

ON THE SACRED NAMES

OF

GOD AND HIS SON

THE NAZARENES AND JESUS OF NAZARETH

Module 1 : Biblical Studies

CHRISTIAN JEWISH STUDIES

Followers of Jesus Ministries (1957)

A Self-study Program based on the RTSP Method

OFFERED FREE TO ALL WHO WANT TO PARTICIPATE

**A Practical Study Program for believers in Jesus desirous to
either supplement, or reinforce their Biblical Studies.**

There is still an intense need to know the true identity of Jesus and especially the proper version of His Name, and we must therefore address this issue. Then the Scriptures will unfold for us and we will be able to understand why God Most High (Yahweh¹) has sent His Son (Jesus/Yeshua) forth into the world (Gal. 4; 1 Jn 4; Phil. 2) and so that we would not only be victorious morally and spiritually but that we would also submit to the authority vested by God the Father in the New Testament Name, given under the New and Better Covenant to ALL nations (Phil. 2.7-11; Eph. 1.10+; Col. 3.17; 1 Jn 5.5; 1 Jn 3.23).

There is indeed only ONE Cross, ONE Salvation, ONE MEDIATOR (1 Tim. 2.5) for one and all and with each of these essentials clearly hinging on the Name of the Son of God. The Name that was raised/exalted above all other Names mentioned in heaven and on earth by God the Father, is then the New Testament chosen Name in which all power in heaven and in earth is vested and in which every knee shall bow (Acts 4.12/Phil. 2.7-11).

¹ See discussion on the Angel of the Lord at the end of this Module, p.20.

Note that the Name of Yeshua is to this day regarded as a so-called “common” name, and before reacting too hastily, let's consider first and foremost what Luke has recorded for us in the Acts of the Apostles, i.e. regarding happenings that had taken place in and around Jerusalem after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 3.16; Acts 4.10-12, also v. 17-18 & 26; Acts 5.28 & 40). From the texts quoted in parenthesis, we will clearly see that the Apostles of Jesus worked in His Name and only in this Name. They healed the sick in this Name and they were also forbidden by the Sanhedrin (with the exception of Paul's teacher, Gamaliel, who remained neutral) to speak in the Name of the Son of God. Therefore not YHVH the so-called “hidden” Old Testament Name.(The Name Jesus/Yeshua was then clearly taken *from among man* and then given to the Son).

Why the Name of Jesus (Yeshua), indeed written and applied in diverse ways, is still regarded as a “common” name, is because Jesus was then not the only one in Israel who was known by this name. The apostle Peter, who acted as leader of the believers in Jerusalem – He was without any trace of doubt appointed by Jesus to act in this capacity up until his departure from Jerusalem and when James succeeded him in this office - stated that God had taken this Name, the Name by which His Son was known in Israel since His birth (Luk. 1.31-32), “from among man”, i.e. from among the Jewish people, raising it in stature after His Son's resurrection (Rom. 1.4). God Most High then indeed applied a Name that was already known in Israel, however, He simultaneously clothed it with the expressed meaning, namely “deliverance”, also “salvation”, implying a special anointing from above. This connotation is of course integral to the New Testament sacred Name and therefore “Messiah”(the Anointed or Anointed One) indeed came first and foremost, also according to Peter's message in Luke's Acts, *to save His people from their sinful ways*. For this very reason Paul emphasized this very message (1 Tim. 1.15).

God's Son's Name was then the Name to which redemption was tied *forever* as the “eternal sacrifice” was brought once and for all by the Son of God on Calvary. It was at the resurrection that God the Father (YHVH) also declared His Son “with power” (=Holy Spirit Power from above – Rom. 1.4) as “Son of God” and this was the identity especially the apostle John had emphatically brought to the attention of his readership as well as the necessity of believing on the Name of the Son. On this Name the Gentiles shall fasten their hope (Math. 12.21). It is assumed by some scholars that the *Gospel of John* was written for the Samaritans – which stance I am apt to follow as well and especially with Jn 1.1 – the opening clause – in mind. One can also sense that the apostle John's pastoral letters were written *after* Paul and Peter's passing and when the consequences of the great Church schism, predicted in prophecy by Paul (2 Thes 2), were in full swing – at least his second and third pastoral letter.

What is then of importance for us, is that the schismatics were from a certain sectarian group who seemingly were quick to deny amongst others, the Greek, even the Latinized version of the Name of Jesus (Yeshua) its rightful place in the Gospel and it therefore does not take much to link them with Samaria and the “Judaizers” for derogatory connotations were definitely set in motion regarding the Name of the Son of God and who else would have taken the lead but those who wanted to keep the Gospel Jewish at all cost? On studying the early church's history and development, one would quickly detect that the onslaught was indeed against the application of the Name of the Son of God (in all its diverse renditions) and especially against, what would perhaps better be described as, paganizing the (Hebrew/Aramaic) New Testament Name.

We must further be able to admit that redemption was vested in the Name as well as in the shed blood of the One who was known by His New Testament Name (Yeshua). Therefore none other and nothing else! But the difference between the Old Testament theocracy (The Temple and the Jewish worship) is that the Son of God generalized the faith so that *all nations* could benefit from Salvation wrought through the Cross by the Son of God (Mk 16; Math. 28). The New Testament Gospel therefore indeed contains the New (not newer!!) Covenant as the Old one, introduced by the shed blood of animals, was indeed, according to the dynamos of our faith, Paul of Tarsus, far inferior to the one introduced by the Son of God via His shed blood (Heb. 9.14). The demarcated spiritual meaning of the former Covenant was indeed, in the fullness of times, superseded by the boundless (better/all encompassing) Covenant “dipped in the blood of the Son of God”!

We must understand that the Name of the Son of God was endowed with Holy Spirit Power (manifested in the Upper Room shortly after Jesus' resurrection), and it was also crowned with the eternal blood of the Son (Heb. 9.14). Jesus/Yeshua clearly stated to his apostles and followers that they shall be HIS witnesses “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1.8). Whenever and wherever the Name of the Son of God (Yeshua) was then to be mentioned (invoked), there the Father would bring into remembrance the sacrifice His Son had brought on Calvary, not only for the Jewish tribes but also for the Gentiles! It was therefore not only the mere orthography of the Name (its spelling and rendition the Jewish/Hebrew way) but it is the whole package that came along with the Name of the Son of God that has to be considered. And it is this holistic portrayal we have of Jesus and His Name we must always keep in mind, rather than just a mere “Jewish” pronunciation.

It was God's will then that Jesus/Yeshua be brought to ALL the goyyim (=the Gentile nations) co-equally, therefore without prejudice, i.e. on a par with His seed from the Jewish stock and which was also strewn among the nations. According to the Apostle Paul, Christ is the seed of Abraham and the apostle, without any trace of doubt, therefore abolished *in his teachings* the division between Jew and Greek (Gentile) as, *in Christ*, all believers are indeed the seed (posterity) of Abraham, the faithful servant of God – Abraham did not believe in God through the Law and all its prescriptions, but he believed the God who revealed Himself to him! The anointed Paul of Tarsus' radical teachings would naturally have had a bearing on the Name of the Son of God as divine power is always vested in the Name – under the Old (First) Covenant in the hidden Name, YHVH, but under the New Covenant in the revealed Name of the Son (Yeshua), namely the Name that was forever tied to the sacrificial blood of God's Son (Phil. 2.7-11; Col. 3.17).

Therefore, trying to put this New Testament faith in a rigid Jewish mould, is to rob the living Gospel of its intrinsic redemptive power, presenting it exclusively as an ethnic Gospel. And for this very reason the enlightened Jew, Paul of Tarsus, was wedged in by Jesus/Yeshua Himself, clothing him with Holy Spirit Power from above and so that He could steer the first-century faith in the Messiah *in the right direction*. Where the Old Covenant is then clearly the shadow of the things that were to come, the New Covenant is the total fulfilment of the promises given to Abraham and his posterity!

ON THE NAZARENES

Probing this history, it seems the “Nazarenes” from Palestine were the ones who were standing

firmly on the “correct”, one and only Name of the Son of God (Yeshua) – sometimes rendered as Yahushua/Yahshua. That is, if we accept that they were similar to, or indeed were those Qumran Essenes who were known for their obsession with the Sacred Old Testament Name. There is an opinion that the Ebionites who have affinities with the Essenes, were called “the men of the Name” (it is said that the Essenes were on the whole from Transjordania whereas the Ebionites were from the western geographical area, i.e. west of the Jordan River).

