

The Goal and the Path 2

Recap part 1 – starting fresh. You're an educated person who has never set foot in a church. You're starting from scratch. You know of Christianity and want to learn, but don't know where to start. Maybe you've heard some podcasts or watched some videos and are hearing some really bizarre things. Maybe you've dabbled and have heard some things that don't match the bible or quite make sense. You feel the pull toward faith but it's such a mess. You want to learn about the afterlife, you want to learn about eternal life, you want to know who Jesus really was, but how to get started and not get led astray?

The previous message is the place to start. Get yourself an NASB95 and make that your anchor point. Read the forward and hints in the front of that bible or at <https://www.blueletterbible.org/bibles/preface-to-the-new-american-standard-bible-1995.cfm>.

Learn when the books of the bible were written, to whom they were written, and about the authors. Context is king! This gives a lot of insight. Feel free to use legitimate historical references and commentaries. Tools like timelines show who was alive when books were written and what was happening in the world, which gives more insight.

Understand the bible and Christianity are meant to be consumed from page 1. Start in Genesis and read the entire thing, in order. Do not start anywhere else. You cannot understand the New Testament or the Messiah without understanding the build-up to His first coming. This is where the majority of people have made a huge mistake. We have nearly two thousand years of simply ludicrous doctrines and churches because people started with the flawed view that Christianity is a new religion rather than the continuation of the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If you're starting fresh, take full advantage of that. Fill the blank slate with the truth and do it in order.

Another pitfall to avoid: most Christians, even if they can quote from the bible from memory, have just memorized doctrine. Even if they say they don't. This is the reason for memorizing the verses. Mainstream Christianity, regardless of the name of the organization, is credal. They are taught doctrine from the earliest ages and then the bible verses follow the accepted doctrine. This is so central to Christianity that to become a 501c3 you must have a doctrinal statement. This is *in addition* to your purpose for the 501c3. That doesn't mean the IRS has to agree with it, just that you must have one. Ours is small and is centered on keeping the Sabbath and the holy days. It's at <https://www.thewordandtheway.net/about-us/>

This credal system is what I'm trying to get people to avoid with this series. If you have never been in that system, then you are in a better place to start. Hands down. Because for the rest of us, we

have doctrines so bred into us that we don't realize they are there. For those of us raised in churches with Sunday school or catechism classes, and have sat in pews week after week, we've been indoctrinated into systems to a degree that those systems were part of us. We had to unlearn a ton. I'm trying to save you from this so you can start from a clean baseline.

This is why we see constant doctrine wars online. People have been conditioned to memorize and prioritize a few verses that correspond to their beliefs and then stop. They drop anchors. And when you show verses that show the opposite of their believe, literal scriptures, not opinions, they call you a heretic. For believing other verses of the bible. This is madness but it's where us older people came from.

Be patient. Don't look for easy answers on the internet. Take your time. And weigh the evidence. Understand there are two things at work: the Spirit and the truth. If a doctrine is true and scriptural, you will arrive at that truth sooner or later. It's not a rush. You are not saved by correct doctrine. You are saved by accepting Yeshua as the Messiah and then behaving like it. Do that, start the journey, and enjoy the walk. Take time to explore ideas and concepts without fear.

Gates in the temple were very big. Some 80 feet deep. When the kohen had to purify himself and enter the gate, he was considered pure enough to be on the other side while still en route. Moral of the story – you're holiness is established when you start the transition. It's not a rush, it's a relationship.

Look at the bulk of evidence. No making doctrines from one verse if at all possible. In order to weigh evidence you first must examine the evidence. And do so as objectively as possible.

Slide 2 Jewish literature

Some may take umbrage at calling it Jewish literature instead of Hebrew literature or Israelite literature, but it is what it is. After the return from Babylon, the term Jew became the default term for anyone who kept the Torah regardless of tribes. The Jews were the ones who created the canon of the old testament as well as the synagogue system. The culture of the first century Christians was one of the first century Jews. Paul was a Jew as was Yeshua. And only one of them was of the tribe of Judah.

This doesn't mean we adopt the ways of modern Judaism but we also need to give respect to their preservation of the scriptures and their perspective. Understand that this group of people have historically been the most hated and persecuted people on earth. Hitler tried to kill them all and failed. Today, the world looks incredibly fine with them being hated, attacked, and even driven into

the sea. And they keep surviving. My conclusion is that God wants them here and we need to realize this.

