
STUDY TO SHOW YOURSELF APPROVED

Eternal God, our Father we are here before you to praise, honor and worship you. Open our hearts to receive the fullness of your love and truth given by your Holy Spirit and bless your servants young and old gathered together in your name. As you have prophesied and promised, pour out your Spirit on mankind in this end of the age before the coming of the Messiah. Cause us to hear and embrace your words. We thank you in the name of the holy name of Jesus Christ our soon coming Savior. Amen!

We are on course to Passover which will be the first holy day of the New Year and a little less than a month away. Spring is in the air and the birds have returned and are looking for good nesting places, including a woodpecker that is trying to make our house his first choice. Then we have the iridescent starlings, hummingbirds, meadowlarks, robins, sparrows, doves, goldfinches, wrens, eagles and swifts.

This week I watched a You Tube about “starlings on Otmoor” (England). It is a marvel the way thousands of the birds gather in flocks called *murmurations*. They are “a dazzling cloud, swirling, pulsating, drawing together to the thinnest of waists, and then wildly twisting in pulses of enlargement and diminution. Almost always these aerial spectacles are caused by a falcon near the edge of the flock. The beauty of a murmuration’s movements often arises purely out of defense, as the starlings strive to put distance between themselves and the predator. The remarkable thing about starling flocks is their fluidity of motion. Thousands of them looked like a huge cloud moving in waves, never hitting each other. The group responds as one” and “cannot be divided into independent subparts.” When one starling changes direction or speed, each of the other birds in the flock responds to the change, and they do so nearly simultaneously regardless of the size of the flock. In essence, information moves across the flock very quickly and with nearly no degradation. This scale free correlation allows a starling on one side of the flock to respond to what others are sensing all the way across the flock. Surprising as it may be, flocks of birds are never led by a single individual. Even in the case of flocks of geese, which appear to have a leader, the movement of the flock is actually governed collectively by all of the flock members.

Evolution cannot explain how starlings achieve such a strong correlation or the migration flight of birds. There is no way evolution can explain the human eye or ear. Most people lack knowledge and understanding because they do not want to study and learn about God, the Creator and ruler of the Universe. **Hosea 4:6** —“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (of God and his word). Because you have rejected knowledge...Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.” God’s word, the entire Bible is the inspired word of God and His communication to mankind. In his word he tells us how to be wise, successful and happy. **John 10:10** —“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. **I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**” The world today is beginning to lack in abundance. It is amazing.

Daniel 12:4—“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” Knowledge is being increased today. I look at the expanse of knowledge such as i-phones, laptops, space satellites, surveillance, nano-technology, scientific advances in health and digital devices which will be one aspect of the mark of the beast to control society, YET the knowledge of God is decreasing among the world as a whole. People are losing the knowledge of God, his word and his way because they have rejected God and no longer desire to know God and study his word—they are not in tune with God. God reveals a lot of truth to those of us who are willing to

study His word and daily seek his understanding. We have to ask him for understanding and revelation of his truth.

This week I ran across an email question regarding “Jesus’ Last Week” regarding the statement “on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread” found in all three parallel accounts in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke (NT).” The question was: “How can you say the crucifixion was on a Thursday that week, but you have Christ sending his disciples out on a Monday or Tuesday, yet it says in the scriptures it was the first day of Unleavened Bread? **Matthew 26:17**-- Now on the first *day of the Feast* of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, “Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?” **Mark 14:12**—“Now *on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb*, His disciples said to Him, “Where do you want us to go and prepare, that you may eat the Passover?” **Luke 22:7-8** (NKJ) –“Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.” So they did.

Some time earlier, I had sent him literature on this subject but had not heard back from him since that time. So I sent him a short email asking him, “Did you get a chance to read the literature I sent in answer to your question? Then I wrote, “It all boils down to the Greek word used for “*first day*”. It cannot have been the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, if they have not even gone out to prepare the Passover yet. Preparation for the days of Unleavened Bread is done *before* the days arrive. This is done in advance, before the days arrive. What the Greek word means or it can be interpreted –“in the beginning of, preparatory to, getting ready for, or a time of preparation prior to. Looking it up in a *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*, it is very clear that the preparation was *before* the Feast of ULB came.

