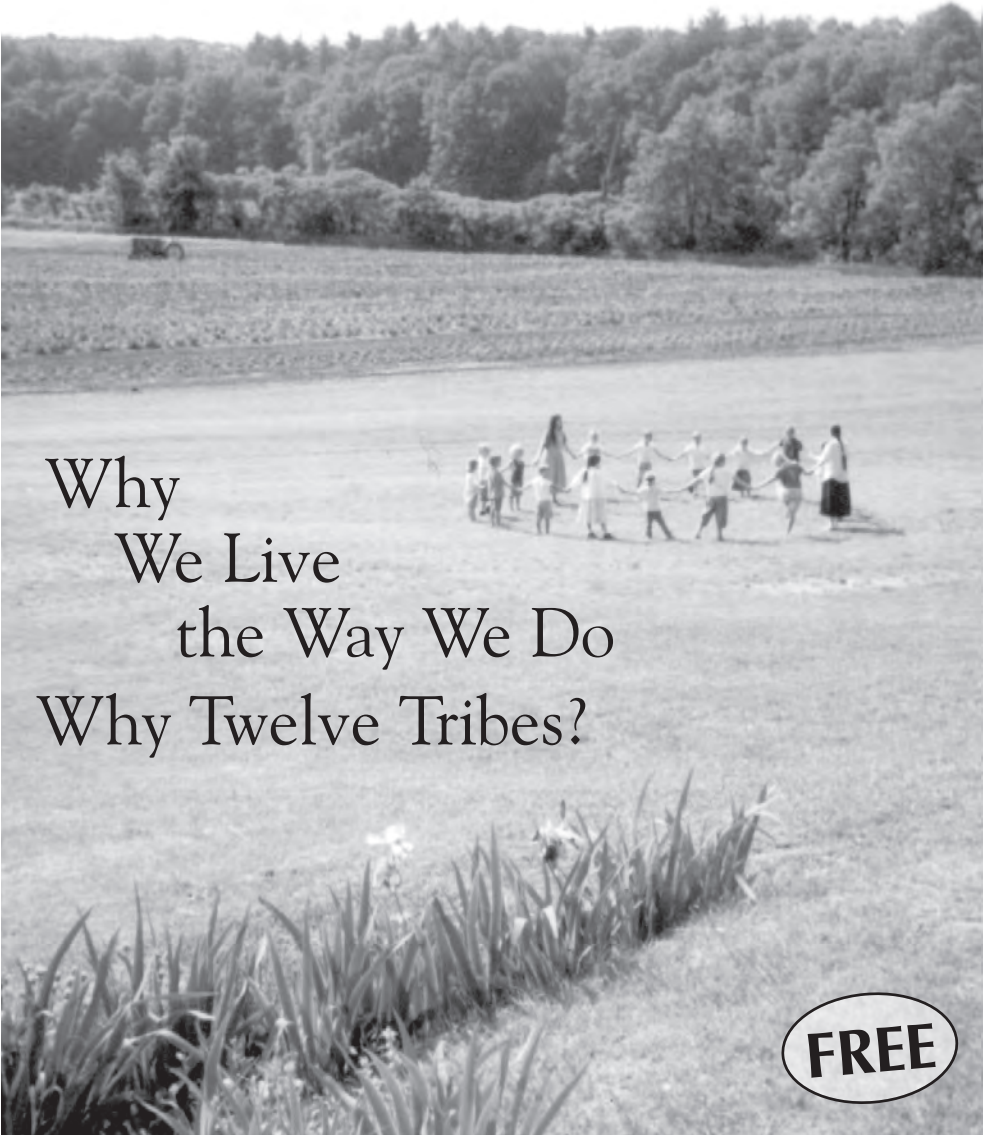




*The*  
**TWELVE TRIBES  
FREE PAPER**

And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet,  
and on her head a crown of twelve stars... (Revelation 12:1)



Why  
We Live  
the Way We Do  
Why Twelve Tribes?