Now, the *Aramaic* “Yeshua” would then indeed have been the Name they would have preferred although it also seems that the diverse Jewish alternative forms of the New Testament Name, is not in the least false versions, however, rigidly standing on only one Hebrew/Aramaic rendition of the Name was definitely something that would not have been practical for the Gentile believers who also had received the Gospel from the apostles and their followers. Strife and division would then definitely have arisen had it indeed been the case and may be *Acts 6.1* must be applied here too for it seems the two opposing branches that had joined the apostles' inner-circle on Pentecost Day (*Acts 2*) were bent on knit-picking and dividing the Body of Jesus/Yeshua right from the start.

It is then no wonder that the apostle Paul especially clashed with the Greek-speaking Jews who would have, in true Greek spirit, been bent on reasoning to the finest detail abstract ideas. We do not, however, detect any partiality on the side of the Jerusalem Apostles of Jesus/Yeshua between either of the two groups and for this reason, according to Luke's *Acts*, Paul was, at a stage, sent back to Tarsus just to restore peace and harmony within the Jerusalem Church (those who were from Palestine over against Paul of Tarsus who was from Cilicia – something that was clearly used against Paul and something we can then quickly detect in the advent of the alternative Church, namely the rise of the post-apostolic Church and especially in St Ignatius' division between the “College of the Apostles” and the “College of the Bishops”.

The type of onslaught against the knowledgeable Paul of Tarsus can especially be detected in the Aramaic categorizing of the New Testament Gospels and Letters : Paul's letters, although he was the one from whom the “unlearned” Jerusalem apostles clearly had gained much of their knowledge, therefore are following on those epistles written by the other New Testament apostles, something we must never approach naively for this type of procedure neatly corresponds with the “Judaizers” preference of the so-called “Jerusalem” apostleship over against Paul's heathen (Gentile) calling. This type of subtle prejudice (what it indeed boils down to) neatly found expression in depictions of Paul and Peter in early Christian art, namely Peter on Jesus/Yeshua's right hand with of course Paul as the less important apostle, namely His left-hand side. And therefore the very early stages in post-apostolic history (especially the transition period from “Apostolic” to “Post-Apostolic” can just never be overlooked IF one wants to arrive at truth, i.e. behind the facade of deception.

It therefore seems that the two branches so neatly and concisely depicted for us in *Acts 6.1* were both involved in the great schism – something that, once again, cannot be overlooked in the New Testament epistles for we are clearly enlightened by these apostles concerning the advent of the alternative Church with its pagan-Jewish leadership. However, what must also be kept in mind, is that from among this conglomerate (the Ebionites/Essenes) some must have remained faithful to the apostles and in order to discern the faithful ones from the unfaithful (as I would apply it here in order to differentiate between “Apostolic” and “non-Apostolic”) we will have to closely scrutinize

what we still have at our disposal, i.e. contained in the New Testament canon of Scriptures. And the first-century Church upheld the Name of Jesus/Yeshua in baptism.

Now, surely, this should be clear for everybody and of course gathered especially from Luke's *Acts of the Apostles*, but what is not so clear is why there are two baptismal formulae recorded in the New Testament – and this should be our clue – although Math. 28.19 is regarded by the Catholic Church as the formula expressing the baptism properly (so-called) but it should be clear, to any objective researcher, that such an approach does not ring true. It therefore seems that the Essenes were the forerunners of what we luckily find inscribed in the *Didache*, namely a trinitarian baptismal formula (Math. 28.19). And this again should bring us to the Post-Apostolic Mother Church's confession of faith for *Math. 28.19* is any good Catholic's, even Protestant and Pentecostal's, so-called “Great Commission” just as it was, from the beginning, the same for the Aramaic (Jewish/Hebrew) Churches of which the Greek and the Eastern Orthodox Churches can be regarded as the most prominent).

Both then, the Western as well as the Eastern Church that took the lead on religious matters right from the start, with of course the Western Church as “Mother Church”, rejected the first-century Church's baptismal method, i.e. in the Name of the Saviour. And it seems that this decision, to get rid of the Name of Jesus/Yeshua in baptism this way, was not merely done to side-step the Aramaic Jews' insistence on using the “correct” version of the Name of Jesus/Yeshua, but *Math. 28.19* is indeed a reflection of an Essene practice that was subtly reinstated, i.e. when discontent within the first-century apostolic Church had squarely fallen in place. The knowledgeable Paul then, for good reasons, made a firm statement to the Ephesians concerning one Lord, and one baptism (Eph. 4.5).

Today, much is made of the so-called “proper” version of the New Testament Name, yet little is done to probe *Math. 28.19* properly, in the light of Essene doctrinal stances. And it is here where “Nazarene” and especially some among them disregarding the Old Covenant Angelic appearances, requires our attention once again - these theophanies clearly linked to a heavenly messenger clothed with immense authority - and who else can it be but Jesus/Yeshua *in His pre-existence* and of course as “mighty deliverer” acting under this Covenant in the Name of YHVH – I AM - profoundly given to Moses at the bramblebush (Ex. 3.14).

Applying then their own version of the Name, would then have been a natural step and then not necessarily regarded as trespassing the Law – as was the case with the Old Testament Tetragrammaton (YHVH) - excepting that those who had laid down hard and fast rules of the New Testament vocalization of the Name, had been staunch Torah supporters, like the Nazarenes/Ebionites indeed were. And with this in mind, it is perhaps only reasonable to conclude that not each and every Gentile would have been willing to apply the New Testament Name strictly in Hebrew or Aramaic. Fact is Greek was widely in use among the Gentiles and the impact of the Greek culture was still to linger for centuries after the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem. What also has to be kept in mind is that “Ebionites” and “Nazarenes” are often, and on the whole, ascribed to one and the same sect, although there is also an opinion that “Ebionite” pertains to the Greek-speaking Jews. But this whole issue calls for objectivity and what seemingly is something we can give good consideration, is that the “Ebionite” label was indeed also applied to the two branches, on the one hand the ultra-Jewish believers in Messiah and, on the other, the Hellenistic Christians. The former then the Hebrew component of the Nazarenes over against the Greek-speaking

Christian Jews.

What we must also give good consideration, is that the Hebrew Ebionites (as I would apply it here) cannot be regarded as having been those who persevered in first-century Apostolic truth, whereas the Hellenistic Jews were then the opposite. It rather seems that the Hebrew Nazarenes (Ebionites) initially joined the apostles (or then the greater portion of them) yet they again later severed ties with them, i.e. along with the Hellenistic Christian Jews. We do not have Church registers available, i.e. giving us exact numbers and information on members, for example who remained faithful to the apostles of Jesus/Yeshua and who did not – who have then reverted to their former ways after the so-called great schism (2 Thes. 2). To this day there are scholars who still date the great schism the apostle Paul deals with in his *Second Letter to the Thessalonians* to modern times, some even claiming that it is still pending. However, the great schism is not of importance now, but the label of “Nazarenes” and “Ebionites” is).

The issue at stake then is that it was not only the Greek-speaking Christians who can be regarded as the founders of the Western Church (the post-apostolic Mother Church), but it seems the whole “Ebionite” component, or then the majority thereof, had severed ties with the apostles of Jesus. According to Carrington (Vol. II) it was only from round about 150 A.D. that a distinction was made between Jew and Jew - in other words, between all the diverse kinds of Jewish believers and seemingly pertaining on the whole to the sectarian groups. Should we then be willing to objectify the doctrinal confessions of the Nazarenes, i.e. on average, we would detect an Essene leniency towards a triune God and we can indeed sense this kind of thought-pattern in Shimon Ben Yochai's ideas on God. Taking this then into account will bring us to the conclusion, namely that the labels “Essene” and “Ebionite” indeed has much in common and that the one was presumably Hebrew (ultra-Jewish) with the other pertaining to the Hellenists.

What is also very interesting is that Hegesippus is referred to as a “Nazarene” – as it then seems with reference to that early Church Historian who was delegated by the Western Church in Rome to visit all the Churches (late second century) to ascertain whether they were still faithfully walking in the path of Clemens I (Third Pope of Rome). Now, should we be acquainted with Clemens I we would immediately see an Essene adherent (like Hegesippus a Nazarene!) through and through – some sources link him to directly to the Qumran. This should give us an idea of the complexity of this issue and that we must keep an open mind when encountering “one God” or “oneness in the Godhead” for all trinitarians, even the very first ones, claimed, like Shimon Ben Yochai too would have done, this type of doctrinal stance.