Mark 14:1-2—“After two days it was the Passover and *the Feast* of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put *Him* to death. ² But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.’ ”

The disciples prepared first, then they had the Lord’s Supper (the Last Supper) with Christ, then that night Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, then the soldiers arrested Christ and took him to Annas the High Priest, later that same night they took Christ to Caiaphas to be interrogated and then brought Christ before the whole Sanhedrin the next morning where he was condemned. He was next taken to Pilate because the Jews could not put a man to death by their authority and had to deliver Christ to the Roman Governor to have Him condemned to death. Pilate interviewed Christ that morning when his work day began about 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. The governor was in charge, and would not start his work day at 5a.m. or 6 a.m. to please a bunch of Jews.

Since Jesus was from Galilee which was King Herod’s territory, Pilate decided King Herod ought to handle the matter and sent Christ to Herod that morning. Herod interrogated Christ and wanted him to perform some miracles (like a magician) since Herod had heard about all the miracles. But Christ did not perform any miracles at Herod’s request, so Herod sent Christ back for Pilate to issue the condemnation. Unleavened Bread had not started yet. Christ was condemned, whipped/scourged and imprisoned over night. Because it says in **Mark 5:25**—“And it was the third hour (9 a.m.) and they crucified him.” So Christ had to be condemned on the day before (6th hour). Then the third day he was crucified and stayed on the stake until the 9th hour (3 p.m.) when he died. They hurried to bury Christ that afternoon before sunset because the feast of Unleavened Bread was coming, so they buried him before sunset. That is when the Days of Unleavened Bread began.

It says very plainly in **John 19:14-16**—“Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour.” The counting of the day begins at 6 a.m. our time. The 3rd hour of the day in ancient Jewish

time (prayer time and early morning sacrifices) corresponds to our 9 a.m. of the day. The sixth hour would be 12 o'clock noon (the hour of prayer) and the 9th hour would be 3 p.m. and the third hour of prayer.

The wording, "it was the first day of Unleavened Bread" as written in the books of Matthew **26:17**, Mark **14:12** and Luke **22:7-8** when Christ sent his disciples out to look for a room does not follow the literal time sequence and the timeline is not possible. Further research helps in understanding the truth of this matter. Reference: *Adam Clarke's Commentary*. "As the feast of unleavened bread did not begin till the day after the Passover, the *fifteenth* day of the month (Leviticus 23:5-6; Numbers 23:16-17) this could not have been, properly, the first day of that feast;" It could not have been the actual literal first day of ULB which could not begin until after Christ had been put in the tomb. He was put in the grave on the 14th of Nisan. The first day of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th of Nisan. So to read the wording "it was the first Day of Unleavened Bread" and Christ sent his disciples out to find a room to keep the feast of Unleavened Bread does not follow in sequential time and order. Obviously when Christ sent his disciples out to find a room it had to literally be before the Days of Unleavened Bread began.

The man sent a short reply. "You make a very strong case, and I believe you are right. I did read your article. But as I read further, I saw that this is really complicated. It really doesn't matter whether Christ was crucified on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. The point is, He was crucified and died for our sins. We may all disagree on what day it was, but that doesn't really matter." As I thought about that statement this morning, I need to send him another email. I share this with you today, because there is something that he needs to consider. Maybe you need to consider it. We all need to consider it. That is, how much do you care about salvation? Christ said in **Matthew 4:4** and **Luke 4:4** (in two places), "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." These are the very words of God. **Deuteronomy 8:3**—says the same thing. How much do you care about the TRUTH? Christ said, "The scriptures cannot be broken."

There is **much confusion over the true calendar, Passover, and Pentecost**. Passover is the sacrifice (lamb) that was killed on the afternoon of Nisan 14th, taken home and roasted and then the meal was eaten between the evenings "*ben ha arbiem*" (end of Nisan 14 at the beginning of Nisan 15 which is also the Feast of Unleavened Bread).

Deuteronomy 30:9—"The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers: ¹⁰ If you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹¹ "For this commandment which I command you today *is not too* mysterious for you, nor *is* it far off. ¹² It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it?' ¹³ Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it?' ¹⁴ But **the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.**"

¹⁵ "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess." **2 Timothy 2:17** (KJV) — Pray and "**study** to show yourself approved to God — a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing (understanding) the word of truth." It is not that hard, but we do have to be prepared to do several things because there are so many variations and confusion of teachings. **Acts 5:32**—

God gives his Holy Spirit to those who obey him. If we want to receive God's Holy Spirit, we have to be willing to obey him and follow Christ's example. Christ said: "Seek and you shall find. Knock on the door and it will be opened to you. Ask, and it will be given you."