**FREE**

# Why We Live the Way We Do

or,  
What it Means  
to be Chosen



*The Master chose certain men to follow Him as disciples.  
What did He require of those men? Does He require any less of us today?*

The Master and Savior we know said that He alone has all authority in heaven and on earth.<sup>1</sup> Since He had all authority on earth, He assumed the right to direct the lives of all those whom He called. In the “Great Commission” He said that all those who believed were to be taught to obey everything He spoke in all the Gospels, especially the so-called hard sayings:

*“Go therefore and **make disciples** from all the nations, baptizing them [i.e., immersing them into the Body<sup>2</sup>] in the name [i.e., the reality] of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to **obey all that I commanded you;**<sup>3</sup> and lo, I am*

*with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)*

Our Master summoned His followers to active service as disciples, not weekend warriors who still carried on their jobs during the week.<sup>4</sup> This was the only way to fulfill the “Great Commission” — by making disciples who obey all His commands.

The first thing He commanded His original twelve disciples to do was to leave everything behind<sup>5</sup> — homes, farms, parents, relatives, friends,

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<sup>1</sup>Mt 28:18   <sup>2</sup>1 Cor 12:13   <sup>3</sup>John 14:21  
<sup>4</sup>2 Tim 2:4   <sup>5</sup>Mark 10:28-30;  
Acts 2:44-45; 4:34



Once... a long time ago



children, brothers, sisters, jobs, and ambitions — and set out with Him on His mission. He demanded that they, His followers, should uproot themselves, that they should abandon the safety of the status quo and the security of their own domains. These words of His in Mark 8:34-38 and 10:17,21,28-30 were the most direct and powerful words He spoke concerning a person's salvation. These very precious words were the unmistakable good news of how to escape from death.

In short, He demanded that they bid farewell to "normal life" and actually hate their life in the abnormal society of their day,<sup>6</sup> with its "my four and no more" existence, to take up their cross and follow Him.<sup>7</sup> He demanded loyalty and devotion to Him and to His commands, and the Good News we have today still demands the same response.<sup>8</sup>

The only evidence that a person has a personal relationship with the One who has all authority in heaven and earth is that he puts His very

precious words into practice.<sup>9</sup> Only those who see the worth and value of Messiah will be able to do this; everyone else will do what the rich young ruler did — reject the free gift of eternal life by not obeying Him.<sup>10</sup> If His commands do not apply to us in the same way as to His disciples in the first century, we cannot prove to be His disciples,<sup>11</sup> doing the things that show that we are worthy of Him.<sup>12</sup> We would be something less, for just as He gave up His life for our sake, so we must give up our sinful lives for His sake, even our own righteousness.<sup>13</sup> And He would be something less if He were to accept anything less, for then He would not be the same yesterday, today, and forever.<sup>14</sup>

In the same way, if we do not demand the



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<sup>6</sup>John 12:25; 1 Pet 1:18-19 <sup>7</sup>Mt 16:24 <sup>8</sup>See "Demystifying the Body of Christ" on p. 9; <sup>9</sup>John 3:36; 8:51 <sup>10</sup>Acts 13:46; Luke 10:16; John 3:18,36 <sup>11</sup>John 15:8 <sup>12</sup>Mt 10:37-39 <sup>13</sup>Isa 64:6 <sup>14</sup>Heb 13:8

there was a group of people who loved one another...



same response, we will find ourselves preaching another gospel by the power of another spirit and will be proclaiming another Jesus.<sup>15</sup> We will be found preaching a message that a man's life, possessions, and family<sup>16</sup> are more important than knowing Messiah. We would be utterly unworthy of Him, even accursed,<sup>17</sup> so how could we preach to others?

## **Demands of the Gospel**

Every Christian needs to know from His objective word all that He demanded of His followers, in order to know whether he has received the true gospel.<sup>18</sup> His words are deserving of full acceptance, for He is the Word made flesh. His sacrifice demands that loyalty to Him should surpass the dearest and most intimate loyalties in life. Loyalty to Him must come before all things, including all of your own possessions. Possessions are not only the material things that you own, things that you control, but also the things that control you. This includes relationships, loyalties, passions, opinions, and ideas. To cling to anything, no matter how well accepted by society or the religious establishment, is to forfeit eternal life.

To give up all of your possessions means to gladly surrender everything you own, relinquishing your control over them and their control over you, letting go of every other spirit, idea, or passion, so as to be ruled by the words and commands of the Master.

Our Master Yahshua does not despise or attack family relationships, and neither do we, but there can be no earthly ties, however intimate, that weigh greater than loyalty and devotion to Him. This unconditional loyalty, both to Him and to His Body,<sup>19</sup> is the very essence of eternal life. To give anything less than He demands is to forfeit eternal life.

