

Two Ransoms — Letter from Almah

This is an example of a letter that Yoneq feels is very good to send to your parents and relatives. It is written by Almah from a teaching given here. Obadiah and Barak helped her to compile the teaching. I have omitted the more personal examples, but it is good to use such examples to help relate to those you are writing.

Dear Dad,

I'm so thankful I'm in a place where I can experience true life and can be near to my Creator. I'm thankful I was born in such a significant time when He could be found. A few days ago I got up early and took a walk. Everything was very dark but then I saw it — the morning star. Ah, it was so beautiful. As I stood there in the quietness, looking at it, I said to myself — "I know who you are." Yahshua, my Creator, He is the morning star, that dawned in my heart after such a long and lonely winter night. He is also the Lily of the Valley that blooms after the dark winter that my life was before I met Him — the Son of God. I want to give Him my whole life. He is worth everything. I am totally satisfied with Him.

I want our children to have what I have. It's not material possessions or a comfortable life which sometimes I get caught up in, and though you faithfully provided all those things for me as I grew up I was not satisfied and had no real life and no real love. Please don't misunderstand me. I'm grateful for everything you did for me and gave me. I believe that in your mind, according to your ability and understanding, you gave me the best. But maybe what I'm writing here helps you to understand why I chose a life different than the life you offered me, and even though I didn't go in the way you wanted me to go I do love you and care about you

I feel like words really fail me as to how to express to you how lost and alone I was before I came to the community. I was without hope and without God in the world. I'm not saying that community saves anybody for surely it doesn't. In fact without the Holy Spirit man is not meant to live in community. It is a torture chamber for the flesh. Looking around at all the communes and communities that have ended up in immorality, hostility, and eventually dividing and falling apart, testifies to this. But what I was drawn to in the community in Chattanooga was the life and the love that was there.

I know this life is the same life that's inside of a bud that causes it to open. What's working there is an incomprehensible force. It's what causes babies to be conceived, what causes them to breathe their first breath, what causes grass to grow, the wind to blow, that forms clouds, what holds the whole universe together and even causes men to rise from the dead, and if I'm not connected to that force then I'm dead. That force, that life is Yahshua, the Master of the Universe, and everybody that's not connected to that life source is just a walking dead person, because their spirit has not been made alive to Him. Their spirit is not compatible with God unless they have been reconciled, forgiven and brought back into fellowship, total unity and oneness with their Creator. He is coming back to marry a bride who is compatible to Him, one who is worthy of Him.

I believe the evil thing about Christianity is that it makes people think that they are reconciled to God when they are not. The fruit of Christianity is like these hybrid vegetables that you can buy now. It looks so big and beautiful but they have no seed in them. The life is in the seed and because they have no seed they cannot reproduce themselves — they are dead. You know the old saying, "You can tell a tree by its fruit. A good tree bears good fruit, and a bad tree bears bad fruit." Christianity is a bad tree that bears bad fruit, and though sometimes it looks good, its fruit has no life-producing seed. It's sterile.

In Revelations the angel said to the Churches that unless they repented of those things he spoke to them about, their lampstand would be removed and God would not walk among them anymore. Obviously they didn't repent but went into apostasy. The Church in Rome developed into the Roman Catholic Church. Just by looking at the Vatican and judging by the word of God you can tell that whatever the true Church turned into was completely void of the true life of God — going on in its own "glorious" light. And so on and on down through the ages — the Catholic Church had many daughters, divisions, and factions, and offshoots, the Lutheran Church being one of them. Probably many sincere people tried and try to make the fruit of that bad tree good but you can't. The only thing God can say now, is, "Come out of her, My people."

Honestly I'm not saying these things apart from my own experience. When I grew up church had *no life* to offer me. But dad, it's not hard for you to agree with me on this, is it? Because I remember you falling asleep almost every Sunday because you were bored to death. There was nothing drawing me in church. But when I came to the community in Chattanooga, for the first time in my life I saw an amazing thing. It's hard for me to explain because it's a spiritual thing, but all I know is I was drawn. Before I came to the community, I came to the place where I doubted that God existed and much more, that He even loved or cared about me. But through the life and the love that was communicated to me there, I believed for the first time that God existed and that He truly loved me. Deep down I knew that what I was seeing and hearing was the truth. "If any man is willing to do the will of God, he will know if the teaching is of God ..." The fruit of the life that I saw was fruit that had a seed in it.....

I don't know what was different about me than the other children of your family but I remember as a child I had such a longing in my heart to be connected to God. I'm so thankful that He sought after me and found me. "My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me." That's the only thing I could write to you when I left to come back here. When His love and His glory was revealed to me through His people, my response was to give my life to Him and to those people who bore His life — to dedicate my whole life to Him and to forsake everything to follow Him wherever He would go. That was my vow, and I still want to keep my vow.