For anyone who is confused and searching for the truth and really wants to please and obey God and be in his kingdom, I would recommend: **1.** Pray with humility and for a teachable heart and ask God to open your eyes to the truth. **2.** Study carefully and patiently what the word of God says. Christ said: **John 17:17**—"Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth,**" not men's words and opinions. **3.** Start at the very beginning. **Psalm 19:7**—"The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

Exodus 12 gives you a sequence of events clearly outlined. When did the first Passover occur and when was it given to Israel? What were the instructions in preparing and keeping the Passover? What and when is *ben ha arbayim*? Just read the whole chapter. *Ben ha arbayim* was from 12 noon until sunset—the time between the two evenings (as the sun is going down). When the sun is set, it is down. Study the Old Testament first. Then go to the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and add those to the picture and you will get to see the truth much more clearly. My article, *When Should We Observe the Passover*, deals primarily with Exodus 12 verse by verse.

"The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel took some of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it (the lamb).⁸ Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs." "For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD."¹³ Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike when I strike the land of Egypt. You shall eat it (Passover lamb): with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. This day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. And it shall be an everlasting ordinance for you and your sons forever.'"¹⁴ "Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing."¹⁵ ³⁶ And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them *what they requested*. Thus they plundered the Egyptians." The Israelites were prepared to leave Egypt the minute Pharaoh gave permission, before he changed his mind.

Verses 15-34 instruct when and how the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to be observed. "From Nisan 14 through Nisan 21 until evening, you shall eat *unleavened* bread; for seven days no leaven is to be found in your dwellings, and you shall eat nothing leavened. Whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land."

²⁹ "And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who *was* in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock."³⁰ So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. Go, serve the LORD as you have said."

³² Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also."

“The Egyptians urged the people that they might send them out of the land *in haste*. For they said, ‘We shall all be dead.’³⁴ So the people took their dough *before it was leavened*, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders.”

Exodus 12:51—“And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies.” **Numbers 33:3-4**—“They departed from Ramses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians. The **Egyptians** were **burying** all their firstborn, whom the Lord had killed among them.” Israel was marching out of Egypt as soon as it was early morning daylight. The Egyptians were burying their dead early the next day. If the tons of dead bodies were left laying around waiting to be buried, they would have contaminated the land and disease would have spread throughout the entire land. It could be looked upon as similar to the time of the bubonic plague during the Elizabethan Era in England which caused such large numbers of people to die (1563 outbreak claimed 80,000 people in England) that death carts were used to load the piles of bodies to minimize the risk of contagion.

The point I want to make is that many people get intimidated and don’t feel confident or qualified to search and check and verify things out for themselves. Somehow, they feel that they can just trust their minister or trust some man to “research” it all and present it to them. Then all they have to do is accept it. In other words, there are ministers and teachers who do not teach the truth but teach lies, inherited errors, myths and fables, but do not teach the truth. **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10**—“The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, *because* they did not **receive the love of the truth**, *that they might be saved*.¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Take the time, make the effort to study and read and prove the word of God yourself. When a miner is looking for gold, he goes thorough a lot of work, a lot of searching, long hours and stretches of territory with his map and equipment of pick axe, shovel, pan and pack horse to eventually hit that right stream or dirt to strike that reward of gold.

A lot of people would put more work into finding gold than they would into finding the truth and kingdom of God. Christ said in **Matthew 13:35-36** — “Again, the *kingdom of heaven is like* a merchant seeking beautiful **pearls**, who, when he had found one **pearl of great price**, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” Think about the effort you are willing to put forth to be in the **kingdom** of heaven and the promise of eternal life (1 John 2:25).

Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom the one
Which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:14).

Revelation 21:1-Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.² Then I, John saw *the holy city, New Jerusalem*, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.⁴ *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more*

death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”⁶ And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.”⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son.⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

God wants us to have the “pearl of great price”. In order to obtain it, we must have the desire to put forth the effort to follow Christ and do the will of the Father and what is pleasing to Him. If we love God and Yeshua, we will keep his commandments, which include observing the Sabbath (*Shabbat*), the annual holy days of Passover (*Pesach*), Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost (*Shavuot*), Trumpets (*Rosh Hashanah*), Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), and Shemini Atzeret. God’s true calendar is the basis of God’s annual holy days and the observed first crescent of the new moon (*Rosh Codesh*) that begins each new month. Daily searching and reading the Bible will strengthen our faith, comfort, inspire, and reinforce our steady spiritual growth in wisdom and understanding. The Scriptures are more valuable than riches of gold, or silver, or precious jewels because the Bible teaches us how to live and shows us the path of eternal life.