In John 5:39, Yeshua told the Jews that they searched the scriptures because they believed the scriptures contained eternal life. Realize how people who believe the scriptures contain eternal life are going to treat those scriptures – very precious. He also went on to tell them the scriptures spoke about Him. This is why we are on this journey, remember? We need to learn about Christ and Him crucified. He is telling us right there how to learn Him – from the scriptures. At that moment in time, the only scriptures were the Tanakh, what we call the Old Testament. Eternal life is found in the scriptures! Yeshua is the way to eternal life, and He's found in the scriptures!

But it's more than just eternal life. It's about this life, too. Following Yeshua means to live as He lived. He observed the Torah perfectly. And we learn how to walk in His footsteps by learning the Torah. He was of the line of David, a Jew. He was not a priest or a Levite. The laws for kohen or Levites aren't for us. They are there for us to learn, and learn how to apply the principles of them, but the idea that there are 613 laws we are all bound to is absurd. There are 613 laws in total, but each in their own context and applying to specific instances.

To return to the theme of Jewish literature, the scriptures, all of them, Genesis to Revelation, are Jewish literature. Jewish literature has literary devices, idioms, and grammar that we do not comprehend. The translators of the NASB95 have done the best job possible of presenting the information in a way we can digest, but we can get more out of the bible if we realize we are not reading 21st century western literature, but ancient Jewish literature presented in a way modern westerners can comprehend.

Key things to understand when starting out that can really help you to understand the Word in a more original sense:

- The chapters and verse numbers aren't there. If possible, don't read them or pay attention to them. They were added 1000 years after the first century by people who were as removed from the Bible's culture as we are. These artificial breaks often break up thoughts and make it seem like there's a change in content or meaning when there isn't. But for those of us who grew up citing chapter and verse, those numbers are a barrier to learning the truth.
- Don't read the headings that tell you what you are about to read. Those are VERY modern additions. Only read the text of the scriptures and come to your own conclusions.
- Idioms – sayings that meant something in their day that they don't mean today. Thanksgiving. Posting on the internet. Superbowl. All terms that don't mean anything without our modern context.

- This is also a problem because things that are idioms to us probably aren't to the bible authors, too. One hitch is how we keep time vice how the bible does. Days, months, years, and hours. They had a totally different system and the Romans had even another different system. In the days of King....
- Language is not static. The exodus is about 1400 years before Yeshua. The bible was written over a period of about 1500 years. A lot happens in 1500 years. Languages evolve, words take on different meanings. We have a notion in our heads that Hebrew stayed exactly the same since it's inception, but that's never even been possible.
- Explain the LXX and how it's the oldest Tanakh we have. And why Jews reject it.
- The New Testament was written in Greek and almost certainly based on the LXX. If you want to see how a NT word translated into a Hebrew word, the LXX is the middle man.
- The fact that the NT was written in Greek does not mean that it was conveying Greek philosophy. You can learn Hebrew culture in a different language, which is why the LXX was made.

Slide 3 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?" (Act 2:5-8)

There were many miracles at Acts 2. Since this is a message for new people, I'll explain the significance. It's key to why we want to read the bible from the beginning and without preconceived notions as much as possible. The Torah has a set of annual Holy Days which are the foundation for all of mankind's holidays. They happen on different calendar than we use. Most of Christianity, like 99%, looks at these days as purely rituals that have no significance to us today at all. This is a mistake. Each of the Holy Days in the Torah has levels of significance beyond their literal observations. Their literal observations also had real meaning as well. Many have heard that Christ is the Lamb of God and is "our Passover". This is quite true. To the point that He died on Passover, which is one of these days. He was resurrected on the day of first fruits, which is another of these days. He ascended back to God 40 days after He was resurrected. And then He sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles ten days later, which was the Day of Pentecost. This is a holy day from the Torah that is based on counting 50 days from the day of first fruits. The apostles were gathered because they were continuing to keep Torah even after Yeshua ascended. They never stopped doing this. And they were blessed by doing so with the gift of the Holy Spirit. The other part of this day is that it's a day when many faithful people from all over the world would go to Jerusalem. It's a pilgrimage festival,

set nearly 1500 years prior, for this specific day. Where all the people present would witness the Holy Spirit empower the Apostles and they would hear the Word of God in their native tongues. This is an example of how blessed we are to approach the faith as a continuation of the faith of Abraham rather than something different.

This is a departure from a lot of purists: we don't need to learn another language. This was not the intent as evidenced by Acts 2. Even some of the Tanakh was originally written in Aramaic, instead of Hebrew. The entire Tanakh, the Old Testament, was translated into Greek about 150 years before Yeshua and circulated to the synagogues. This paved the way for all those faithful to be present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. And it's our example. With a faithful and literal bible translation and the help of the Holy Spirit, we will come to the knowledge of the truth.