I wanted to share with you some things I've been learning about the gospel as it's getting more and more clear to us. What's worth having costs you something. And what's worth having costs you to give up something that you *love* in order to gain something that you *love even more*. This is what "a ransom" is (Mt 10:34-39). "**Ransom**" means that which is given up to secure what is more valuable. A ransom is Jn 3:16 — God loved the world *so much* that He ransomed His only begotten Son. This is a comparison. Of course God loved His Son. That's why it says, "His only begotten Son". But the point that this verse is trying to make is that God loved the world even more than His beloved only begotten Son. That's why He gave Him up.

In the old covenant "ransom" meant "the price of a life". "Ransom" also means "**the price paid for what is redeemed**". Pr 13:8 — The ransom of a man's life is his riches. In Mt 10:37-39 a man must ransom his own life — what he loves — to have what is more valuable just as YHWH ransomed His own Son whom He greatly loved in order to gain something that He loved more. He gave up His one beloved Son that He could have many beloved sons (Heb 2:10). One Son is not enough — He needs many sons.

Why were not those who were called or invited in Mt 22:8 worthy? If one hangs on to his own life or will not forsake what he must forsake in order to have Messiah he is not worthy to have Him or eternal life (1 Jn 5:12; Mt 16:24-26; Mk 8:34-37). What will a man exchange...? — Mk 8:37 asks — or what will a man ransom, what is the price, what value is eternal life to him? It is the same exchange as in Mk 10:17-30; Mt 10:34-39 — a man must exchange his old life, and all his possessions, and his family, his dream home, and occupation (Mk 10:21). But verse 22 showed that the man did not value eternal life (verse 17) as much as he did his own life and possessions (Lk 14:33; Mk 10:28-30) — *these things were and still are the ransom price*.

So when Yahshua asked, "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?", He did not just pose a rhetorical question, even though what He said before, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?", could elude to that, by falsely insinuating that there is nothing that a person could give in exchange for his soul. Well, that is true because the redemption of our soul is costly, so costly that nothing in the world can pay it (Ps 49:7-8). That's why it says that we "were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from the futile way of life inherited from our forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Messiah" (1 Pet 1:18-19). The ransom that Yahshua paid with His blood is priceless. But there is an exchange, a real exchange, that a person must make in order to be worthy to receive the salvation that Yahshua accomplished for him.

I hope you don't mind me laboring this point as it is an essential part of the gospel. Mk 10:29 — You have to ransom your house, brothers, sisters, wife, father, mother, children, farms. What else is there one could ransom?

Should he hold on to anything at all, if he trusts the One who's saving him? He can't save us with all our junk or precious possessions and loved ones. You simply can't get into the kingdom with them (Mk 10:23-25).

2 Cor 5:14-15 — giving everything we have up, even our own life in this world, is the only way possible to not live for yourself any longer, but for Him who paid the price for our salvation. He paid this great price in order for us to now participate in the will and purpose of God in the body of Messiah, which is the community as Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:32-35 explains. *No one can be a disciple any other way* (Mt 28:18-20). There is no other gospel that calls one out of this abnormal society, this wicked and perverse, secular society (Acts 2:38-41). If anyone proclaims a different gospel, let him be accursed as Gal 1:6-10 says. Today, while the greater king is *yet far away* — we must ransom our own life and possessions (Lk 14:31-33; 12:32-34). This is essential for receiving the good news. So where is our heart? Where is the heart of Christians? Yahshua was emphatic when He said "No one..." in Lk 14:33 + 26,27 "...can be My disciple." as Mt 10:34-39 explains.

Therefore one must *dispossess himself* to be worthy of Messiah, then the life that is described in Acts 2:44-45 is not so impossible which is the only way the Church can be. Acts 2:44-45 is the result of proclaiming the complete gospel. Each denomination is the result of whichever gospel created it. In other words, if a denomination is different than how the Church was in the beginning in Acts 2:44,45 and in Acts 4:32-37 it is so because a different gospel created it than the gospel that was originally proclaimed by the apostles of Yahshua at Pentecost.

So in order to obey the gospel we must ransom our own father, mother, etc., as God ransomed His own Son for us. So again, a ransom is necessary to gain what you want more as Jn 3:16 teaches us what it cost God to have many sons that He needed (Heb 2:10-11). In Isa 62:12 the Church is called "sought out, a city not forsaken". The Hebrew word for "sought out" is *derusha*, which means "necessary", "needed", "essential". So much were we needed that it required God to make a ransom (Jn 3:16).