Hebrews 11:6—“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” How can we say we diligently seek God, if we don’t study his Word and meditate on it? If we don’t pray, how can we say we are earnestly seeking God? **Deuteronomy 4:9**—“But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” **Psalms 14:2**—“God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God.” **Philippians 2:12**—we are to have a one on relationship with Christ and are to work out our “own salvation with fear and trembling”. Got to have people around? What if those people are deceived and just going along with them you are deceived, too?

Isaiah 55:6-13— “Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.” How do we return to the Lord? We return to God by repenting of our sins.⁸ “For My thoughts not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.⁹ “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Get rid of excuses, when your human nature says “it is just too complicated”. Take the attitude that it may not be nearly as complicated as I think. Be patient, take the time to carefully study everything and absorb the words from the Bible. Get rid of preconceived ideas and assumptions. Refrain from assuming that anybody is right, or giving favorable preference to anyone. Just read the word from the Bible with an open mind—a clear/uncluttered mind—without any preconceived ideas of what the answer is. Otherwise you will wind up reading your own ideas into the scriptures. **Proverbs 16:25,33**—“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.” We need to do more than just what seems right, and search the scriptures and prove what is right. **Acts 17:11**—“these (the Bereans) were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and

searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” They heard what Paul preached; then they opened their Bibles and searched the Scriptures (Old Testament). They put out the effort to find out what things were true, and what things were not true. They did not pass it off, but went directly to the Word of God to see and back it up for themselves.

When I was a senior in high school, I listened to several night-time religious radio broadcasts and received a lot of free literature from all of them. I zealously read it all and looked up every verse, trying to learn what God wanted me to do with my life. The 10:30 p.m. program by H.W. Armstrong really caught my attention because he would repeatedly say: “Blow the dust off your Bible, open it up and believe the Bible and what it says—not what I say, or what any other man says.” His challenge caused me to read the Bible to prove whether he was right or not. I found out about pagan holidays—Easter, Christmas, and Halloween vs. holy days, and that the Bible commands us to keep the Sabbath. See my article on *Pagan Holidays or God’s Holy Days — Which?* I found out that the Bible commands that we keep the annual holy days that God instituted. Later, I found out H.W.A., still kept the wrong Passover and Pentecost. *Pentecost* can be Sivan 5 6, or 7 and is not on a Sunday every year because of the length of the month. I continued to study and search using many different Bible helps and discovered the arguments over Passover and Pentecost which is all in the Bible dictionaries and commentaries. I consider that God opened my mind to see his truth because I was studying and re-proving everything. God’s way is not man’s way. For whatever reasons, H.W.A. became side-tracked and stopped growing in truth and knowledge.

You will find out the time of the judges was one of the bloodiest histories in Israel. The book of Judges takes its title from the fact that it records the activities of twelve men and one woman, designated as judges and raised up by God to deliver Israel in times of apostasy and disunion after Joshua’s death. No one was capable of such leadership as Joshua had exercised. The *fourfold cycle so common in Israel’s history (rebellion, retribution, repentance, and restoration) occurs repeatedly*. Joshua is a book of victory; Judges is a book of defeat. Joshua, the leader, had died, but God remained. There was no necessity for defeat. But Israel did not have the faith to enter the Promised Land after the bad report brought back by the spies, despite the positive words and encouragement by Joshua and Caleb. So God pronounced a curse upon that current generation who would have 40 more years of wandering in the wilderness and die there.

The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. The next generation forsook God and followed other gods (idolatry) of the people that were round about them and bowed themselves unto them (Baal and Ashtaroth) and provoked the Lord to anger and he sent Israel into captivity. God raised up judges who delivered Israel—Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Barak. God kept forgiving them and restoring them and sending Israel deliverers – Gideon, Jephthah and Sampson. Finally God sent them Samuel.

The last verse in the book of judges summarizes this period. **Judges 21:25**—“**In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.**” The result was bloodshed and death, just as Solomon said: “there is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” If we want the way of life, we need to go by God’s way, not man’s way. Again, it gets back to daily searching of the Scriptures. The Old Testament in many places predicted the coming of the Messiah, and what he would be, do and accomplish. He would be greater than Moses. Christ would expound and explain and magnify the Law of God.

Isaiah 66:1-2—“Heaven *is* My throne,
And earth *is* My footstool.
Where *is* the house that you will build me?
And where *is* the place of my rest?
For all those *things* my hand has made,
And all those *things* exist,”
Says the LORD.

