

Whence all the confusion in churches?

by C.J. Koster

It is estimated that 2300 different Christian denominations exist in the world. Is that no confusion? Where is that Faith which was *"once and for all"* (Jude v. 3 NEB), delivered unto the set-apart ones? Vince's Expository Dictionary says the word means "once for all, of what is of perpetual validity, not requiring repetition". Where did error creep into the True Faith?

Right back in the Old Covenant we read how apostasy set in. In the history of Judaism we read how they were misled by their religious leaders to stop calling on the Name of Yahueh. This decision was totally unscriptural and was born from a mistaken reverence for the name. This was how the Name started to be hidden and eventually substituted by something else. But also, the Scriptures (the Word) were gradually being replaced by the Talmud and Mishna.

"Your tradition" and "teaching for doctrines the commandments of Men", Yahushua called it in Matt. 15 and Mark 7. In Mark 7:8 He says, *"For laying aside the commandment of Yahueh, ye hold the tradition of men"*. In verse 9 He repeats, *"Full well ye reject the commandment of Yahueh that ye keep your own tradition."* And for the third time in verse 13, *"Making the Word of Yahueh of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered ..."*. In the majority of churches it is taught that the Pharisees and Scribes kept the Law of Yahueh strictly. No! The Master says three times in this chapter that they held on to their traditions, man-made laws, laying aside the Law of the Mighty One! The Jewish People today admit that the avoidance of the Name was caused by a misinterpretation of the Third Commandment. In the Encyclopedia Judaica under "God, Names of, YHWH" we read, "At least until the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E, this Name was **regularly pronounced** - But at least by the third century B.C.E. the **pronunciation of the name YHWH was avoided and Adonai, 'the Lord', was substituted for it - the custom** was later introduced of saying simply in Hebrew 'ha-shem' - The avoidance of pronouncing the name YHWH is generally ascribed to a sense of reverence. **More precisely it was caused by a misunderstanding of the Third Commandment.** The true pronunciation of the name YHWH was never lost. Several early Greek writers . . . testify that the name was pronounced 'Yahueh' (Emphasis mine). If the Name, the very identity, of the One that we should worship, be hidden, then we start erring. And if His Name is eventually substituted by the name of an idol, then we find that error has led to idolatry!

The key to the knowledge of the Almighty and His Word has been taken away. "Woe unto you, lawyers! (or Scribes) for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered", Yahushua said to them in Luk 11:52. The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible says in Vol. 2 p 407, "The Name of (the Mighty One) is the key to understanding the biblical doctrine of (the Mighty One)." The confusion had started: the Name, the key to understanding the Scriptures and its Author, had been taken away and the Scribes tried to justify this change by misinterpreting and twisting the Third Commandment.

In that same period, we read in the Mishna how they added 39 additional, unscriptural laws on Sabbath keeping - adding to the Word of Yahueh as He clearly prohibited in Deut 4:2. These 39 laws contributed to Satan's plan to make the Sabbath a burden instead of it being a delight (Yesh 58:13). Indeed *"teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."* Yahushua warned

the lawyers against burdening the people with man-made laws in Luke 11:46, *"woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne ..."*

After the New Covenant (New Testament) was written, the theological school in Alexandria took over. The Messianic Faith was polluted with Greek philosophies, especially those of Plato. The Scriptures was completely "spiritualized". Indeed, to spiritualize the Scriptures is the easiest way to bypass Scriptural Truths. Clement and Origen were the champions of this spiritualization of the Scriptures, thereby accommodating Greek philosophies and beliefs into Messianic worship.

But further confusion came about in the Fourth Century when Emperor Constantine as emperor of the Roman Empire, fraternized with the persecuted believers in Rome. The Babylonian cult prevailed in Rome. Constantine wanted peace amongst the different religions and he saw to it that a merger of all religions was established. This merger, religious syncretism, formed the basis of the Roman Catholic church which was subsequently established (The Two Babylons - Rev Alexander Hislop). Emperor Constantine enacted the Edict of Constantine in the year 321. Sunday was commanded to be observed as a rest-day in honour of "the venerable Day of the Sun". Many authorities relate the fact that Constantine had always been a "sun-god worshipper". This suited the sun worship of the pagan religions and the gap which existed between paganism and the Believers in Rome was soon eliminated in the year 364 when the Church, at the Council of Laodicea passed a canon (law) that "Christians ought not to Judaize and to rest on the Sabbath, but to work in that day. But preferring in honour of the Lord's day ... if they desired to rest ..." That is where the Church transferred the set apartness of Sabbath to Sunday! In the 6th Century, at the Synod of Orleans all manual work on the Sunday was finally forbidden. Meanwhile, back at the Council of Nicea in the year 325, Constantine as chairman, saw to it that "Easter Sunday" and the "Trinity" (both coming from pagan religions) were adopted into the Church. This religion, formed by merging pagan religions and the already apostate Messianic Believers, was subsequently the only religion tolerated in the "Christian" world for more than 1000 years. And in these Dark Middle Ages the Scriptures was also withheld from the people, only the Priests being allowed to read it.