## **Total Surrender**


This is what it means to surrender to Him. It is what a desperate man will do in order to cling to the One who has the power and authority to save him from sin and death. This is what it means to be saved by grace through faith. No one can do anything to be saved except believe, which, as the

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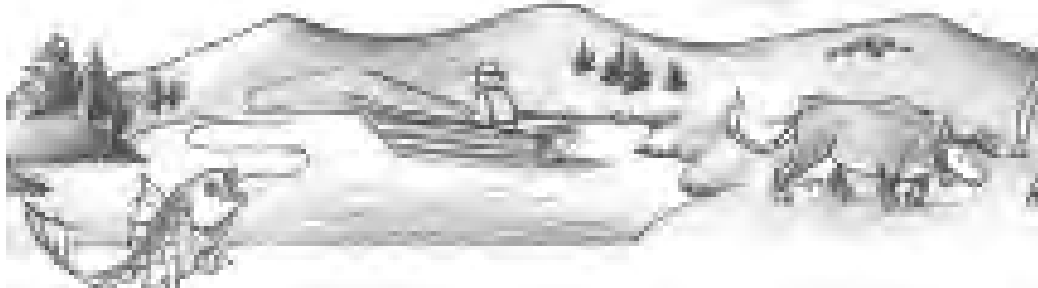
<sup>15</sup>2 Cor 11:3-4; 13-15    <sup>16</sup>Mark 3:34-35

<sup>17</sup>Gal 1:8    <sup>18</sup>1 John 5:12-13

<sup>19</sup>Eph 1:22-23



**Among that group, a few had been fishermen, a few had been farmers, a couple had worked for the government, and the rest had done a lot of different things. With the great love they had, they decided to live as close to one another as they possibly could. To do this, the ones with property and possessions sold what they had and**



Scriptures make abundantly clear (especially in the Greek text), means you come into the obedience of the faith.<sup>20</sup> Apart from this obedience there is no objective proof that you love this Savior who saved you from eternal death.<sup>21</sup> Surrender means to make your life available to Him to the extent that He controls all your time, resources, and ambitions. It means that loyalty to Him must come before loyalty to your own life, to wife and children, mother and father, friends, brothers and sisters, jobs and education, ambitions and desires. To be set free from these things is what enables you to follow Him and become His disciple.<sup>22</sup> Total surrender is the normal response to God's gift of faith.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, He made it clear that whoever does not take up his cross daily and follow Him is not worthy of Him.<sup>24</sup> The word daily in Luke 9:23 entails all the demands upon your life within the Body of Messiah. This Body, which we were immersed into,<sup>25</sup> must be a community where the demands to lay down your life are the essence of



your daily experience.<sup>26</sup> This is what it means to serve Him where He is.<sup>27</sup> Laying down your life for your brothers daily is the greatest expression of love that can be demonstrated.<sup>28</sup> If it were not for this life in community, where would you live after you gave up all

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<sup>20</sup>Romans 1:5; 10:16; 16:26 <sup>21</sup>John 14:15,21,23,24 <sup>22</sup>Luke 14:31-33

<sup>23</sup>2 Cor 5:14-15 <sup>24</sup>Mt 10:38-39; 16:24; Mark 8:34,35; Luke 17:33; 9:23,24; the Greek word translated **worthy** in Matthew 10:37 means: deserving, comparable, or suitable. It is the same word used in Rev 3:4, Col 1:10, and Acts 13:46. Those who are worthy He is not ashamed to call His brothers, Heb 2:11. <sup>25</sup>1 Cor 12:13 <sup>26</sup>1 John 3:16-18 <sup>27</sup>John 12:26 <sup>28</sup>1 John 3:16; John 15:12-13

brought the proceeds of the sales to the leaders of the group to be shared with those who had need. Not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. They lived together, worked together.

There was not a needy person among them.







your possessions, as Acts 2:40,41,44,45 describes? Who can you encourage daily apart from this environment — the “brothers in Christ” you see once a week?<sup>29</sup> How can you seek first His kingdom and His righteousness when you, just like an unbeliever, are so extremely busy making ends meet, trying to keep your family properly clothed, fed, and sheltered?<sup>30</sup>

## To Never See Death

The Master expressed these things in no uncertain terms. He made it clear that true disciples abide in His word,<sup>31</sup> and that it is by keeping His word that one would not see death.<sup>32</sup> The word is not vague. The choices are clear. He did not speak in the realm of “various interpretations,” any of which might be valid. But today it is virtually impossible to find Bible teachers or Christian reference books that uphold the absolutes of the Scriptures we have been talking about. Where can you go in the Christian churches today to find absolutes rather than various interpretations that contradict each other?