Quotation : “This following creed is from a church at Constantinople at the same period: 'I renounce all customs, rites, legalisms, unleavened breads & sacrifices of lambs of the Hebrews, and all other feasts of the Hebrews, sacrifices, prayers, aspersions, purifications, sanctifications and propitiations and fasts, and new moons, and Sabbaths, and superstitions, and hymns and chants and observances and Synagogues, and the food and drink of the Hebrews; in one word, I renounce everything Jewish, every law, rite and custom and if afterwards I shall wish to deny and return to Jewish superstition, or shall be found eating with the Jews, or feasting with them, or secretly conversing and condemning the Christian religion instead of openly confuting them and condemning their vain faith, then let the trembling of Gehazi cleave to me, as well as the legal punishments to which I acknowledge myself liable. And may I be

anathema in the world to come, and may my soul be set down with Satan and the devils'."

Source : [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_\(sect\)#Nazarene_.28title.29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_(sect)#Nazarene_.28title.29) (2013-09-04)

Quotation (1) : "Use of Hebrew and Aramaic New Testament source texts: 'They have the Gospel according to Matthew in its entirety in Hebrew. For it is clear that they still preserve this, in the Hebrew alphabet, as it was originally written'."

—Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 29.9.4

Quotation (2) : "And he [Hegesippus the Nazarene] quotes some passages from the [Gospel according to the Hebrews](#) and from the Syriac [the Aramaic], and some particulars from the Hebrew tongue, showing that he was a convert from the Hebrews, and he mentions other matters as taken from the oral tradition of the Jews." *Eusebius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History Source* :

Source for both quotations :

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_\(sect\)#Nazarene_.28title.29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_(sect)#Nazarene_.28title.29) (2013-09-04)

What we can also seemingly accept is that just as there were at least four basic Essene sects (at least initially or then four levels on the hierarchy), there must then have been more than one Nazarene (Hebrew) sect and especially after the fall of Jerusalem and the resettling of the Qumran refugees in Pella – indeed the place where assimilation and syncretism were the order of the day. Probing then the Nazarene/Ebionite issue calls for personal research as new material constantly comes to light, and for this reason links of interest are supplied for those who want to broaden their knowledge in this field. This Module will then not cover everything and it will then have to be supplemented by self-study and, considering this complex issue, from various angles.

What does, however, seem to be acceptable is that the fanatical obsession with only one version of the New Testament Name, did spring forth from the Jewish (Hebrew) Nazarenes. It seems they were as fanatical as any Essene could be - consult Josephus' comments on the Qumran Essenes. However, ironically, also denying the baptism in the most important New Testament Name, and which stance may have something to do with the ineffable Name of the Old Testament, overriding then the New Testament Name (or integrating it). One should therefore also guard against ethnic bias as and therefore accepting *carte blanche* that everything smacking of "Jewishness" and "Torah obedience" - something projected by the Nazarenes – are necessarily apostolic! (first-century and then not meaning Catholicism).

It does not take much to sense that instead of sticking to their Jewish rendition of the Name, those Judaizers who were also the ones who had introduced the triune Name in baptism (Mt 28.19) were indeed connected with the Jewish "Essenes" who were of course quick to introduce their Ein Sof idea to Christianity (We must also be careful not to apply all kinds of cliché's to "Christianity" as though such group identity only pertains to Gentiles – although Catholic literature, e.g., applies this connotation to their own flock with, of course, also the schismatic sects who severed ties with them in the past, in mind). Now, concerning translations of names, e.g. Timothy was, in transliteration,

Timoteos (Gr) but I am sure Paul did not care a cinch to be named Paulos (Polos in the Hebrew New Testament*). And the same goes for Barnaba (Barnabas) – a clear niqqud applied in the Hebraic b consonant. Likewise Sila for Silas, etcetera. So it should be clear that such translations or adaptations of names to the local dialect was common practice.

So why address the one (declaring Jesus' Name as unchangeable and therefore making the Jewish version/s compulsory – note there is no consensus thusfar on using only one version of the Name yet neglecting to also address the other - omitting the New Testament Sacred Name from baptism, i.e. Matt. 28.19 in comparison with Acts 2.38? What we should clearly be able to detect, if we at least want to remain objective, is that there was indeed a Jewish sect who had joined the apostles (consisting of two main branches (Acts 6.1), and they were, (1) the Judaizers who wanted nothing but a Gospel that was to remain in all its facets Jewish, and then, (2) a Greek-speaking branch who was also Jewish through and through yet *who opted also for a philosophical approach to Scripture* and this is why they could reason so avidly on an abstract Ein Sof (which indeed seems to boil down to the emergence of the trinitarian “Essence”). And considering the aforementioned, I think we must reconsider before pushing ideas like, “Jesus is not His Name!” Also, that discarding the New Testament Sacred Name in baptism is justified just because we have subtly been led into error by a *pagan* Jewish tradition that had driven the Name of the Son of God on the periphery.

I am deliberately bold when I am saying that it is of no use standing on so-called traditional ideas yet never taking action to determine their origins (their roots). The “Name Drivers” - those who are standing rigidly on only one Jewish version of the Name - were then standing firmly on a triune concept of the Godhead also applying such a concept to baptism. This should be clear to everybody studying their confessions of faith. Yes, there might have been some or other branch that had stood on the Name of the Son of God in baptism (Jesus/Yeshua), that is from among the diverse sects that had later evolved from one pool of thought, but then it was an apostolic influence for it was Peter who had tipped the scales in the right direction with his introduction of the New Testament baptism in the Name of the Son of God on Pentecost Day (Acts 2) and which instruction had caused 3000 (believers seemingly from this type of Nazarene community) to be baptized in Messiah's Name.

[NOTE : What seems clear, is that the Nazarenes joined the apostles' newly established Church (ekklesia) in Jerusalem and not vice versa. We must keep in mind that only 120 disciples were waiting on the Lord for the fulfilment of Joel's prophetic word. It could then not have included the whole Essene community, 4000 in Judea and surrounds according to Josephus and who were of course related to the Qumran community – it is often wrongly propagated that the apostles of Jesus, even Jesus Himself, was Essene. Also, keep in mind the great schism that had later taken place and which clearly relates to the Jewish sect that had joined the Jerusalem apostolic assemblies (Acts 2). There was perhaps a good reason for Luke mentioning specifically 3000 souls added on Pentecost Day and if they were indeed Nazarene (which seems to have been the case), then 1000 members of the same community did not join the apostles (*on average* as it seems calculations cannot be regarded as absolute). They were presumably the false “brothers” the apostle Paul encountered in Antioch. (This is an assumption but once we begin to research this issue it seems there was indeed a staunch group of die-hards operating subtly in the background and who were constantly stirring trouble, that is for those who had joined the apostolic ekklesia). And this is what makes this whole issue so complex as there were indeed faithful Nazarenes among the apostles too, although and once again, it seems that the majority of Nazarenes (on both sides of the fence) had

again severed ties with the apostles (1 Jn 4; 1 Jn 2; 2 Pet. 2.1, etc). I think this specific issue calls for further research, with of course, the first-century teachings in mind and naturally as a parameter against apostasy that indeed had fallen in place and especially after the apostle Paul had left the scene (2 Thes. 2.7). The apostle Paul was, like the other apostles, for the Name of the Son of God I baptism! And this particular issue may act as a sound vantage point to probe this specific issue further.

It seems that the large addition to the Church (Acts 2), and especially having come from one organization, namely the Essenes (Nazarenes), had perhaps caused the label of “Nazarene” to have stuck – and with of course Isaiah's prophetic “Branch” in mind, however, it was undoubtedly also applied to Jesus as Messiah by His own Apostles - and this is seemingly how the new Church, born on Pentecost Day, had come to be named “Nazarenes” too for Jesus was not Nazarene; He was *from* Nazareth (Chpt 11; Acts 24). What should be clear is that those who joined the Apostles of Jesus, had to submit to their authority, and a thorough religious purification/reorientation, i.e. to accommodate a new vision with new objectives, must then have fallen in place, with the essential acceptance of Yeshua/Jesus as one and only Messiah (We can gather from the apostolic epistles that a sectarian group that had joined them initially, had again later severed ties with them). [I would have loved to embroider on Peter's “children of the curse” but this specific issue calls for another in-depth discussion].