When the Reformation began at the beginning of the 16th Century, the printing press was also invented and the Reformers had the Scriptures translated and distributed to all those who wished to have it. The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of Yahueh, was again being used by the heavenly Father to convince sincere Believers of Scriptural Truths. Luther took his stand. Calvin received more Light. We must remember however, that both these sincere men were both educated in the teachings of the Roman Catholic church. Luther was a R.C. priest himself. That is why they both retained much of the R.C. doctrines and brought it with them into their newly formed churches. The Anabaptists saw water baptism and took their stand. Step by step the Reformation grew as Truths were revealed. But every group still retained much of the pagan beliefs and names that were totally unscriptural. The origin? From pagan religions, of course! In the last four centuries, heavenly Light has been breaking through into the hearts of searching Believers.

The darkness of the Middle Ages began to give way to the Light of the Word - *"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path"*, Psalm 119:105". *"The Commandment of Yahueh is pure, enlightening the eyes"*, Ps 19:9. What does the Scriptures say about this Reformation that started more than four centuries ago and which is still continuing?

" ... for the wisdom of their wise (men) shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid ... And in that day shall the deaf hear the Words of the Book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and the darkness", Yesh 29:14,18. "Knowledge shall be increased ... Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried' but the wicked (lawless) shall do wickedly (lawlessly): and none of the wicked (lawless) shall understand; but the wise shall understand", Dan 12:4,10, Companion Bible. "The entrance of Thy Words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple", Ps 119:130. "The Law of Yahueh is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of Yahueh is sure, making wise the simple", Psalm 19:7.

And now in this end-time, the path of the righteous *"is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"*, Prov 4:18. The division between light and darkness is getting bigger and bigger, Rev 22:1. The lies which have been brought from paganism into the churches, and have caused all the confusion, are being laid bare in the Light of His Word. The father of all lies, Satan, has deceived the whole world (Rev 12:9) and his master plan has been exposed. He has seen to it that the Ten Commandments are being ignored or annulled in the churches. This resulted in innocent believers in churches to be held captive by Satan, being still in bondage to sin (transgression of the law - 1 Yohanan 3:4), slaves of sin (Yohanan 8:32, 36), *"slaves to impurity and to lawlessness"* (Rom 6:19 NASB). But Satan's onslaught was not only against the last six Commandments of the Decalogue. No, his master plan was to subvert the first four Commandments, bringing the people into confusion as to **WHO** should be worshipped and on **WHICH DAY**. The first four Commandments stipulate very clearly the identity of the Mighty One - His Name - and His Day.

However, the arch deceiver succeeded to institute Sunday instead of the Scriptural and Set-apart Sabbath and also getting the world to worship "**God**" instead of Yahueh. "**God**" - the idol of the old Germanic tribes! (See Webster's Twentieth Century Dictionary and Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th Edition).

What will happen to this "Confusion"? The shocking truth is that Babylon means **confusion!** The prophecy for the end-time is given in the closing chapters of the Book of Revelation. This Babylon (confusion) is going **to fall, will receive plagues and be burned with fire**. This clear verdict we read in Rev 14:8-11; 16:19; 17:1-18; 18:1-24 and 19:2. But by His Favour, His saving and delivering call comes to us in Rev 18:4, *"Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins (transgression of the law), and that ye receive not of her plagues"*. The Bride of the Messiah is preparing herself, Rev 19:7,8. Do you want to be part of those who have overcome and that will enter into the New Jerusalem? And what is the Seal of the overcomers? The Scriptures says they have **the Name of the Lamb and the Name of His Father written in their foreheads**, Rev 14:1, Greek text. Of the New Jerusalem we read in Rev 21:27, *"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh as lie ..."* And what bigger lies do we find than the lie of His Name being "God" and that "the Sabbath has now been changed to Sunday"!!!

The overcomers who will enter into the New Jerusalem "shall see His face; and **His Name shall be in their foreheads**", Rev 22:4. *"And let him that heareth say, Come and let him that is a thirst come. And whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely"*, Rev 22:17.