Our response to this great love can't be any less. It is *life for life*. Our death in baptism must be as real as His death. That means that our old life with all its dreams, hopes, ambitions, and desires, must come to a real end. That means our relationship with our own parents, if need be. That's what repentance is — to surrender your life, relationships, possessions, everything, to the Son of God. If this does not happen, and if our death is not as real as His death then it's just a mental concept. And if it's just a mental concept it is as if His blood, that was shed to gain us, or rescue us, didn't really mean anything. It's just a myth or some fairy tale. But that's not true! His death was very real.

A ransom is usually given because someone's life is in danger. I'm thankful I was rescued from the strong man who was taking me to death, to the sea of fire, this was also very real. Eternal death is also a very real thing. Not only was I rescued from eternal death but I was ransomed and freed from captivity, from the bondage of living for myself (2 Cor 5:15-16). We were redeemed from being in possession of an enemy. His sacrifice for us freed us from Satan. Our sacrifice for Him of our own life, possessions, and family is our sacrifice or ransom for Him.

And so you see, mom and dad, it's not that I don't *love you* but I have to love Messiah *more*. I had to give you up in order to *obey the gospel*. To be worthy of Him you have to give up your father and mother, and whatever is dear to you, even your own life. It says in Lk 14:26, you have to hate your father and your mother. But of course, it's not that I "hate" you, like I have some kind of animosity in my heart towards you, but I had to give you, as well as my brothers and my sister, up, that I could be worthy of Messiah. We have to love Him *more* than anything else. Mk 10:17-30; Mt 16:25-26; Mk 8:35,37 — is the overwhelming evidence of what I am saying — the Savior's own words which is the good news of salvation.

From the one who wanted the pearl of great price, the treasure hidden in the field, it was required to give up everything for it. The same response is required from us who are worthy of Him (Mt 13:44). What kind of phony faith would a person claim to have if he would not give up His life for Yahshua?

Jn 12:25-26 — Yahshua dwells in every place He has caused His name to dwell. This is the only place we can serve Him and obey the gospel. A place means a community in a township (1 Pet 2:9-15; 1 Tim 2:8; 1 Cor 1:2,

10; Mal 1:11), a place where one terminates his life to serve the Son of God (1 Cor 12:13; Rom 6:2-5). But if one has heard faith, it is proven in His obedience to the gospel (Acts 5:32; Jn 3:36). To receive the royal invitation to eternal life in the Son of God one must capitulate (Lk 14:26-33,31,32,33). Such capitulation, having been baptized into His body on earth, makes a person worthy of Him and eternal life (Acts 13:46) being registered in the Lamb's book of life (Eph 1:13) and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

He won't have us and we can't have Him unless our faith is as real as His, so we must have the faith to no longer live for ourselves (2 Cor 5:15). So to do that there must be a way for us to die to our old life, and this is by faith (Rom 10:17). Unless we have faith, what the rich man did not have, we cannot believe in our hearts what is a miracle (Rom 10:9). It is just as great a miracle to believe it in our heart as it was for God to raise Yahshua from the dead for we, too, are raised by the miracle of His Spirit by whom we made the good confession (Rom 10:9-10).

So it is certain that we ourselves cannot pay the ransom price for our sins. But we must pay our flesh to be crucified with Messiah and be baptized when we call upon His name, the name above all names, confessing His sovereignty (Rom 10:9,13) after hearing the sent one (verses 14,17), that is, someone who has the authority to proclaim the good news and to communicate faith because that person has obeyed the gospel themselves and lives a life of faith.

Even though I give you all these Scriptures and it might be hard for you and somewhat laborious to follow, I hope you won't get lost but endure until the end of my letter. I want you to know that I put a lot of thought and time into this letter, as you can see I started in fall and now it's winter, because I had a great burden that you would understand what I'm doing and why I'm doing it so that you can see my heart. I'm sure you understand the difficulties of finding time and space as a mother besides my other responsibilities in the community. But I did not want to let these things keep me from my responsibility towards you, my parents, for I do love you and care about you. Anyway, the reason why I am so detailed with the Scriptures in this letter, is so that you can see that what we are saying is not our own word but is solidly based on the Scriptures. What we are saying is actually very simple: You only can receive faith if you meet someone who has faith, and you only can live out your faith in a place where faith is being lived out.

If God had kept His Son from dying He could not have provided a ransom for us. If we hang on to our life, or hang on to our ransom, we will lose our life. If we keep back our death in baptism we will not have His life. When a person sinned in the old covenant he had to provide an atonement, a ransom, to pay the price of his sin. But if he would not provide a ransom, or if his offering was not pure, there could be no forgiveness. Of course receiving forgiveness was not like a business deal. It was based on faith. It depended upon the mercy of a forgiving God who judged each person according to their heart. He righteously forgave based on a ransom that He would provide in the future in the death of His Son. So if a person's heart in the old covenant was right they would provide the best, purest sacrifice they could. This was the expression of their faith and of how much they desired to be forgiven. The whole sacrificial system was instituted by God so that Israel would recognize and understand the sacrifice of His Son.