NOTE : There were seemingly three groups of believers eventually, i.e. after the fall of Jerusalem (70 A.D), i.e., the two Jewish opposing groups who had joined the apostles but who later banded together to sever ties with the apostles, and then also the apostles' faithful believers who remained on the whole and to a large extent faithful up until their final submission to the all-powerful Western Church. Once again, we do not have registers at our disposal to supply us with demographic statistics. Had this been the case, research would have been either unnecessary or so much easier. It seems there were at a stage, i.e. in early post-apostolic times, no less than three bishops in Rome, each heading their own type of community of believers – see CarringtonII for interesting facts on early Christendom.

The aforementioned could perhaps also be the reason why the disciples were, for the first time (!) called “Christians” in Antioch. Was there perhaps a dispute on the liberal use of the sect's name – i.e. cross-border, and, in other words, including the Gentile believers with whom the staunch Law abiders/keepers seem to have had their issues right from the start. (As stated previously, it does appear that not each and every “brother” had joined the apostolic Church in Jerusalem). Or was it merely the Greek-speaking and the Gentile believers who desired their own “Christian” affiliation, i.e. derived from the Greek language and in order to distinguish them from the staunch Judaizers' “Nazarenes”? It seems there had always been a division between the two rival parties (Acts 6.1). This latter identity was definitely prominent in Jerusalem and this is perhaps then also the reason why Paul had to closely follow the instructions of the apostle James during his final visit to Jerusalem and seemingly especially with his subsequent trial before Festus in mind (Acts 24). Besides, we never see Paul applying this specific Jewish label outside Jerusalem (=Nazarene) and I can hardly visualize, i.e. at that early stage, a Church sharply divided into two opposing sects – that is with the dating of the Antioch gathering in mind as the great schism (rebellion) was still in the offing – although, coming to think of Paul's 2 Thes. 2 prophetic word, the “secret of iniquity” was already subtly at work.

PAST AND PRESENT

And with the Peshitta's strong Jewish bias in mind, it is just as though we, today, are again reliving the past all over again. Fact is, the so-called first or original New Testament, i.e. the Palestinian Aramaic Peshitta (written in Judean Hebrew or the so-called “square characters”), is indeed given a date “before the end of the first century”. It is further assumed that because of the remarkable numerological codification of the Peshitta's New Testament text, accurately divided into equal parts, i.e. running full length, that it should be regarded as proof not only of its authenticity but also of its inerrant contents – being then indeed a true copy of the apostolic autographs.

Numerology/codification is clearly based on an Old Testament practice and supposedly initiated by the Maccabees - a method they were applying to study the hidden meaning of the Biblical text and seemingly based on the Sacred Name of God, something that quickly brings to mind the Essene's obsession with the Name and especially regarding it as strictly ineffable (Weingreen's Hebrew Grammar Book; see also Bauscher's Peshitta translation).

The Peshitta must then indeed have been a product of the Nazarenes – keep in mind what was previously discussed about this conglomerate label - yet what we must also keep in mind is that the Nazarenes are often related to the Nazarene Carmelites, Greek-speaking Jews, and even the Ebionites, which is something that again connects well with *Acts 6.1*. One often gets the idea that the Hebrews were regarded as the intellectuals and not the Greek-speaking Jews, however, this is something which indeed calls for objectivity as Greek was a very important language especially used by the intellectuals - it is said that Pontus, e.g., was a lively Hellenistic Jewish geographical area, also well-known by Origen and his contemporaries who were all involved with the Bible translations.

I think what we are able to detect in the Peshitta, is the use of the I AM as a Name directly linked to God Most High (LORD), again proving the Nazarenes' obsession with Oneness in the Godhead and of course for this reason ascribing Goodhood to Jesus, something which is not the case with other translations and which title Jesus/Yeshua also never claimed for Himself. What does happen with such approach is ambiguity to the extreme, and then especially giving rise to incoherence, also anomalous speculation. Fact is Jesus/Yeshua emphatically states in the Synoptic Gospel of John, an idea the apostle repeats in his first pastoral letter, that NOBODY has ever seen God (Jn 1.18; 4.24; 1 Jn. 4.12 - compare The Hebraic-Roots Version which was also translated and thoroughly compared with the main original texts). It therefore appears as though the Nazarenes (Essenes) were indeed the forerunners of an indivisible Trinity, clearly something that links well with Greek thought.

What we may perhaps also keep in mind is, with the Peshitta and its codification in mind, that the narrative of the adulterous woman who was caught in the act, seems to have been omitted at one stage or another, and which omission perhaps then brings us to a sect that was using the Peshitta (the Nazarenes) yet seemingly dissociating themselves from Mary Magdalene (the one of Magdala at the Sea of Galilee) and who was later proclaimed the first apostle by, e.g. Hippolytis (linked

directly or indirectly to a Jewish or pagan Jewish cult propagating this message – something that appears to relate well with the Da Vinci Code). This of course brings us again to diversity within the so-called broader “Nazarene” community.

Now, considering this issue from all angles, it seems that this narrative was indeed deliberately removed from the Gospels for specific reasons but again later added. However, removal of the narrative would surely have affected the final codification of the Peshitta – and which again should tell us that the *exact* codification applied to the text, was something that must have been done later, that is after the text was declared *final* and *inerrant*. And what then could have necessitated so-called *indisputable codification*, was nothing but a concerted effort to prevent tampering with the text (or at least the final version thereof). Something of this nature is also detected in *The Book of Revelation's* last chapter, forbidding any additions to or deletions from the text, and which of course immediately brings to our mind that there must then indeed have been a corps of writers who were bent on either plagiarizing or changing the contents of the apostolic text. And this again is something we can infer from 2 Pet. 3.15-16, even 2 Thes. 3.17. (Carrington, Vol. II, (*The Early Christian Church*) is an excellent reference).

We must then, even with so-called “original” copies of the New Testament in mind, always remain objective. Textual codification, although well applied by ancient scribes in Israel, was then not something new to the Jews. The Chinese were excellent with intricate calculations and mathematical prowess was indeed something the Greeks, also the Indians (Asians) had also excelled in. It was then not something mysterious or something mystical but it was indeed based on a thorough and well-developed knowledge gained by dedicated disciples of the science of mathematical calculations. And no wonder, it is said that Galilee, quite a large portion of Northern Palestine in the days of the apostles, was the bridge between Asia and Egypt!

JUDAIZING THE NAME

There are some who feel awkward applying this type of wording to the Name of the Son. They feel His Name is Jewish and therefore a depiction of “judaizing” a Name is out of the question. But I am sure it will be clear to all that, should we become so obsessed with only one JEWISH version, then we are bound to follow in the path of the Judaizers. They wanted to present the Gospel in an exclusive Jewish package and the Antioch clash between Paul and Peter had a lot to do with this type of early onslaught against also bringing in the Gentiles, and naturally through the Grace of Jesus Christ and the complete work He had brought to fulfilment on the Cross for one and all alike. This indeed proves God's righteousness (His love equally to all). Salvation is then about redemption through the shed blood of the Son, the one and only Saviour of the world who died on a Roman Cross to set man free from sin (1 Tim. 1.15)! This is the core meaning of “Grace” versus the “Law” - not that those now standing in Grace has obtained mercy *carte blanche*, *i.e.* to remain forever trapped in sin and iniquity just because they can now quickly resort to the Savior's work on the Cross when falling in the trap of sin (Rom.4)! This is deception for we are crucifying our Savior over and over again should we remain wilfully in sin and sinful ways (Heb. 6).

Always keep in mind ONE Cross, ONE Salvation, ONE Mediator lest we stray from the New Testament (apostolic) Truth, our living legacy, bequeathed to us by the Father of

Jesus/Yeshua/Yahshua, and making us heirs to His glory! If we follow this path, the Eternal Spirit, having testified again and again of the coming in the flesh of God's One and Only Son (1 Jn 4), will teach and lead us in the way of Truth (Jn 14.6) for only Truth, eternally linked to our precious Saviour and His work of full Salvation and reconciliation on the Cross, shall set us free, leading us once and for all out of spiritual confusion and the deceit of satanic error into the Light! (This again, is the core meaning of Salvation, for once we are walking in the Light, we will break with sin. Consult the First Pastoral Letter of John).