**But on this one will I look:
On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word.”**

To me, some of the greatest cathedrals are found in nature –Yosemite National Park, the Giant Sequoias the Cascades, and the Grand Canyon—God’s Creation. If we respect God and fear God, then we will tremble at his word and will want to understand it and will study repetitively until we get it right. The things that we don’t understand, we will hold in abeyance until we read further and gain better understanding. Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived except for Christ himself. Solomon wrote:

Ecclesiastes 12:1-5, 7— “*Remember your Creator* before the evil days come.”

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth,
Before the difficult days come,
And the years draw near when you say,
“I have no pleasure in them”:
While the sun and the light,
The moon and the stars,
Are not darkened,
And the clouds do not return after the rain;
In the day when the keepers of the house tremble,
And the strong men bow down;
When the grinders cease because they are few,
And those that look through the windows grow dim;
When the doors are shut in the streets,
And the sound of grinding is low;
When one rises up at the sound of a bird,
And all the daughters of music are brought low.
Also they are afraid of height,
And of terrors in the way;
When the almond tree blossoms,
The grasshopper is a burden,
And desire shall fail.
For man goes to his eternal home,
And the mourners go about the streets.
Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was:
And the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN

Ecclesiastes 12:9—“And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs. ¹⁰The Preacher (Solomon) sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright—words of truth.

¹¹ The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd. ¹² And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books *there is* no end, and much study *is* wearisome to the flesh. ¹³⁻¹⁴ **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:**

Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil."

The Scriptures are words of truth. Words of the wise are like goads (prods) that stir to action—to get one going. There is no coasting into God's kingdom. "Faith without works is dead." God says we are to be doing his works of righteousness, practicing his commandments—not only just believing! God's true servants nail down the truth by study and witness to what they learn. God's word is like a well-driven nail—it holds firmly. In order to know how to preserve and protect God's commandments, you have to know what they are. How do we learn what God's commandments are? By reading the Bible, we learn the Torah (which is the first five books of the Law) and need to read through the entire Bible—the Old Testament and the New Testament. Torah literally means teaching. The whole Bible is the teaching of God and it is all equally inspired.

2 Timothy 3:16—"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

There are so many mysteries in God's word. We can find so many interesting facts and knowledge. Another question someone asked was, please explain the meaning of **Exodus 23:19**. "**The first of the first-fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.** *References: Adam Clark Commentary, Jamison-Faucet Brown Commentary, Vol. 1, The Chumash.* Cappy found the texts I requested and brought all of these to me as asked. This command was found in the Bible three times. **Exodus 23:19** —"The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God. You *shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.* **Exodus 34:26**—'The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. **Deuteronomy 14:21**—“You shall not eat anything that dies of itself; you may give it to the alien who *is* within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you are a holy people to the Lord your God. You *shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk*”.

As I began to research this and write yesterday afternoon, I found an interesting and complete answer. The commentary showed that in those ancient days, there was a common practice among the heathen nations and is said to still be a common practice today among the Muslims. "After you bring in your harvest, you shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. It was a custom of the pagan (heathen) to take a kid from its mother, boil the meat in its mother's milk, after the meat is eaten the liquid is poured out on your trees, crops and your land to ensure a good crop for the following year." It is a pagan practice of superstition. God is telling his people not to practice this insensitive, cruel, irreverent, and unloving pagan ritual.

The *Chumash* had an altogether different explanation. The Jewish commentary said it means you shall not eat animal products with dairy products at the same meal, i.e., meat and milk and butter at the same meal. I discount the Jewish rabbis' explanation of this scripture, because the

Bible itself tells us that is a foolish explanation and not what the verse means at all. The scripture does not contradict itself.

Genesis 18:1-8—“Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. ² So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, ³ and said, “My Lord, if I have now found favor in your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. ⁴ Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant.” They said, “Do as you have said.”⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes.” ⁷ And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender calf and hastened to prepare it. ⁸ **So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.”**

Proverbs 1:2-7—the proverbs of Solomon.

To perceive the words of understanding,
To receive the instruction of wisdom,
Justice, judgment, and equity;
To give prudence to the simple,
To the young man knowledge and discretion
A wise man will hear and increase learning,
And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,
To understand a proverb and an enigma,
The words of the wise and their riddles.
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Brethren, study to show yourself **approved unto God**, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (**2 Tim. 2:15**). Let everything you do reflect your love of the truth and in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works and the fact that you are in dead earnest about it. God will reward you with everlasting life.