It is the same with us now in the new covenant (Jn 3:16; 12:25). God has already provided the ransom, but we must now give our ransom in order to be worthy to receive His ransom. Giving our ransom is the expression of our heart and our faith. We have to give up one for the other — we can't have both, His ransom, and hold on to our ransom at the same time (2 Cor 5:15).

If we hang on to our life we will lose our life. If we give up our life we will find our life. What if God had hung on to His Son and would not have given Him as the price of our redemption? (1 Cor 6:20; 2 Cor 5:14-15). He made us and He bought us. So we are His. He says, "I made you and I bought you — you are Mine."

Remember, ransom is that which is given up to secure what is more valuable (Jn 3:16). He provided the ransom for the world, and His royal invitation is, "I love you so much that I did this for you." So now He will entrust His own, His very own life to those who repent and show it by their actions in response to the gospel as Acts 2:38-41 explains. They responded to or obeyed the many other words and received faith to obey the gospel (Rom 10:16; Jn 3:36; 2 Cor 5:15). Yahshua said, "If anyone desires to save his life he will lose it. But whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." The word "desire" means "prefers", or "chooses", or "determines", or "to

will” — actually “hold on to”, “refuse to let go” — “hang on to” — “to wish” or “desire to keep his life” because he loves his life in this world. Jn 12:25 talks about hating your life in this world. You have to hate your life in this present evil age and not be deceived by the “beauty” of the world. You know, the marvel of the Eiffel Tower, a nice plush home, all the stars on Hollywood Boulevard, and other things like this. You cannot love your life in this world system because 1 Jn 2:15-17 makes it clear that “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father”, and that this “world is passing away” (Jms 4:4; Mt 4:8).

Mom and Dad, what Yahshua says in Lk 14:26 concerning you, is explained very clearly in Mt 10:37. So I did not want to save my life but give it, as well as you, mom and dad, up for a ransom, for I wanted to be worthy of my Master and Savior Yahshua and be prepared and ready for Him. This preparation is only possible by working for Him in the body, helping to prepare it for Him as a Bride by the good works I was saved to accomplish (Eph 2:10; Rev 19:7-8).

When I say “give you up”, I mean in the sense that you would have no more influence or authority over me anymore. It’s just like when someone gets married. They come out from their father’s house and his authority to cleave to their wife or to their husband, to begin a new family together. It’s even more so with Messiah, that we must come out from our old fatherhood, counting everything as loss to gain Messiah.

That doesn’t mean that I cannot have anything to do with you anymore. At one time, our Master’s family along with His mother thought that He had turned mad, and they wanted to take Him back home with them. At that time, He made it very clear to them who His real family was, those who do the will of His Father in heaven. His mind and His heart was set, that is, to do the will of His heavenly Father. Everything else was subordinate to that and nothing could sway Him.

I’m sure this was really hard for His family, but especially for His mother. She had been warned by Shimon, when her Son was dedicated as a baby, that a sword would pierce even her own heart. So when that incident happened, when Yahshua made it clear to His family who His real family was, part of that prophecy by Shimon was fulfilled. Of course that was not the only time that a sword pierced her heart. She was a humble woman, though, humble enough to receive the suffering and not resist it. She honored the words of her Son, and thus she was honored. And for this reason she was not separated from Him but could continue in a relationship with Him as you can see from the Scriptures. When our Master was dying, it was clear what His heart was towards His mother — that He really loved her.

This is our heart also, that we want to love and honor our parents. And what makes them honorable is that they would respect the decision that we’ve made for our lives. And even though they might not understand us, they are certainly welcome to come and visit and continue in a relationship with us. Even though our relationship with our parents is different after we have given our life to our Master Yahshua in that we are not under their authority anymore, that doesn’t mean that we cannot have a relationship with them at all. Our decision doesn’t *have to* cut them off from us. Our decision cuts us off from being under their authority, but not from having a relationship with them. They are still our parents, and we appreciate our parents for having been that to us. And of course, we understand that they still have an interest in us, that is just simply normal, but they just cannot control and direct our lives anymore. So what cuts off our relationship with our parents is if they don’t respect our decision and try to interfere with it. In this case the word of our Master comes true who said that He didn’t come to bring peace but a sword.

Everything will be judged by the word of God, and the word is a double-edged sword, dividing between bone and marrow, revealing the thoughts and the intentions and motives of a person’s heart. It’s all according to a person’s heart as to how they will be judged. The clearest way how a person’s heart is revealed is by the way they respond to the word of God, like the rich young ruler’s heart was not revealed until he heard the gospel; then it was clear that he loved riches more than God.

I hope so much that you could take in what I am saying here, because I believe it would show you my heart towards you and give you the needed understanding to bring healing to our relationship.

