphic illustration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit among those who first believed! Thus, the church began. The foundation was set. It came as no mistake, but was the very intention of the Gospel.⁴¹ The cry of our Savior’s heart, “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” was at last finding fulfillment. How else would His followers not worry about their food, shelter, and clothing as they were commanded,⁴² yet be taken care of by their heavenly Father, unless it were by seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness in this way? Of course, this was Yahshua’s intention — to establish the church as a community in order to meet all the needs of those who believed in Him.

The community described in Acts 2 and 4 was not the result of the apostles demanding



³⁷ Acts 2:40

³⁸ Luke 14:33; Matthew 10:34-39; Mark 10:29-30

³⁹ Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38

⁴⁰ Acts 2:44-45

⁴¹ Acts 4:32-37

⁴² Matthew 6:25-34

that everyone give all their possessions to them for distribution. It simply shows what the first disciples did in obedience to Yahshua's commands in the Gospel.⁴³ They obeyed and gave up all they had because of their love for Him and their trust in Him. Love dictated the pattern of community that was formed. Nothing else did and nothing else ever will. This pattern was not a legal mandate, but the natural outcome of those who had received the Spirit of the Living God. It was not an ideal — it was real. Obedience to the Gospel produces the holy nation that Peter spoke of in 1 Peter 2:9 — not be an *idealized* nation, but a *realized* nation.

That realized nation is the restored twelve tribes which the prophet Isaiah said would be raised up by Messiah, the suffering Servant of Isaiah 49:3-6 and 53:1-12.

They are the spiritual seed of Abraham, the Israel of God that Paul spoke of in Galatians 6:16. They are “*our twelve tribes who earnestly serve God night and day,*” as Paul said in Acts 26:7.⁴⁴ Their tribal life in communities all over the earth is that Witness of the Kingdom in Matthew 24:14 that will provide the light to the nations and bring salvation to the ends of the earth, as Isaiah prophesied,⁴⁵ in fulfillment of the “Great Commission” of Matthew 28:18-20. That holy nation of twelve tribes, the Commonwealth of Israel,⁴⁶ will bear the fruit of the kingdom the Master spoke of in Matthew 21:43 — love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.⁴⁷ When that love is perfected in the unity of a fully formed, twelve tribe nation, then Messiah will return for His bride, and she will be as radiant and glorious as Revelation 21:9-12 describes. ✨



⁴³ Luke 14:33; Mark 10:17,21,28

⁴⁴ James 1:1; Revelation 7:4-8; 21:9,12

⁴⁵ Isaiah 49:6

⁴⁶ Ephesians 2:12

⁴⁷ 1 Timothy 1:5

The Name Above All Names

In the days of John the Baptist and the Son of God, the preserved language of the devout Jews was Hebrew. So, when the angel Gabriel brought the good news to the Hebrew virgin, Miriam (or *Mary* in English), that she would give birth to the Savior of the world, and told her what His name would be, what language do you suppose he spoke? Hebrew, of course! And certainly Miriam and Yoceph (or *Joseph* in English) named the child just as the angel had commanded them — *Yahshua*.

In Matthew 1:21, your Bible probably reads, “and you shall call His name *Jesus*, for He shall save His people from their sins.” But the name *Jesus* is a modern English adaptation of the Greek name, *Iesous*, which is itself a corruption of the original Hebrew name *Yahshua*. The name *Jesus* or *Iesous* has no meaning of its own, but the Hebrew name *Yahshua* literally means *Yahweh’s Salvation*,¹ which makes sense out of what the angel said in Matthew 1:21, “...you shall call His name *Yahshua* [*Yahweh’s Salvation*], for He shall save His people from their sins.”

If you look in a pre-1769 edition of the King James Bible, you will find the name *Jesus* in these two passages:

*Which also our fathers that came after brought in with **Jesus** into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David... (Acts 7:45, KJV, 1611 Edition)*

*For if **Jesus** had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. (Hebrews 4:8, KJV, 1611 Edition)*

However, if you look in any modern translation of the Bible (including the New King James) you will find that in place of the name *Jesus*, they use the name *Joshua* — for in the context it is clear that it is speaking there of Moses’ successor and not the Son of God. But in the Greek manuscript the name in both of these verses is *Iesous*.



You see, *Joshua* is the popular English transliteration of Moses' successor's Hebrew name, which meant, "He will save." This name looks forward to the name of the Son of God, for Joshua was the prophetic forerunner of the Messiah, bringing Israel into the Promised Land and leading them to victory over their enemies. But since the translators obviously know this fact, why do they only translate *Iesous* as *Joshua* in these two verses, and as *Jesus* everywhere else?

The NIV New Testament even has a footnote for Matthew 1:21 supporting this fact, saying, "*Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua.*"

But the fact is, the name of God's Son was not even written or pronounced as "Jesus" in English until the 1600s, simply because there was no "J" sound or letter in English before then.² The modern letter "J" evolved from the letter "I" which began to be written with a "tail" when it appeared as the first letter in a word. So in old English the name now written as *Jesus* was actually written and pronounced much like the original Greek *Iesous*. Eventually the hard "J" sound crept into the English language to accompany the different way of writing the initial "I" in the name.

You may also find it interesting that in Acts 26:14-15, it says that the apostle Paul heard the name of the Son of God pronounced "in the Hebrew tongue" by the Son of God Himself. Paul certainly didn't hear the Greek name *Iesous* or the English name *Jesus*, but rather the Hebrew name, the name above all names, *Yahshua*.³ ❄

¹ *Yah* is the personal name of God, and *shua* is from a Hebrew root word that means "to save." God identified Himself to Moses as *YAH* (meaning "I AM") in Exodus 3:14, as in Psalm 68:4 ("whose name is *Yah*"), and as most familiar in the word *Halleluyah* ("Praise *Yah*"). And in John 5:43 and 17:11, *Yahshua* says that He came in His Father's name, "the name which You have given Me" (NASB), so it is not surprising that the Father's name would be incorporated into the Son's name, *Yahshua*. ² *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 1496,1507 ³ *Philippians 2:9; Acts 4:12*

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THERE IS A PEOPLE who woke up this morning with one thing on their minds: to love their Creator with all their heart, soul, and strength, and to love one another just as He loved them. Being ordinary human beings, we are far from perfect in our love, yet, in hope, we persevere. Our goal? That the Kingdom of God would come on earth as it is in heaven, so that love and justice can rule on the earth. Sound impossible? It would be, were it not that Yahshua, the Messiah, came to redeem mankind, to set us free from the curse of sin, and to enable us to love. Because we have come to see His worth and our own desperate need, we have surrendered everything in order to follow Him. Our hearts and our homes are open night and day to any who are interested in our life or are weary of their sin and want to know the purpose for which they were created. ✨