WHO WILL BE THE MAIN PROTAGONIST IN THE FINAL END-TIME DRAMA?

- (1) The Father (Yahweh, or then for those who are bent on knit-picking, the Hebraic yod-he-waw-he rendition of the Old Testament sacred, ineffable Name) is not coming at the end of times to receive the Bride - the sum-total of the bloodwashed and the obedient - but the Son indeed is (1 Thes. 4.13)!
- (2) The Father is not going to judge us, but the Son indeed is (Acts 10.42)!
- (3) The Father (Yahweh) is not going to appear on the clouds of heaven, but the Son indeed is (Acts 1.11)!
- (4) The Father's Name does not cleanse us from sin, but the Son's indeed does (1 Cor. 6.11; Phil. 2.7-11)! And let's remember that the apostle Paul also dealt with diaspora and proselyte Jews while writing his epistles and they were then well-acquainted with Torah! In fact, the Greek Septuagint was widely read in Paul's assemblies (=the Old Testament translation)!
- (5) And Jesus/Yeshua/Yahshua is also going to fight for Israel at Armageddon at the end of times and then His Presence will be revealed in no uncertain terms to all nations gathering together for the Day of the Lord! (Dan. 12; Ex. 23.20+). Day of the Lord meaning, and as applied here, the day (period) God had determined to enter into judgment with the nations (The Book of Revelations/Ezek. 37/38). Also note that "Lord" (Adonai) was indeed used when addressing Baal, but it was also applied for people in authority. Arn't we expected to also take note of lexical/syntactic expressions and reading them in context in stead of, in our haste, making the faith a contentious issue, especially an ethnic one – as though "Lord" is pagan and therefore giving it an exclusive pagan connotation.
- (6) What is then important for us? And with this crucial question in mind, it is about time we study Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (1.10) anew. Surely, SALVATION is about, (1) being saved and, (2) going out and to tell that Jesus came to save sinners (1 Tim. 1.15), and (3) finally to see the fruits on our labour when we shall bring in the sheaves, placing them at the feet of the Saviour for He is the DELIVERER/SAVIOR of ALL nations! Yes, there is an end-time destiny for Israel and when Michael (Micha-el - *He who is like unto God* – Dan 12) will steer His people to victory, but this is a different issue and pertaining to the Jewish nation only). But SALVATION AND THE CROSS was for ALL NATIONS and the Name of Jesus is then very appropriate to use. (I prayed about this very issue and the Lord confirmed to me in a vision that I can confidently bring this gospel to the world!).

UNRAVELING THE MYSTERY AND FROM WHENCE IT CAME

I feel like briefly commenting also on other Jewish ways of verbalizing the Name of Yeshua. The Nazarenes were what Josephus would have described "Essenes". The modern version also does not only consist of one branch as there are more than one type laying claim to this identity (adapted, however, in one or other way and again with adaptations to particular ways of applying the identity/label depicted as "Nazarene"). They were what I would call Paul's `Judaizers` - a term that can indeed be applied in diverse ways, however, mainly boiling down to keeping the faith Jewish/casting it in a Jewish mould. The Greek *Iesous* was clearly rejected by them and today's English version (Jesus) is especially minimized to zero significance. Consider my discussion on the importance of the NT Name of our Saviour, keep in mind Js 2.7 with reference to the defamation/slandering of the "glorious Name" and where the suffix "sous"(Greek IeSOUS) is still to this day linked to "horse" (*sous* is horse in Hebrew) - something which is indeed ridiculous - I am sure we should quickly be able to guess where this nonsensical idea had its origin, and of course keeping, once again, the two contending sectarian groups in mind (Acts 6.1-2). [Even a Natzrayah will reject such a stance wholeheartedly]. So, if we cannot detect a taint of tongue-in-the-cheek sarcasm here, how will we ever be able to deal with figurative meanings in the Scriptures?

The Essenes had regarded themselves as the "watchmen of Jerusalem" and they would of course have refused instructions from others, rather taking confidence in their own ability and wisdom – it is said that they adored the Holy City and they were also fanatic preservers of the Torah tradition (keep in mind the two basic branches – Acts 6.1). They would therefore have stood firmly on their version of the Jewish Name of the Son and we can also detect the rejection of Jesus as a heavenly messenger (*Angelic* being), something that was rather explained as one of the many ways in which He was revealed (yet denying His main revelation especially up until the First Temple destruction and thereafter on the whole to prophets only). I am boldly liaising them with the very early, i.e. the initial phase, of the post-apostolic era also with the rise of the post-apostolic Church. And this is how a triune God had found its way to the heart of Christendom – the Angelic Being of the Old Testament was also rejected by the post-apostolic Church as its Old Testament reality – His real appearances to especially the prophets - did not line up with the Logos theology and especially a triune concept linked to God Most High - we are therefore still sitting with this type of ingrained legacy.

Today we can quickly detect leniencies towards a triune image of God in their Stoic reasoning and finding expression in Ein Sof. I can unfortunately not go on and on indefinitely. I am therefore sharing with those interested the following web pages so that you can read more about this for yourselves probing what I have mentioned in this article. The Ein Sof also links to the Kabbalah which theosophy definitely shows Hindu, even a Buddhist, influence. I have done a good research work, I think, on this type of Eastern influence on the Essenes for those interested to pursue it further**

Article on the web keeping a watchful eye on the correct version of the Name of the Son of God Jewish:

"Nazarene Israelites Two House Congregation of Port Elizabeth"

<http://nazarene2house.weebly.com/torah-portions.html>

Related articles that are highly recommended for insight and understanding of influences on Jewish

thought and practice :

"Kabbalah, the Serifot of Ein Sof"

<http://reluctant-messenger.com/citsym/kabbalah.htm>

Studies in Comparative Religion, "Parallels in Hindu and Stoic Ethical Thought",

by Donald H. Bishop:

http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Parallels_in_Hindu_and_Stoic_Ethical_Thought.aspx

"Flight from Ein Sof" by W.E Gutman

Epilogue : <http://books.google.co.za/books?id=J2L-0iAG7dcC&pg=PA93&lpg=PA93&dq=Stoicism+and+ein+sof&source=bl&ots=Ow3OtjWXsv&sig=HOxVJjW57TH81sl7xQAgEcGKaSQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=SCHHUaKOKca3hAf33oHoDw&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=Stoicism%20and%20ein%20sof&f=false>

<http://books.google.co.za/books?id=J2L-0iAG7dcC&pg=PA93&lpg=PA93&dq=Stoicism+and+ein+sof&source=bl&ots=Ow3OtjWXsv&sig=HOxVJjW57TH81sl7xQAgEcGKaSQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=SCHHUaKOKca3hAf33oHoDw&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=Stoicism%20and%20ein%20sof&f=false>

An excellent article on the Name of Jesus: <http://www.charismanews.com/opinion/39917-is-the-name-jesus-really-related-to-the-name-zeus> : Is the Name Zeus, really related to Zeus? By Michael Brown.

Archaeological Evidence that Jesus' hometown, Nazareth, did exist in His day and age

From Wikipedia the following : <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazareth>”(2013-08-22):

In 2009 Israeli archaeologist Yardenna Alexandre excavated archaeological remains in Nazareth that might date to the time of Jesus in the early Roman period. Alexandre told reporters, 'The discovery is of the utmost importance since it reveals for the very first time a house from the Jewish village of Nazareth.'^[39] Source : [House from Jesus' time excavated](#) (December 23, 2009) in *Israel 21c Innovation News Service* Retrieved 2010-01-05

It is important to note that had Jesus/Yeshua indeed been a member of the acclaimed Essene sect (the Carmelite Essenes), then why would they have regarded Him as one of them, yet on the other hand not acknowledging Him (Jesus was rejected from the very beginning of His ministry, in Nazareth). This is something that immediately tells us that any claims to making Jesus an Essene, and of course coupled with all the other so-called “proofs of evidence” thusfar taken note of, do not ring true. Jesus was, according to Paul, born under the Law (a Pharisee according to many Biblical scholars, even Jewish rabbis are in favour of this group membership assigned to Jesus). The

Essenes were not part of the Temple system – they refused the central worship system, namely the very important and essential Mosaic animal sacrifices. But what could have happened and why Joseph and Mary settled in Nazareth after their return from Egypt, was that Nazareth was indeed their choice of residence because of its insignificance.