So I cannot deviate from the words of our Master recorded for us, for we live by every word that came and comes out of His mouth. The whole emphasis our Master was getting across in Mt 10:34-39 is that what

following the true Messiah as a disciple will cause. The difference between the true One and the false one is 1 Jn 5:20 which talks about being in the real Messiah, since there are so many false ones (2 Cor 11:4) propagated by Christianity (Rev 18:2). The whole letter of First John talks about what it means to be in Messiah and to have eternal life. So if a person lives out and practices what it says in this letter he can know that he has passed out of death into life because the Holy Spirit in him will give him that witness (1 Jn 3:14,24).

So the gospel kills our old man so we can live a new life. The Holy Spirit cannot do His work in us unless He can make His home in us. This is why the gospel is preached, and it is through the proclamation of the gospel that faith comes to a person.

The First Church that started in Jerusalem at Pentecost developed into the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel (Acts 26:7; 1 Pet 2:9-10; Titus 2:14; Rev 1:5-6; 5:9-10; Eph 2:12; Jms 1:1). However, by the time the letter of James was written, the twelve tribes had a false faith (Jms 2:14-27). Verse 19 — because faith without works is dead. No longer was the gospel they preached valid, since no sent ones were available to preach faith to anyone. In other words, nobody lived what they preached. The Church died since the false gospel could not put anyone to death that they might live a new life in Yahshua.

Do you think God would entrust His Spirit to a fool? A fool is a person who is fooled by the false gospel, or who is foolish enough to believe a lie. A fool is a person who believes *that Messiah's work alone is enough to save them without their response and a death corresponding to His*, or without true repentance in doing what is necessary to be worthy of Him as the gospel teaches (Mt 10:37-39).

This means that no one can be saved by Messiah's death without faith because without faith no one can obey the demands of the gospel. To try to do it without faith would be just legal obedience. This is the reason why Christians persecute those who do have faith, because their faith exposes that Christians merely have such a legal obedience, but not true faith. This faith is only imparted by the Holy Spirit upon hearing the gospel from a sent one (Jn 7:17-18). A sent one is a person that is actually sent by God Himself. They seek the glory of God and bring a gospel that exults Yahshua, causing those who receive their gospel to make Yahshua their Sovereign and to give up everything for His sake. Someone who is seeking their own glory is not sent by God. They are sending themselves. The gospel that they bring does not exult Yahshua and cause those who receive it to make Yahshua their Sovereign, giving up everything for His sake. But only if a person is willing to do God's will can they know if what they hear is actually from God or just from the one who speaks, because one gospel is true and the other is false. One person proclaims the true gospel and is blessed, the other person proclaims another gospel and is cursed (Gal 1:6-9; Jn 7:18).

Right now we are betrothed to Him, being prepared for marriage. He has so much to say — so much must be revealed to us before the end. God has not spoken one word to Christianity for about 1,900 years. Ever since the candlestick of the First Church was blown out, He doesn't walk among them anymore. They just live on memory of when they once were alive. So now they just recite different creeds — the apostle's creed, the Nicene Creed, and so on. In the liturgy it's all planned and written out for them, even weeks in advance, including the sermon and which page in the hymnal to turn to.

Yes, there are many people in Christianity who are very sincere in wanting to love God and serve Him. But God will make sure that they will be confronted with the true gospel like you. And if they are willing they will respond to the words of life they hear. It will actually be what they are longing for. It will not be just nice words they hear, but there will be a demonstration of life to back up the words. Yes, the life of the next age, when Yahshua will rule over the whole earth, has to be expressed as a foretaste and witness in this age. And it will be expressed as that witness in all the places where Yahshua rules now.

So you can see what God has to do and what He's doing now before His Son can return to the earth. God is establishing His kingdom on earth now in this age as a foretaste. The restoration of the people of God has to take place first before Messiah can come back (Acts 3:21 — but first Mk 9:12). First things first. It is just like in the old covenant when Elijah came and brought a restoration to Israel. At that time, there was hardly any difference between Israel, who was supposed to be the people of God, and the nations around them. Actually, there really wasn't. They had fallen so far that they didn't even know who the true God was until Elijah came and brought that revelation back into Israel and restored them as the nation who served the true God.

So to those who can see this restoration taking place now, this nation that's being formed, it is *marvelous* in their eyes. The calling is to participate in the redemption of the body of Messiah and its restoration (Eph 4:16; 4:1-3-6). The body, when restored, will be exactly like Eph 4:1-16; Phil 2:2-4, meaning every member of the body giving their full potential, that is, all they are in Messiah and all they have, to the building up of the body, the community. This is what love is, and this is what it means to be led by the Spirit.