For example, how many interpretations can you find of what the Master said in Luke 14:26-33 among today’s Bible scholars? But their interpretations miss the point. They labor over the exact meaning of “hating your parents” or “hating your own life,” but fail to see that what the Master stressed is the absolute, unqualified, unconditional claim that He has on

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<sup>29</sup>Heb 3:12-13    <sup>30</sup>Mt 6:31-33

<sup>31</sup>John 8:31-32    <sup>32</sup>John 8:51



**Who were these people? Were they German Marxists, Communist revolutionaries, or hippie idealists? No, they were the first community in Jerusalem, followers of the Son of God, the Messiah, and His teachings. Their great love for one another, and their great zeal, had brought them together to become a New Israel. They were determined to grow into a new nation of people who truly loved one another from the heart. All the**



the life of all disciples. They totally miss the fundamental significance of these verses,<sup>33</sup> especially the parable of the two kings (verses 31-33). Total capitulation and the surrender of all possessions are the only terms of peace the Master ever offered to anyone seeking eternal life. It is the very same response He gave in answer to the question, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"<sup>34</sup>

Death is absolute for all mankind, for it is the wages of sin,<sup>35</sup> and the call out of death is absolute, without compromise. The Son of God, who came to save from death, requires absolute loyalty from all who would believe according to the gospel. This is good news to the one who is willing to do His will.<sup>36</sup>

So are these qualifications and demands not relevant today? How else can one follow Him except within the framework of true community?<sup>37</sup> If the message of salvation was preached once again with His authority, then there would also be, once again, a living demonstration of a radically new life lived corporately like the Judean pattern (with persecution<sup>38</sup>) established

for the church in Acts 2 and 4 after Pentecost. Then the Holy Spirit would be able to convict the world of the sin of unbelief.<sup>39</sup> But until this happens, the whole world is lost because they cannot see anything that proves that the Father sent the Son.<sup>40</sup>

### So why do we live the way we do?

Because the gospel compels us to.<sup>41</sup> The gospel is the answer to the basic problem with humanity, which is the disintegration of basic human relationships. This is expressed in alienation and loneliness. So we live the way we do because our God wants to prove that our Master took away the guilt of sin that separates us. If it is true that He broke down all barriers and thus solved this basic problem with humanity, then all of us who are in Him must be one — in unity. Any outward separation is a negation of unity. Nowhere in the Bible is this unity

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<sup>33</sup>1 Cor 2:14    <sup>34</sup>Mark 10:17-30

<sup>35</sup>Rom 6:23; Heb 9:27    <sup>36</sup>John 7:17; 10:14,27    <sup>37</sup>John 12:26    <sup>38</sup>1 Ths 2:14-15; Mark 10:30; John 15:18    <sup>39</sup>John 16:8-11    <sup>40</sup>John 17:23; 13:35    <sup>41</sup>Acts 5:32; John 3:36; Phil 2:14-15; Mt 21:43; 24:14

old barriers separating people had been broken down in their midst. Their life together was the beginning of a new society that quickly grew and spread in many different localities. Wherever they lived, they copied as closely as possible the pattern that had been set in Jerusalem, loving one another in the same way as those who had first begun. But there was also much difficulty and persecution.





expressed more than in Acts 4:32-35, and this is the only way the church can be.<sup>42</sup> If the church is not like this, it is not the church that Messiah died for. It is something else, like Revelation 18:2 describes. If we are not integrated into this Body which is one, then we are still in the world and of it.

We are so thankful that we are chosen. Our Father in heaven knows who belongs to Him.<sup>43</sup> He has known us, chosen us, before the foundation of the world, just like Abraham.<sup>44</sup>

Somehow, He saw beyond our rebellion, our faults, all our problems, and knew our hearts. He knew that we would obey Him if we ever got the chance.<sup>45</sup> He gave us that chance by sending His own Son to be the sacrifice for our sins. He emptied Himself of all of His blood, plunging Him into death as our substitution in order to buy us out of the death we so richly deserved. His

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<sup>42</sup>1 Tim 2:8    <sup>43</sup>Gal 3:29    <sup>44</sup>Gen 18:19; John 8:39

*A lot changed in the short span of forty or fifty years. We don't know exactly what happened, but we do know that they fell away from their first love for their Savior, and lost their undying love for one another. Eventually, the little communities died. They still met together, but their love had grown cold.*





precious blood washed away the guilt of our sins, redeeming us from our futile way of life.<sup>46</sup> The high price He paid for us reveals how valuable we are to Him. It is the least we can do to give our lives unreservedly to Him. It is life for life. If you are not giving Him your life, He cannot save you, and unless His worth is revealed to you, you will never give up your life, for it is too valuable to you.