We must remember that they were on their arrival still avoiding Judea, especially shying away from Herod's son, Archelaus' attention. And, it seems, that hardly any Pharisee or Sadducee would have associated Nazareth easily with the Messiah and with this in mind, we should also be able to acknowledge that Joseph was indeed a clever man making good, sound choices, also keeping a low profile at all cost. Besides, God was with Joseph and Mary and He would therefore constantly have met with them in dreams as He indeed had done right from the beginning of their relationship. But there is no proof that Jesus or his parents were Essene Nazarenes – there could perhaps have been a different version of pious sects but it is not to say that, on face value, Jesus was an Essene and just because He grew up in Nazareth from about age fourteen (Herod killed all the male infants “under two years old”, i.e. from Judea – it seems this was the area that was covered and then not including Galilee). This is something academics have as yet and seemingly not probed satisfactorily. Jesus' and his apostles profile differed too much from the fanatical sectarian Qumran monastics' lifestyle. Also, not any dedicated Jew was necessarily Essene!

Once again, be careful when you so firmly want to stand on the one and only correct (!) Jewish Name for the Father and the Son. And just to go a little further, there is definitely a type of reincarnation detected in the Kabbalah, also in the modern Essene's statement of faith. Keep in mind the diversity of the Essene sect, also of those laying claim to the “Nazarene” label. My advice is to always opt for objectivity. I am not downing anybody, I am just sharing something of importance as this is, as I think, how the Greek Name which we know today as the Latinized (English) "Jesus" was rejected and framed as meaningless. And lastly, it is meaningless to replace the Name of Jesus with the Old Testament YHVH!

Jesus is, and He remains, the Son of God and it is therefore necessary, in order to understand the Scriptures as conveyed to us, that He is not the Father, although God the Father was and will forever be revealed in and through the Son (Jn 14) – the Son of God is heir to the Throne of God and I think a differentiation must therefore be made between an ordinary son of God (child of the Covenant) and God's one and only Son's identity. It was also the “son-of-God-identity” that was pushed by the Essenes to extremity and we can, and should therefore again be able to sense why the connotation of “God” in stead of “Son of God” was emphasized, making God and His Son, along with the Spirit of God, then indeed an indivisible unity as the Trinitarian doctrine to this day rules (The Hebraic echad (one) can indeed also be applied to a unity/union,i.e. depending again of course, on its syntactical meaning). No one has ever seen, or will ever be able to see God and live! This God emphatically said to Moses.

Considering the aforementioned, let us do all in our power not to divide the body of Jesus (the body of true, sincere believers, both Jews and Gentiles) for this is not God's will and we may just be crucifying Jesus once again in the eyes of the world!

PRAYER : Thank you Father for sending us Jesus/Yeshua/Yahshua, your one and only Son, heir to your Throne, our Saviour and our Lord (Ps. 2; Acts 4.12).

STATEMENT : The NT Name indeed reflects the richness of a Gospel shared with ALL NATIONS: Jesus/Jehoshua/Yahoshua/Yahushua, or for an English speaking orthodox Jew, Joshua (Note also that J + : (shewa) always represents Yah in transliteration). It is good to consult, if doubt still lingers, i.e. concerning the Sacred OT Name, a Jewish linguist – somebody with sound (!) knowledge of the Hebrew Language and Hebrew Online's Director is, I think, the right contact or he may bring you in touch with someone who will be able to give clarity on this very issue – that is if you want to approach a Hebrew language fundi. It is therefore not only what we have received, but what has happened to the language in the distant past, especially how it has developed, that is especially of importance to us and as far as I know, research on the OT Sacred Name has not yet been finalized. And remember what I have said: If the Name is so important why discard it in baptism? Also keep in mind who were indeed responsible for this crucial move in the early history of Christianity, and who then have shaped the mind of the post-apostolic protagonists? It is always important to consider the full picture before drawing rash conclusions.

*Quoted from The New Testament in Hebrew and English, Society for distributing Hebrew Scriptures.

**Go to Christian Jewish Studies, on <http://www.housealtarnetwork.com>, for a series of books written by Ester and available online on PDF (only currently in Afrikaans).

*** YHVH was the Name the Angel of the Lord, the One who spoke from the bramblebush, gave to Moses and when He asked Him to reveal His Name. This Name was declared by the Angelic Messenger as “I am that I am” when He instructed Moses to reveal God's Plan of deliverance to His people, i.e. from the oppression of Pharaoh (Ex. 3.14), Now this very Name was surely pronounced in full by the Angelic Messenger, therefore not only supplying Moses with the mere Hebrew consonants, i.e. the consonantal *yod-he-waw-he*. It is believed that the spoken Name was removed from the mouth of the people in order to safeguard it from using it in vain – and seemingly after Alexander the Great's conquests and the Greek civilization's impact on the Holy land. Such safeguard was binding and, in accordance also with God's commandments, trespassers would severely have been punished when ignoring this salient prescription. Now, this Name has been probed for years by Jewish scholars and laymen alike but its real pronunciation seems to still be both intriguing and mind-boggling.

There are those who, to this day, proclaim that the true pronunciation of the Sacred Name was revealed to them, but such stance is definitely not generally accepted. If we are honest and objective, we will have to admit that it was the Angelic Being who had appeared to Moses in the bramblebush who also revealed His Name to Him. He was of course, and in accordance with the prophet Isaiah's anointed word, God's very own heavenly Messenger (the Angel of Presence), however, considering this, we must also accept that God, who remained invisible even to Moses, was always acting in and through this specific Angelic Being and who was then indeed also carrying God's Name (Ex. 23.20+). And this brings us again to the New Testament.

Just as Jesus had explained to Thomas that He was in the Father and the Father in Him, likewise, and therefore in the same manner, this Angelic Being was intimately linked with God Most High and His Presence was then as good as God Himself appearing. Yet technically speaking, He remained the visible projection of God, and therefore He was never God the Father (God Himself). According to Jesus/Yeshua's prayer in Gethsemane, He did reveal the Name of His Father to the Jews (Jn 17). There is therefore, and to this day, propagators who feel convinced that Jesus/Yeshua

had then indeed also revealed the true pronunciation of the ineffable Name and as a result of this “trespass” He was condemned to death – it is to this day accepted by many that God had never meant His Name to be forgotten, something He had therefore indeed inscribed in the Old Testament (=the Tanach). Now, without going further, what we can seemingly then confidently accept, is that, even in the Gospels, we have no evidence of the true pronunciation of the tetragrammaton (=YHVH). Therefore, referring to YHVH as the Father of Jesus must be understood as God's Old Testament revelation in and through the Angelic Being, over against the New Testament Yeshua, Y'shua, Yahshua made flesh - or as was debated in this Module, known to the Jews as Jehoshua/Yahoshua/Yehoshua, even sometimes written Yahushua, the latter often vehemently adhered to by at least a portion of Jewish believers.

A self-study project and assignment:

- 1) Give the article a thorough reading.
- 2) Read it once again, making notes where necessary so that you can go back to those things that have made an impact on your mind. Especially make notes of the things you want to supplement with your own research.
- 3) Quietly contemplate the contents.
- 4) Pray that God will help you to understand the Scriptures, also clearing your mind from that type of instruction that will not benefit you. This is something you must always do for we have often been imprinted with ideas that don't line-up with God's Word. Remember the apostle's warning against apostatizing the faith by believing false spirits that have gone forth into the world (1 Jn 4).
- 5) Take a Concordance and cross-reference as this will give you the broader picture.
- 6) Read the recommended web pages, always giving credit the authors of the articles supplied.
- 7) Growing in knowledge will instil faith in God and a risen Jesus and it will also make you steadfast in your daily interaction with people and especially with all kinds of doctrines coming your way.
- 8) Be cheerful of spirit, full knowing that Jesus is risen and that He will lead you to the pastures of Gospel Truth for He is the Way, the Truth, the Life (Jn 14.6).
- 9) Keep in mind that it is good to first “break the fallow ground” before you want go further. Take it step-by-step and this way you will make spiritual progress, also grow in confidence.
- 10) Always keep in mind God's awesome Spirit-being, namely that of a consuming fire (Heb. 12.29). Never ever be arrogant by believing some modern TV channel teachers, claiming that “you must become like God”, and that “you must act like God”, even “look like God”. Such statements speak of ignorance, and such word of faith is nothing but preposterous, even blasphemous. You and I can NEVER look like God or act like God. What we can do, if we conform to God's prescriptions, also reflected in the New Testament, is to walk in humility of spirit before God, acting in the Name of Jesus and using the weapons of our faith, not in our own power but in the Power of God's Spirit, given to us by Jesus (Acts 2.33), namely the New Testament deposit of our faith. You and I must therefore guard with all our might, this deposit keeping whatever we do Scripture bound! Also do not fall in the

trap by presenting yourself as a son of God as though you are Christ Himself. “Christ in Us” should therefore never be applied as though we are Jesus Himself. Being a “son of God” means being a child of God, i.e. if we keep what we read in Paul's Letter to the Romans Biblical, reading this phrase then always in context. Be on your guard for Essene influence as this influence had caused our beloved apostle Paul much sorrow and grief.