This means that every person in the community will be functioning with the glorious power of God, His grace, having wisdom and understanding and true knowledge of His will. This is the only way how someone can walk in a manner worthy of Yahshua and please Him in all respects and bear fruit in every good work (Col 1:9-11). This means that every person will walk just like Yahshua walked and love like He loved (1 Jn 2:6; Jn 13:34). The result of that is the unity of faith. This unity is the expression of having received the glory of Yahshua, the love of God that's been poured out by the Holy Spirit into the heart of every true believer (Jn 17:21). Love is always expressed in unity, because love is the perfect bond of unity (Col 3:14).

Sounds utopian. But remember — it already happened as recorded in Acts 2 and 4, and remember — there is going to be a restoration of that. It's going to startle the whole world some day. Love is what's going to startle the world. Some people can see it, and some can't. It's *all* according to a person's heart. The world doesn't know what love is. Lk 12:49-52 is the fire which will light up the whole world soon, which is now being kindled by such love for Messiah as shown by ransoming my own life, or sacrificing my own self-life for His life to become that fire in me.

By His grace and strength I want to endure in this precious life and pass it on to our children. It's all I have to offer them that's of any value, that they would love God and love one another at any cost. We want to teach them to do the will of their Creator, to be kind, to share, and to give — to possess these qualities that, unlike material possessions or comforts in life, can't be taken away (Gen 18:19). These things are eternal — what we build between each other and our God will remain.

For some people the only comfort they will receive for all eternity will be what they have in this life. I would rather be like the poor man who, when he died, was carried away by angels to a place of comfort, than the rich man, or the "Christian", who pretends to see when he is not doing what Abraham did (Jn 8:39-47 as Jn 9:41 says) — because those who pretend to know Him and do not keep His commandments are a liar and the truth is not in them (1 Jn 2:4). It's an awesome judgment that their guilt will remain forever and ever (Rev 19:1-3) — I don't want my guilt to remain.

You know there is something that, over the time, is becoming very clear to me and is now very much on my conscience. And that's how I have failed you many times in having wisdom and understanding and being filled with His love in representing this life to you.

We have been learning a lot about Ex 20:5-6 — the sins of the fathers being passed on to the children to the third and fourth generation. Have you ever thought about what those sins or inherited tendencies are that have been passed on to you from grandma and grandpa and the generations before? I know I thought a lot about it.

I remember writing a letter telling grandma how *sorry* I was for getting so angry at her one time. She wrote back and so lovingly forgave me. She said, "You know, honey, it comes from both sides of the family." Some of my deep besetting sins are getting clearer to me as community is designed to bring it out — anger, anxiety, selfishness, strife to get something when I want it, stubbornness, among many other things.

Anyway all these inherited tendencies and deep moral disorders that have been passed down to me, I know I am responsible for, and I see there is no way out for me to be delivered from them except that Yahshua save me, and it's only in His body — the body of Messiah where true forgiveness is — that I have the hope to change.

I am thankful I live in this place where I can practically live out His commandments (Jn 14:21) and do His *will* (Mt 7:21) and be set free from all the bent ways in me I have inherited from you. You cannot honestly say that you or any of my own brothers or my sister has been set free and will not see death, being set free from these inherited iniquities in us, these evil bent ways and mannerisms and temperaments which can only be healed by living in the healing environment of the body, the community.

Yes, the community is the perfect environment to be healed, because living like this causes you to face what's in you — all your selfish ways and all the other manifestations of self-life. But not without hope, because it's possible with the help of Yahshua by the power of His Holy Spirit to put to death the old man with all his iniquities and corruptions, all the things in you that hinder you from keeping the commandments of God and to live a new life in Yahshua with the power to love. This is not an easy life, and it never was meant to be. It is called "the narrow way". This is what it means to pick up your cross daily which is the only way to follow Yahshua. But there is nothing more satisfying and fulfilling than to experience fellowship with your Creator, having His love and approval because you are doing what you were created to do.

The sad story, however, is that, although the First Church started out with this life, they didn't endure in it. Many became enemies of the cross of Messiah (Phil 3:18). Many started pursuing their own desires, thus falling into the snares of the devil and being held captive by him to do his will (2 Tim 2:26). They eventually turned the whole First Church into a prison of unclean spirits (Rev 18:2-5).

So that's why I plead with you now to come out of her and be washed of your sins which have piled up as high as the skies — all these inherited tendencies that will bring you to death. Come out before it's too late, for the day will come when she will be judged for all her sins (Rev 18:5,8) because she claims to see but she really doesn't. This judgment will happen but after you are no longer living, but for us — we can be those who endure to the end (Mt 24:34; Isa 53:10) to even have our lives prolonged in order to carry out His will, His good pleasure, and be purified. We have this hope because Mt 1:21 promises that His *special people will be saved by Him from these bent ways which cause us to hurt others.*

When I say "special people" it's not that we are so special, for we are just the outcasts and misfits of society, the "not many noble". Remember? As you can see from 1 Cor 1:26-31, anybody can fulfill the qualifications to become a chosen one, because God chooses the foolish and weak things, the base and despised things, the things that are nothing in the world. The point is that only the ones that see themselves fitting this description see their need for salvation and are desperate enough to respond to His call. The ones that respond to the call are the chosen ones. Many are called, but few are chosen. So you see, it's not that we are so special, but it's that our God is special. He has qualified us (Col 1:12). We just obeyed the royal invitation.