It is overwhelming to consider that the Creator of all things would hand pick you to do something, and that He would have confidence that you would obey Him. This is the faith He communicates to His people through the good news, that He can save them, and by this faith they can obey Him. And it is to those who will obey Him that He gives His Holy Spirit.<sup>47</sup> What an awesome God we serve! His purpose is so great! And He must have a loyal people that He can command. We are thankful to be chosen, and to live the way we do. Acts 5:20 is our command, and this is why we are writing this to you. 🍀

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<sup>46</sup>John 7:17    <sup>46</sup>1 Peter 1:18-19  
<sup>47</sup>Acts 5:32

## Demystifying the “Body of Christ”

*“If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.”*

— John 12:26

So, where is He, that a person may follow Him and be where He is? Who wouldn't want to be the servant He speaks of here? Who wouldn't want to serve Him where He is? If only we could be where He is, then everything would be so clear. Then there would surely be no more confusion and no more division. Is this talking about going to heaven one day, or what?

In John 14:18, He promised us, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” Surely He was not talking about His bodily return at the end of this age. If that is what He meant, then we have been left as orphans for the last 2000 years. But it is clear from John 14:15-17 that He is speaking of being with His disciples in the person of His Spirit:

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When they came together and talked about Messiah, it was not the same. And there was no one left to tell them what it should be like. Once it had been a community of love, the beginning of a twelve-tribed nation, Israel. Now there was none, because the Spirit of Messiah was no longer leading them...



*"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you."*

So His true disciples, the ones who put His words into practice,<sup>1</sup> will find themselves together in the same place, serving Him where He lives, as He goes on to describe in John 14:23:

*"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."*

Of course, this is exactly what happened in the first century:

*"And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common..." (Acts 2:44)*

This was no mystical unity of an invisible Church. It was a definitive, locatable Body, where Messiah Yahshua dwelled by His Spirit.<sup>2</sup> It is hard for

people to understand this today, but the apostle Paul understood it! He understood it perfectly from the day that the Master confronted him on the road to Damascus and said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"<sup>3</sup> This "Me" referred to the tangible corporate Body of believers who were one in every locality, according to the Judean pattern.<sup>4</sup>

This one Body, housing the one Spirit of God,<sup>5</sup> was described by Paul in Ephesians 4:16 as "fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part." The members of this Body are intimately connected with each other, dedicated to building each other up, until they would all attain to the full-statured maturity that their Master possessed<sup>6</sup> and the perfect unity that he prayed for in John 17:23.<sup>7</sup>

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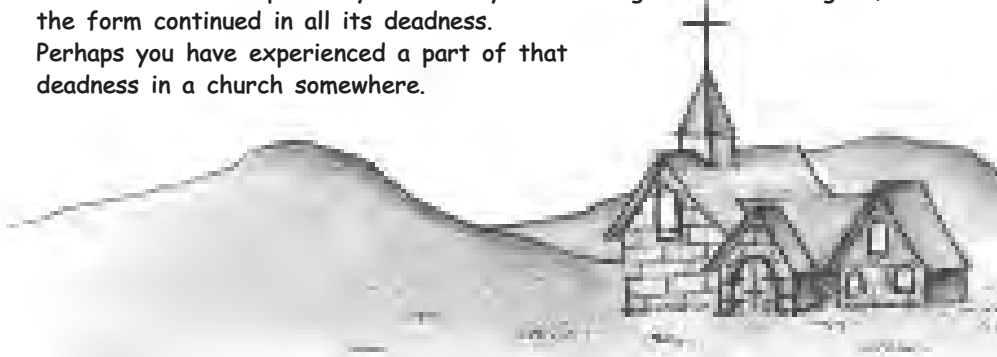
<sup>1</sup> John 8:31,51    <sup>2</sup>Eph 2:22; John 14:2,3

<sup>3</sup>Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14    <sup>4</sup>1 Ths 2:14

<sup>5</sup>Eph 4:4    <sup>6</sup>Eph 4:13; 1 John 3:2,3    <sup>7</sup>He

was not praying that his disciples would merely "agree on the essentials." They already agreed on the essentials. They wouldn't even be disciples if they didn't "agree on the essentials."