- 11) Use a Concordance to locate the diverse texts dealing with the Angel of God, also referred to as the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of God's Presence. Note His appearances (theophanies) also in Torah above the Mercy Seat (the Ark of the Covenant). Note especially his appearance in the bramblebush to Moses and his assignment for Moses and Aaron (i.e. to Egypt to deliver God's People from their bondage of slavery). Note how He led the Israelites out of Egypt and how He appeared in the cloud by day and the fiery cloud by night. How did He act as God's representative, also as Mediator between God and His People, and why.
- 12) Research the history of the Maccabeans and the impact of the House of the Hasmoneans on Palestine.
- 13) Study the Book of Daniel, especially taking note of this prophets four beasts. Research for yourselves the consecutive kingdoms, beginning with the Kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian King, who had taken the Jews captive, i.e. along with Daniel. Note the pagan kingdoms that succeeded the Babylonians : the Medes and the Persians, then the Greeks and finally the Romans ruling in Jesus' time.

THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED TO PURSUE WHAT WAS DISCUSSED IN THIS MODULE FURTHER, MAY CONSULT THE FOLLOWING (ADDED 15/07/ 2013) :

Links On the Names of God the Father and His Son:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_\(name\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_(name))

<http://christianity.about.com/od/faqhelpdesk/f/jesusoryeshua.htm>

How Yeshua became Jesus:

<http://jesusisajew.org/YESHUA.php>

Hebrew Names of God:

http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Names_of_G-d/Yeshua/yeshua.html

also...

http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Names_of_G-d/YHVH/yhvh.html

Jews for Jesus – An Introduction to the Names.....:

<http://www.jewsforjesus.org/answers/jesus/names>

Names of God in Judaism:

http://za.ask.com/wiki/Names_of_God_in_Judaism?lang=en#Kabbalistic_use

On the Essene Nazarenes :

<http://nazarenespace.com/group/essenenezarenes>

<http://www.essene.com/>

Those who want to pursue this subject matter further may consult the Internet directories.

NOTE ADDED ON THE CULTURE THAT HAD SURROUNDED THE USAGE OF THE NAME OF GOD AND HIS SON DURING EARLY CHRISTIANITY

It is said that a sacred name must not be tampered with. It must remain in other words unaltered in whatever language it is applied. According to one Aramaic record, also relating to Talmudic inscriptions on Yeshua's Name, that the “h” was, at a stage, removed from the NT Name, also the “a”, and clearly done with the purpose of diminishing the true meaning of the Son of God's Name, even the sacredness of the Name. This is of course how Jesus, the Son of God, was mocked by His own people. So this type of ruling seems to be applied in accordance with the sages' own perception. And the Babylonian Talmud was of course esteemed as an academic work, reflecting the Jewish culture and the Jewish faith, also at the time of Jesus and His disciples.

The Babylonian Talmud would therefore have had a very strong influence on the Jewish community which, in turn, had to stand their ground against the very strong rise of vibrant Christianity – however, note the dating of finalization of the Babylonian Talmud but rabbinical oral directives were of course always strong and especially after 70 A.D. The Jewish risen Jesus who was preached to one and all alike – without any ethnicity attached to His Gospel - would of course have been made an object of ridicule by His opponents, something that had indeed also extended to His Name.

I feel strongly that, if we want to tamper with the name “Yeshua”, then we must begin to apply the Biblical Names the original way, i.e. pertaining to the Old Testament, and then Aramaic will of course come into play as it was indeed the language that impacted strongly on ancient Hebrew and the Hebrew race since the end of the Captivity and the return of the Israelites to their land. And this would especially mean adaptations made to the vocalization of all the Biblical names.

What we should also keep in mind is that there is a direct translation from Greek to Hebrew and *vice versa* and this is why the name of Yeshua had found its salient place in the heart of Christendom as Greek indeed had a very strong impact on the world since Alexander's conquests [Readers are especially referred to Rev. Baucher's Aramaic/English translation of the Peshitta. This linguist draws interesting conclusions on Aramaic/Greek translations and anyone desirous to become acquainted with the language struggle as I would call it – between those Jews who were standing on Aramaic (the Judean Hebrews) over against those Greek-speaking Jews who were driving Greek at all cost) – should consult his excellent work].

The LXX (Septuagint translation of the Old Testament) is proof of this as is also the impact the Ptolemies had made on the Levant, i.e. with especially the western coast-line of Palestine and Syria in mind, also on the Nabataeans. It seems the kind of language struggle that has been set in motion, i.e. surrounding the NT Name and whether it should be pronounced in Aramaic/Greek or Hebrew -

is similar to the attitude some stalwarts like to maintain, namely to only stick to their preference of language. This is usually found in a bilingual or multilingual country. All effort is usually then made to down the second language speakers, making the one inferior to the other.

It seems this was also the reason why the Old Testament Sacred Name (Jehovah/Yahweh) was removed from the mouths of the people – since seemingly Alexander the Great's time (333 B.C.) - and it was seemingly also from that time forth propagated that sacred names cannot and must not be /adapted (i.e. when speaking a foreign language). But we must keep in mind that the Jewish nation revolved around a theocracy (in Old Testament times especially) also one nation with one faith, one language on the whole and therefore proselytes were ardently made. But in Yeshua's case, the Good News were meant for ALL nations. The one was then definitely ethnic in nature whereas the other was not restricted to one nation and, e.g., all its customs, culture and linguistic prescriptions.

It seems it was this type of wrangling between the two NT groups/cultures, both Jewish but the one with a clear ring of foreign practice (Greek) to it, that had inflamed the senseless furore over the NT Name of Yeshua (Acts 6). And the mere fact that there were Greek-speaking Jews (Hellenists) in Palestine when the Gospel went forth from Judea, is proof thereof that Greek was not the insignificant language of the Greek oppressors! We must therefore be careful not to think in terms of Aramaic only, always keeping in mind that there were more than one type of Jew (speaking then his own Mediterranean language or dialect).

Paul therefore, in a very informative way, stated in his letters that there was no more Jew, Greek, freeman (a Jew who was set free from slavery and like the Essenes were seemingly apt to do and when such a freed slave could even have clinched Roman citizenship), slave (a Jew who was employed as a slave) and Scythian (a Sacae (?) or rather a Jew from the diaspora who had mixed with the nations – therefore not just any Jew who relocated to a foreign country but a Jew who, since the times of the destruction of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians, had lost his land – the complex history of the lost tribes comes into play here. The Scythians seem to have formed part of this type of mixed Jewish-Gentile race. Diversity in language, similar to what we find written in Acts 2, and when Jesus had poured out the Holy Spirit on His 120 faithful followers, had then fallen in place. (Note the 120 Jewish disciples and then not pertaining to the 3000 who were shortly thereafter added to the Jerusalem assembly through baptism).

MORE ON THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

There is currently strong contention concerning the “proper” or “correct” way of writing the Tetragrammaton, some orthodox Jews insisting on YHVH instead of YHWH. Now, we know there isn't a W consonant in Hebrew and the V (vav) is rightly pronounced “ve” as in “very” or “vulnerable” and therefore not “whe” as in “when”. Following this type of pronunciation, it seems that “Yahweh”, as the Name has been pronounced for centuries (since at least the seventeenth century), will then be discarded. For a faithful Jew, the wrong pronunciation is anathema, however, it seems that finalization, i.e. on the *exact* and *proper* vocalization of the Sacred Name, has not as yet been reached, at least not generally. Many Jewish believers in the Messiah will not accept this approach to the Name as they believe that the Sacred Name still applies, finding expression in the I AM and even I AM GOD status as expressed in one Aramaic/English translation (Bauscher). Now, this latter translation is not wrong as long as we should keep in mind that the Son of God has

received His status of almighty ruling power (=omnipotence) from His Father who, in Jesus' own words, was (and still is) indeed greater than the Son (Jn 15).