So you see that the people of Yahshua, who are the ones He is going to save from their bent and crooked ways, have a hope which nobody else has ever had. This hope is to be different. Apart from this hope they all died with their inherited tendencies. No matter how much they wanted to change and not be like their mothers and fathers, they couldn't come out of it. I am thankful that, as I come to see my sins and confess and forsake them, He is faithful to forgive me and heal me.

I want to love the way God loves. I want to be pure in heart and pure in my motives in whatever I may say to you concerning the good news that I received. For I know the words of life I heard when I came to Chattanooga were spoken from a pure heart and a good conscience as well as from a sincere love for the brethren.

Being with them, with the ones that are just like the ones described as in Acts 4:32-37, is the only way I have come to know faith (Rom 10:17). This faith caused me to obey the demands of the gospel as in Jn 3:36. If I had disbelieved the gospel and rejected it by not obeying it, I would be judged already (Jn 3:18).

"Saints" means "holy people", and "holy" means "set apart". The holy in Rev 22:11 were made holy as God is holy. To be holy or set apart for God and His purpose one must be ransomed. We had to set ourselves apart by obeying the gospel. The gospel tells us what God did in Messiah's sacrifice to save us from our sins. It also tells us what we must do to make ourselves holy or worthy of Him who is holy. The gospel tells us about Messiah and His work for us, that we can now be saved from our sins (Mt 1:21) if we repent.

This word "repent" is not just a mental concept or attitude, as I said before. It means obeying the many other words as Acts 2:38-41 says. Although these many other words are not spelled out in this record in Acts 2:38-41, it is clear what Peter told them. These many other words were Mt 28:19,20 as you can very easily ascertain by that which is recorded of the message Peter told them in Acts 2:38-40, and by the subsequent response and life of those who received his message (Acts 2:41-47). What is *not recorded* are the words he spoke concerning what Messiah commanded them to preach to bring about repentance. Up until they heard these

words they were only cut to the heart and they asked what they should do. So Peter with the rest of the disciples told them what they were commanded to teach — as *Mt 28:19-20* says *very plainly*. Unless people know what to do they can't do it. So the good news tells us what to do, what it takes for the repentant person to have eternal life or be entrusted with the Holy Spirit — that they must also make a corresponding sacrifice of their lives (2 Cor 5:14-15).

They had to be tested to see if they were now willing to do His will and be baptized, that is, die with Messiah in His death (Rom 6:2-5) to live a new life in the body. 1 Cor 12:13 — The many other words in Acts 2:39-41 told about that which Messiah had commanded them. If one does not include this in the gospel they are accursed. The last instruction of Yahshua to His apostles before He ascended to heaven was to "...make disciples..." (Lk 14:33) "...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Mk 10:28-30; Lk 14:33; Mt 10:37-39; Jn 12:25-26).

How else could the disciples they made confess openly that Yahshua is Sovereign and has first place in everything (Rom 10:9) unless they knew the good news about Lk 14:26-33, especially Lk 14:31-32 about the Sovereign King Yahshua who is coming (Rev 19:11-20) It will be only the faithful followers who are loyal to Him, who walk worthily of Him, who will be taken up (Rev 17:14; Mt 25:1-13; Mt 24:29-31,40,41).

Only the righteous will inherit the kingdom of heaven (His reign on the earth in the next age) and yet I am not righteous in the way I am sometimes — this is the problem. Please don't misunderstand me. I am thankful that I already have eternal life. By His blood and by His righteousness I have passed out of death and into life, because the blood of His righteous sacrifice has justified me. But in Yahshua I have the hope that one day I will be made righteous enough to enter the next age with Him, that He could say of me, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of my master."

Eph 4:1-3 — We serve in the one body (verse 4) by the one Spirit, all having the same hope of our one call so now we must prove worthy of our calling. I desire to have wisdom and understanding, to know His will so I could please Him in all aspects and walk in a manner worthy of Him so that He will not have to tell me, "Depart from me; you didn't do the will of My Father — you practiced lawlessness." If that's being told to us, it means that we are not worthy of the kingdom (2 Ths 1:4-5).