**The little groups grew stiff and formal. Rules multiplied. Arguments and intellectual debates filled the air. Leaders put on robes and rituals began. Ceremonies were repeated year after year. Although the life was gone, the form continued in all its deadness. Perhaps you have experienced a part of that deadness in a church somewhere.**



According to the words of our Master's prayer, the unity in this Body is an amazing phenomenon. It is such an obvious marvel, that it causes the world to know that the Father in heaven sent his Son, and that He loves the people of the world as



much as He loves His own Son.<sup>8</sup> Such unity only comes about because of the glory He has given to His disciples, to those who are willing to do His will.<sup>9</sup>

But what is this glory? Is it a mystical concept? No, it is the real inward worth which He imparts to all His disciples because of the inestimable price He paid to redeem them. This glory shows itself in what they say (and how they say it) and what they do (and how they do it).<sup>10</sup> These good deeds<sup>11</sup> — done in fellowship with their Savior, by the power (or grace) of His Spirit — command the respect of others. So, as each disciple sees his fellow disciples walking as his Master walked, day after day, his respect for them deepens, thus deepening the bond they all have with

each other and perfecting their unity.

So where is He today, that we might be where He is and serve Him? Is He just in heaven, waiting for us to die and join Him there? Is He mystically present in “true believers,” scattered here and there among the “tares” in the

various denominations? Or is He come in the flesh, as 1 John 4:2-3 expresses? Does He dwell, by His Spirit, in a discernible Body of disciples whose love and unity prove to the world that they belong to Him?

*“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the {spirit} of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.” (1 John 4:2-3) ❖*

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<sup>8</sup>John 3:16    <sup>9</sup>John 7:17    <sup>10</sup>1 Pet 4:11

<sup>11</sup>Rev 19:8; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:12

**When the first communities failed, Christianity began. The Son of God did not start it. Neither did His true followers, who clung to His words and obeyed His teachings. The decay and corruption were never meant to be there. We were never meant to go to a building once a week and sit there, bored out of our minds. We were never meant to have to endure that or have that emptiness fill our souls with apathy.**

**God never intended it to be that way.**



# Why Twelve Tribes?

*“And now I am standing trial  
for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers,  
the promise to which **our twelve tribes** hope to attain [for them],  
as they earnestly serve God night and day. And for this hope, O King,  
I am being accused by Jews.” (Acts 26:6-7)*

Our twelve tribes have nothing to do with mystical tribalism, as in the beliefs of the Mormons, the Rastafarians, or British Israelism. Rather, we are speaking of people actually dwelling together in unity, living a tribal life in twelve different geographical areas on the earth, so as to be a light to the nations.

When Paul, in his defense before Agrippa, referred to “our twelve tribes,” surely he was not referring to the Jews who were accusing him. There was no point in flattering them about “earnestly serving God night and day.” The Master had already prophesied to the Jews that, “The kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it” (Matthew 21:43). A new

nation had to take the place of the old. And this is exactly what Paul meant when he wrote to the Gentile Ephesians:

*“You were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ ... So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets ...”  
(Ephesians 2:12-13,19-20)*

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Just imagine what you would do if you heard this for the first time from someone brimming over with life. What if someone told you that the Creator of the universe sent His own Son to the earth to become a man and die in your place for your sins? And because of this, you could be forgiven and washed of all your guilt.





It was through apostles like Paul that this new nation was being formed, the commonwealth of Israel, or the Israel of God as Paul called it in Galatians 6:16. This new nation was not one formed by physical descendants, but of those born of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> It was a nation of an entirely different order, composed only of disciples, because only they had given up their old life<sup>2</sup> outside the commonwealth of Israel to be born again into the new holy nation.<sup>3</sup> Only they were the ones who had taken the Master seriously

enough to put aside their own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and yes, even their own life, in order to follow Him as He had commanded.<sup>4</sup> And they certainly respected His word enough to forsake their own possessions, which was the only way in which they could even begin to qualify as disciples.<sup>5</sup>

The whole emphasis of the Master's preaching was the kingdom of God and

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<sup>1</sup>Gal 3:29   <sup>2</sup>1 Pet 1:18   <sup>3</sup>1 Pet 2:9

<sup>4</sup>Mt 10:34-39   <sup>5</sup>Luke 14:26,33

**You could be reunited to your Creator who gives eternal life, and be part of His eternal purpose — the restoration of the universe. What would you do if you heard that? Would you rejoice and be glad? Would you cling to the one who told you that?**

**I would. Wouldn't you?**







how to enter it. In relative importance, the topic of the kingdom is mentioned three times as often as salvation in the New Testament. So it was absolutely essential that a nation be prepared that could inherit that kingdom.<sup>6</sup> It had to be a nation bonded together with a deeper commitment than mere family ties or blood relations. And being part of that new nation was what being a disciple was all about — and still is to this very day.