There is then Biblically, and indeed gathered from the Scriptures, this salient truth we can and must keep in mind as the “God” or Almighty status (Godhood) was owned by God the Father. Should we not then differentiate between the OWNED and the RECEIVED status, we might end up with misinterpretation of the Biblical text. Both the Trinitarians and the Unitarians (Oneness) have their respective interpretations of the Scriptures, however, should we not also be prepared to objectify Scripture anew, we will interpret the I AM GOD as though the Son is God Almighty within Himself (of His own ability)! And this is where we must always be prepared to “follow” the Scriptures, not “leading” the Scriptures! Fact is, we encounter the theophanies (God appearing as an Angelic being) in the Old Testament and if we believe the Scriptures, a specific Angelic Being was indeed clothed with God's Name, also mighty authority (Ex. 23.20+) and He was then also the “Angel of the Covenant” as He was that very One who made the covenants with Abraham, appearing also to Isaac and Jacob. This is then not angel worship (Col. 2.18), but this is surely how God, who will forever remain invisible to man, has revealed Himself and His existence to His People in ancient times (Jn. 1.18; Jn. 4.24; 1 Jn. 4.12).

This type of angelic encounter was also known to Moses and it was indeed, as Scripture clearly states, that very same angelic being who spoke to Moses from the brambles, revealing His Name (I AM WHAT (that) I AM to him (Ex. 3.14). Now, surely, His status of glory was immense and the I AM can therefore indeed be interpreted as “God”, however, and this calls for wisdom, He, that specific, exalted angelic being who also led the Israelites out of their captivity under the Pharaohs, was then indeed clothed with immense Power, but He was not God Almighty (God the Father) as God the Father, creator of heaven and earth, can never ever be made subject to His own creation! And Angels were brought forth by God, not as God had created Adam and Eve from the dust of the earth, but they were brought forth in the heavenly, divine sphere, as spirit-beings (in rank as cherubim, seraphim, and thousands of other “elohim” angelic beings. Note that “Elohim” in Hebrew is the title of their supreme God whereas “elohim” (lowercase) pertains to the angelic hosts. Now, without going further into the existence and status of the Angel of the Covenant (clearly the “Prince of Israel” according to Dan. 12).

“Michael” means “He who is like unto God” and this connotation remarkably and perfectly corresponds with the Pauline Christ or Messiah who had left His heavenly glory to dwell among man (Phil. 2) – it is clear that the I AM status and title indeed belongs to the Son of God. However, what we must always keep in mind – if we at least want to remain Scriptural not naively following teachings brought forth by humans, i.e. especially from post-apostolic times - is that the Son was brought forth by the Father and His goings forth is then truly “from days of old” (Mic. 5.1; Mal. 3.1), but, regardless of the aforementioned status of glory, His Father still remains “greater than I” (Jesus) and there is then a very good reason why Jesus had once again brought His Father's status, in comparison with His own, to the attention of His apostles (Jn 14/15; Jn 17). His divinity is then indeed subject unto the Father's Godhood, although He was clothed with the status of omnipotence and authority by God the Father, and so that we can, under the New Covenant, now worship Him, the Son of God as God the Father had determined it, after the resurrection of His Son, namely that “all the angels must worship Him” (Math. 28.20; Heb. 1.6). To worship somebody indeed means to be exalted to the status of “God/divinity”.

Paul, the apostle who brought insight into the identity of Jesus as none did and could, i.e. among the New Testament writers, clearly states : (Heb. 1.9) “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Ps. 45.6,7 - From the *New Testament in Hebrew and English, The Society for Distributing Hebrew Scriptures, Middlesex HA8 7LF, England*). This text clearly points back to the Old Testament and “fellows” to the archangels of which there are four (*see Cohen's Concise Translated Talmud on this very issue, p.80-88*). However, what should be clear is Paul's particular viewpoint, namely that the Son of God was raised after His death and resurrection above His fellows, the angelic beings(!), and so that they were to worship Him (Heb.1.6). What should then, in light of the aforesaid, be clear to us is the Father's greater authority than that of the Son, the Son having received His exalted status from the Father.

The Son therefore remains the visible expression/likeness of the invisible God, His Father, forever! Note Jesus' discussion with Thomas and His apostles – Jn 14, also 15. Note also the transfiguration and James, Peter and John seeing Jesus on the Mount in intimate discussion with Moses, which again brings us to the bramblesh. This specific testimony of the Son in His pre-existence (the Old Testament times) were questioned and also discarded by, as it seems, initially by the Nazarenes. The apostle Paul might have referred to them, stating in his epistles : “They bring a different Jesus (to the people!)” (Keep in mind that there are, to this day, more than one sect among the broader umbrella, known as “Nazarene”).

Briefly, they wanted, in their Jewish reasoning, to keep the Godhead strictly and therefore exclusively monotheistic, and they therefore opted for their own type of explanation of the Son's Incarnation (who was made flesh – Gal. 4) namely to make and keep Him that One God of the Shema (Deut. 6.4), yet, ironically, divided in three persons (although, and seemingly right from the start, expressed as “one” God). This is what it boils down to and although the declaration of the Trinity only reached its final doctrinal formulation in 325 and 381, we can detect its primitive basis in Shimon Ben Yochai and his type of approach to the Godhead (Shimon shows leniencies towards Nazarene Essenism).

We can therefore only understand Jesus' reference to Himself as the I AM (the great I AM rightly called as such by many) if we could place His revelation in context for the Scriptures are clear that God moved out of His distant abode to make contact with His creatures (“distant” for puny man – Isaiah the prophet states that “God lives in obscurity”) in and through ONE heavenly (!) messenger carrying His authority and His Name, and who could and did appear as an Angelic Being (e.g. to Bileam and David) OR as a man (to Joshua before the invasion of Jericho).

We indeed then worship God the Father in and through His Son for the Son was appointed by the Father as one and only (!) Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2.5; Math. 28.2; Eph. 3.14). Christ's Godhood/divinity is then never independent of the Father's for it is the Father – the one and only God having absolute power and authority within Himself – who is revealed in and through one specific Angelic Being in the Old Testament, and, in the New Testament, in and through the Son's (human) being (Phil. 2).

Should we then want to see the Father, we will only see Him, the invisible God in and through the Son![God who will and can NEVER be seen by man according to the Scriptures (!)], (rf. Jn

14/15). The I AM is indeed that great, awesome One who sent Moses to Egypt to deliver His people from the Pharaohs' oppression (see Ps 2). But keep in mind that God the Father was never, like the Son, made subject to His creation, i.e. being an angel or, in the New Testament, as Son of man (a human being). This is where we must ask for wisdom so that we can understand that, should we make God a human being, then we are subjecting the Most High/Supreme Creator of heaven and earth, to His own creation! And this is apostasy *par excellence*! God the Father prepared a human body for His Son in the virgin Mary by the (creative) Power of His Spirit and so that we could receive sanctification through the Son's sacrificial blood (Ps. 40.7-9; Heb. 10.5; Jes. 9.5; Heb. 10.10| Lu. 1.35). The angelic appearances must then be seen as the Son of God in His pre-existence and acting as God, His Father's, representative/mediator (only He and no other angelic being was clothed with the Name of God – Ex. 23.20+).

Acting therefore as “God Almighty” yet in essence remaining the “Son of God Most High”. This Old Testament truth was discarded by the carnal minded Jewish-Christian teachers! Carefully note the apostle Paul's teachings for his teachings were tampered with : they were distorted by this type of carnal minded teachers (2 Pet. 3.15). Retain objectivity for “many false spirits have gone forth into the world”(1 Jn. 4.1).

Module compiled by Ester Blomerus, Th.D, for the Followers of Jesus (1957), Christian Jewish Studies(1). Edited 6/7 July 2013 (2) Re-edited adding info on Nazareth, 2013-08-22 (3) Re-edited supplementing info on the Angel of the Lord and additional info on the Nazarenes (2013-09-04) - <http://www.housealtarnetwork.com>