He is coming back for a *whole* people who have made themselves ready — those who have been walking with Him in white (Rev 3:4; 19:7-8) — those who walked in the deeds that were prepared beforehand for them to walk in, deeds that built up the body (Eph 2:10). These are not lawless deeds initiated and carried out by mere human effort, because deeds like this tear down the body. But these are lawful deeds initiated by the Holy Spirit and carried out by His power by those who are surrendered to Him. This is the Bride that He will return for (Rev 21:9-12) which is the twelve tribes of Israel. Are you part of one of these tribes now? Unless you are — Lk 13:24-26 says, "He will not know where you are from." Only if you are from one of these tribes, that are being prepared for Him, are you in His dwelling-place, because the twelve tribes will be His dwelling-place among the nations in all eternity (Rev 21:3).

1 Tim 2:8 commands "...the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension." Those who have no wrath or dissension between them are the brothers and sisters that dwell together in unity — the community of God. "Every place" means every township or locality where He has caused His name to dwell in a people who are one (Mal 1:11; Jn 17:21; 1 Tim 2:8). The same is true today. The community of the redeemed is in the midst of the secular community (1 Pet 2:9-15). This community is a witness of His kingdom in every place. There is no division or denomination in this community in any of the places where He dwells on earth today as it will be through eternity when His dwelling-place (according to Rev 21:3) will be, just like now, among the nations.

So, mom and dad, I want to be a living sacrifice for Him (Rom 12:1-2) separated from the world (1 Jn 2:15; Jms 4:4; Jn 12:2) and for His sake and for the gospel's sake I do everything I do, as the gospel commands (Mk 8:34-36; 10:28-30). So we are to spend all of our waking moments in doing that what builds up the body and prepares the Bride (Rev 19:7-8). We must do it in a worthy manner to Messiah Himself.

As a human being, a man, He had no advantage over us to walk as He walked. Otherwise the Holy Spirit could

not tell us to walk as He walked (1 Jn 2:6). We have the same Holy Spirit as He did and, being forgiven by His blood, we have the same accessibility to the Father and to His grace as He did. To say anything different is in effect to deny that Yahshua came in the flesh which is the spirit of Antichrist. Therefore we are to walk in a manner worthy of Yahshua unless we stain our garments and commit a sin unto death, a sin that would disqualify us from ruling with Him in His kingdom in the next age (Rev 3:4; Dt 21:22; 1 Jn 5:16-17).

Not that we would lose eternal life. Yahshua gained that for us when He paid for our sins with His death, and we made ourselves worthy to receive this great gift when we obeyed the gospel and forsook everything for His sake. But if we now don't live and continue to live our life in a manner worthy of Him by walking as He walked, we will have to spend the thousand years of the next age, when the glorious kingdom of Yahshua will fill the whole earth, in death, full of regret, weeping and gnashing our teeth.

So this is why I gave up my life to Him, for a ransom, for something of greater value than my own *individual short-time useless existence* on this earth in this age. And this is why I give up my life for Yahshua's and the gospel's sake every day. And this is eternal life, to know the Father and the true Sent One from the Father (Jn 17:3). We cannot know the Father except through obeying the gospel of His Son (Jn 3:36). Just like when the rich young ruler asks in Mk 10:17, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?", the answer of the Teacher is: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life." That is the word of Yahshua, the Son of God Himself as recorded in Mk 8:34-35; Mk 10:29-30. This is the gospel I received.

So now I have the Son, I have the life He promised (1 Jn 5:12), and not to be disrespectful, I would dare you to read the letter of First John to see if you have eternal life or not, for you may just be a Gnostic yourself and not a true follower of Messiah. This letter by John was written to believers or supposedly believers to combat Gnosticism. And so, as 1 Jn 5:13 says, a person can judge themselves by everything that's written in this letter and thus *know* if they are a true believer and if they really have eternal life or if they just have some kind of mental belief without the works that accompany true faith. Such a mental belief is the modern day Gnosticism.

I hope that you can receive the royal invitation to participate in the eternal purpose of God, by becoming His offspring who will faithfully carry out His will (Isa 53:10). It's all a matter of *being willing*. His bond-servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and they shall reign forever and ever (Rev 22:3-5). This is the promise for those who accept this royal invitation and who endure by His grace and by His mercy to the end, giving their bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1). We are forgiven already even in advance of Messiah coming to earth as a man, even before the foundation of the worlds, in eternal past. But only if we are *the ones that give themselves up into His hands in the body in baptism* (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27-29) *is His forgiveness appropriated*. It's only the seed of Abraham who have faith and walk as Yahshua walked (Jn 8:39-47).

Well, good-bye for now. I hope that you will please consider these things. Although I tried to be as clear, as thorough, and as concise as I could, I know what I've written to you has still amounted to a lot, and it might bring up different questions. Please feel absolutely free to ask me anything pertaining to this letter or to clarify anything where greater clarity is needed.

It's only out of love that I write to you.

Love, Martin & Kirsten