### Do You Believe in Prophecy?

Many Christians today are puzzled about this notion of a holy nation, for they do not see themselves as part of a nation, which is understandable. Some even regard these passages as merely symbolic, a mystical ideal, while others fancy that they must somehow refer to the Jews in Palestine, or perhaps Jewish Christians. But do you believe in Biblical prophecy? I know that you do.

Paul the Apostle certainly did, so much so that in fact he applied it directly to himself and Barnabas when he said, “For thus the Lord has commanded us, ‘I have placed you as a light for the

nations, that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth.’”<sup>7</sup> But is it so unreasonable to think that the apostles were raising up a twelve-tribed nation, a New Covenant Israel, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, united together by the Holy Spirit? No, not at all, because the Scripture from which Paul quoted said first, “It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob...”<sup>8</sup> Here’s a little Bible quiz: Jacob’s sons each became the head of a tribe, and all the tribes together were called Israel. How many sons did Jacob have? How many tribes were there?

Surely James knew when he wrote “... to the **twelve tribes** who are dispersed abroad, greetings.”<sup>9</sup> But Old Covenant Israel had not been a twelve-tribed nation since the days of King Solomon! Ten of the tribes vanished from history in the Assyrian captivity, some 700 years before James wrote his letter. Had James gone off the deep end? Who was James writing to, anyway?

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<sup>6</sup>Mt 21:43    <sup>7</sup>Acts 13:47    <sup>8</sup>Isa 49:6

<sup>9</sup>James 1:1

The apostle Peter knew exactly who, when he wrote:

*“For you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1 Peter 2:9-10)<sup>10</sup>*

Clearly Peter was addressing a newly-formed people who were once not a people. Something had changed in their life to warrant them being called a people, for if they had remained in their same old houses, worked their same old jobs, and only believed in Jesus, they would still be not a people. They would still remain integrated into society in the same way as Christianity is today.

“That’s all well and good,” you might say, “but why doesn’t the rest of the New Testament say anything about the church being composed of twelve tribes?”

Don’t be hasty! Have you ever heard of the church being called the “bride” of Messiah? It comes from Ephesians and Revelations:

*“... that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.” (Ephesians 5:26-27)*

*“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready...”  
(Revelation 19:7)*

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<sup>9</sup> James 1:1    <sup>10</sup> This is a direct reference to Exodus 19:5-6, which was God’s original desire for the entire twelve-tribed nation of old Israel, as is clear from the original context. But Peter was addressing the New Covenant priesthood, the new spiritual Israel that was the fulfillment of what God always wanted... Jer 30:20 – 31:1 “at that time” I will be the God of all the clans of Israel. There is no nation without tribes, no tribes without clans, no clans without families.



But the Book of Revelation gives us two other pictures of the bride, which is the church, revealing her true composition:

*And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman<sup>11</sup> clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of **twelve stars...***

*(Revelation 12:1)*

*And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are those of the **twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.** (Revelation 21:9-12)*

What do all these references signify? Twelve apostles... our twelve tribes... the commonwealth of Israel... the Israel of God... a holy nation... a crown of

twelve stars... twelve tribes of the sons of Israel... Get the picture?

We have come to see that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost gave birth to a rich tribal life of togetherness and mutual care and accountability that exposed the selfishness of that perverse generation.<sup>12</sup> This life increased and developed

into a twelve-tribed holy nation of priests<sup>13</sup> who earnestly served God night and day,<sup>14</sup> intended to fulfill Malachi 1:5,11. She should have grown to full stature as the spotless bride of Revelation 19:7, for whom Yahshua, the Bridegroom, would return in triumph as the rest of the chapter describes.

But something happened. Her love waned and the prophetic warnings of Romans 11:22, 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, and Revelation 2:5 came upon her:

*Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; **otherwise you also will be cut off.** (Romans 11:22)*

*For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might*



<sup>11</sup>the same word translated as "wife" <sup>12</sup>Acts 2:40; Phil 2:15 <sup>13</sup>1 Peter 2:9 <sup>14</sup>Acts 26:7

present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:2-3)

‘Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent. (Revelation 2:5)

The virgin bride defiled herself and became the harlot of Revelation chapters 17 and 18 — Christianity:

And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! And she **has become** a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. (Revelation 18:2)

The word become indicates a transition from one nature to another, as this is a direct reference to Isaiah 1:21:

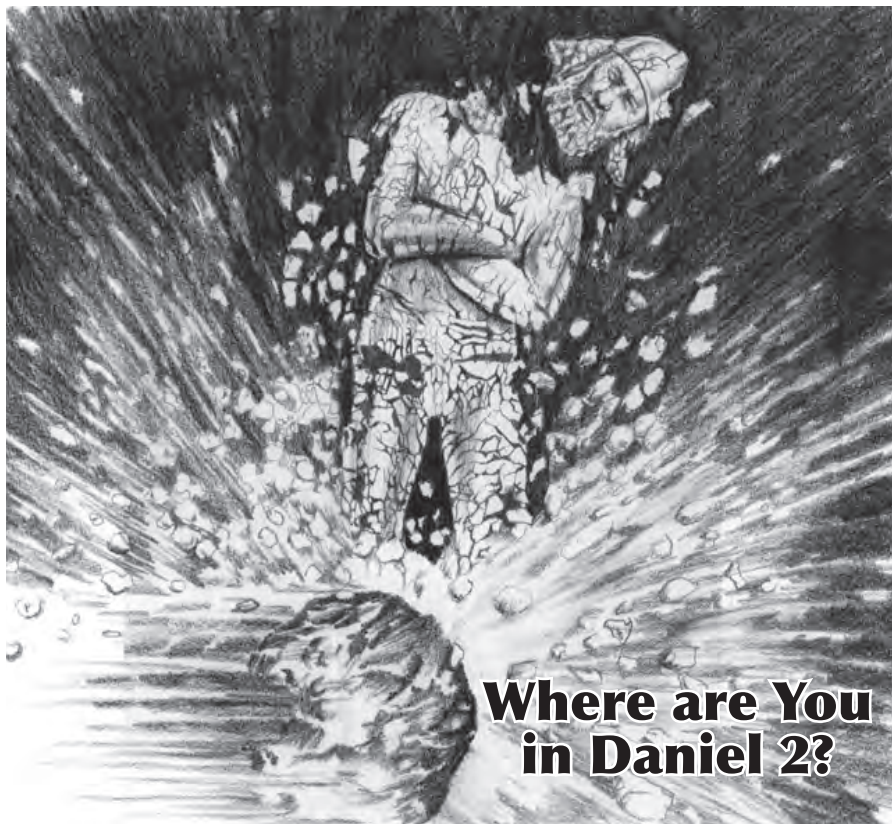
How the faithful city has become a harlot, She who was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, but now murderers. (Isaiah 1:21)

But as Romans 9:29 anticipates, a seed of that early, vital life was preserved in heaven, awaiting the fullness of time when the faith to obey the true gospel would again be kindled in a people...

“I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two, and two against three... father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” (Luke 12:49-53) ❖







## **Where are You in Daniel 2?**

Are you a part of the “Stone Kingdom” that puts an end to the “Kingdoms of the World”? Daniel said the Stone Kingdom would put an end to them, but would itself endure forever.

Or are you a part of the Statue that the Stone will crush? The Stone will strike the feet of iron and clay – the most corrupt expression of human government – the marriage of church and state.

Such evil will come on the earth once again as a fallen church attempts to gain the power to punish those who don’t agree with her. Only a corrupted government so insensitive to human rights and freedoms that it is called “beastly” will allow the church access to the machinery of power.

So where are you? Are you in the Stone, or in the Statue? Are you in the good woman of Revelation 12:1, or the bad woman of Revelation 17:3? Make sure you are in the right woman!





# *Eternity...*

*Your thoughts become your words*

*Your words shape your deeds*

*Your deeds form your habits*

*Your habits set your character*

*And your character determines*

*your Eternal Destiny.*

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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, mind, and strength, and to love one another just as He loved them. Being just 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 the Son of God came to earth 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.

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