



The Zion Letter

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"Blessed is he who does not become offended because of Me" Matt 11:6

According to the Scriptures, in the last days, **"Many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved,"** Mt 24:10-13.

Do you notice that people seem to be easily offended these days? The Bible tells us that in the last days most people's love will grow cold due to an increase in lawlessness (see MT 24:12 above). **1 John 3:4 tells us that "sin is lawlessness."** So it follows that because of sin and lack of repentance, people will increasingly fall away; offenses will increase, and people will take matters into their own hands, rather than following Biblical commands. Falling away implies that many sheep will separate from the flock and be left to the wolves. Proverbs 14:12 says, **"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."** I believe we are in such days as Yeshua spoke of, and many will fall away; so how can we stay grounded and avoid that fate? If we follow certain Biblical principles steadfastly, they will guide us through the storms.

First of all, God has always impressed upon me to keep a short list. What I mean by that is I am by no means perfect and if I offend someone or think I may have offended them I make every effort to go to them in accordance with Matthew 5:23-25, or vice - versa (see Matthew 18:15) to work it out and be reconciled. If I sin in other ways, I make every effort to seek the Lord's forgiveness and so should you. Keep a short list. Repentance is good for the soul. It's the only way to walk in freedom. If we don't deal with our sins (pride, anger, jealousy, envy, greed, lust/sexual immorality, hatred, bitterness, grudges, gossip etc.), the weight of that sin will put spiritual shackles on us. The more sins we collect, the heavier the shackles get, the more difficult it becomes to break free.

Second of all, we must recognize that we are all sinners, saved by grace. The Scriptures say **"There is none righteous, not even one,"** Romans 3:10. Yet the Lord says, **"By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify**

the many..." Isaiah 53:11. If you read all of Isaiah 53 you will see that the Righteous One is Yeshua/Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! So by dying on the cross for us, Yeshua, God's perfect Son, set us free from sin/lawlessness and all unrighteousness. **The founding fathers of our nation would often pray, "it is through the merits of**

In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

—Judges 21:25



Jesus Christ that we pray..." What these men meant was that we have no righteousness of our own, but if we receive the righteousness of Yeshua by believing in Him, our unrighteousness will be overlooked by God. Repentance is what gives us access to divine power to overcome the sin that is destroying us. That is His promise to us: **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar**

and His word is not in us," 1 John 1:9-10. Are you righteous through the merits of Yeshua/Jesus, or are you self-righteous? Self-righteous people always think they know better; walking in self-righteousness is a dangerous path to follow.

Back to Offense:

Beloved, you can't stop someone from being offended with you, but you can **choose** to not be offended yourself. Yeshua told us to forgive 70 x 7. We must make a conscious decision to love our neighbor even if they are a really difficult person to love. I always look for ha-Satan's influence in these situations because he came to kill, steal and destroy. Ha-Satan is very skilled at goading us and triggering us to react in our flesh, trapping us and ensnaring us with our own sins. We are God's family and families don't always get along, but unless there is gross sin like adultery, physical abuse or preaching a false Gospel, we should always do our best to work out our differences. Do you run from your problems like Jonah or do you run to your brother like Jacob who finally faced his brother Esau after running from him years earlier? As a rabbi, I can tell when people run from me and I have done nothing to them, it is not of God. Like I said, I have Biblical principles that keep me on the straight and narrow. You should too. I may be hurt by someone or even offended, but I always attempt to go

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to them and be reconciled. **People like to say, "God told me such and such..." but God says, "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses" 2 Corinthians 13:1.** I highly doubt God cares whether you order fettuccine alfredo instead of spaghetti and meatballs without two witnesses. A **matter** is something more significant like deciding to get married or deciding to move 1000 miles away; maybe a matter is deciding to make a major career move, to buy a house or to leave a Church/Synagogue? If it is something as serious as these, then I strongly suggest getting pastoral guidance from two mature, spiritual elders; I always sought, seek and will continue to seek guidance from my pastors, elders, and spiritual mentors. Doing this has protected me, my family, my marriage and my ministry for 26 years!

Loving those who are hard to love:

Serve one another, even those you don't really like and watch your heart begin to expand and your love to increase! If you have anger or bitterness, ask God to cleanse you and give you a spirit of forgiveness. Read Psalm 51 out loud. Guard your heart and don't allow your love to grow cold! This does not mean you should compromise and accept false doctrines (**See Romans 16:17, Galatians 2:4-5, 2 Corinthians 11:12-15**), or be a doormat for an abusive person. Pray for discernment regarding your particular situation and ask the Lord for Solomon's wisdom. God often asks us to sacrificially serve the most unlovable and even difficult downright mean people. He wants us to win them with kindness. You'll find such people in every assembly, I guarantee it.

"Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me" Mt. 11:6

When Yeshua/Jesus said this, He was referring to the previous verse where He talked about restoring sight to the blind, healing the lame, cleansing the lepers, opening the ears of the deaf, raising the dead and preaching the Gospel to the poor... **This is the stuff that offended many people in Yeshua's case.** Man, he really ticked them off when He said, **"Anyone who would be My Disciple must eat my flesh and drink My blood" in John 6.** As I recall, more than 100 followers abandoned Him that day; only the 12 remained. Was He testing the others? **Did you ever stop and think that things that offend you might be a test from God to see whether you will overcome?**

Is there power in your religion?

The day I asked God if He was real and to come into my life, I also asked Him to show me His power. I didn't realize at the time that supernatural power was the promise of God. **Acts 1:8 says, "You will receive Power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses"**. From age 28 to this day I still need and rely on the power of God in my life. Jesus was talking powerful stuff like healing the sick and raising the dead! Does your religion include these things Yeshua spoke of and demonstrated? I have seen people get out of wheel chairs by God's power, through my own hand. I have seen a mute woman speak who had not spoken in years when (at the request of her niece) I pinched her cheeks and commanded her tongue to be loosed in the name of Jesus! I have seen God work many more miracles through my own hands. In addition I have survived stage 4 cancer for 13 years by His amazing grace along with painful arthritis... Hallelujah! Many of these things will offend certain people, especially **preaching the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Yeshua.** That one seems to offend many folks. If you are looking for a faith that has real power to change your life, ask Yeshua/Jesus to demonstrate His power to you and make Himself real to you. You can do it in your car, in your bedroom, in the woods, wherever you feel comfortable to talk to God. Read the New Testament; it's a very Jewish book, and those who read it will find life, healing, and redemption. If you follow His instructions about dealing with others such as in Matthew 5-6 and throughout the Torah and the Brit Hadasha (New Testament), you will prosper in every way! But if you are a law unto yourself and have to do it your way, I can guarantee that you will end up miserable and like the children of Israel who wandered 40 years in the desert on a journey that should have lasted ten -twelve days. My job and intention is to help you be successful in your journey with the Lord, arriving on time, and avoiding the trap of Satan, but I can't help you if you resist. Resistance is a fleshly reaction that if you are unaware of it, will ensure that you remain in a perpetual holding pattern, not making any progress in the fulfillment of your destiny.

Conclusion:

Believers should not allow offense to overtake them or they risk their love growing cold and falling away in these last days. Find and build in yourself a set of solid Biblical principles to live by and practice them! Always seek pastoral guidance, whether you agree or not, seek your shepherd's blessing. **We are called to turn the other cheek. Do you do this, or do you hold onto grudges, bitterness and resentment?** If you gossip about anyone, you're probably bitter and not right with God. Beloved, those who hate their brother or sister, will not enter the Kingdom of God (1 John 3:15). So let the offenses roll off and serve one another in love. If you need forgiveness, ask for it. Go to God, and go to your brother or you might end up in the belly of a big fish for 3 days. If you need cleansing, read Psalm 51 out loud every day until it happens to you, **"Create in Me a Clean Heart O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from Me. Restore to me the joy of my salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will be converted to You."** Lastly, never quit. Quitters in the Bible always found themselves in despair and alone: Peter denied Yeshua, Jonah ran away, David was betrayed by quitters too many times to mention. The bottom line is that it never goes well for quitters. Face your problems like an adult and be reconciled to your brother. Don't quit on your marriage, family, congregation or friends. Not only will you feel better, you might just beat the devil and see God do something amazing! Shavuot/Pentecost is a season of understanding and receiving power, so be intentional and take a bold step in the Spirit! If you can master putting into practice these awesome principles that God has given us regarding offenses, you will

Synagogue of the City



Friends of For Zion's Sake Ministry, We are in full swing with our "Synagogue of the City" Campaign. We have made strides towards our goal of meeting the needs of the Synagogue. We are standing with Israel and shining His light here in NETN/SWVA as a reflection of the City's heart for the Jewish people. While we praise the Lord for His faithfulness in providing for our more immediate needs, we still have some long term needs to be addressed. Please ask the Lord how He would like you to partner with us in meeting these goals.

Needs for The Synagogue of the City:

- We owe about \$40,000 on our mortgage
- A new kitchen is needed with a cost of approximately \$15,000. Also a shower installed in the bathroom for \$3000.00.
- We need a Sanctuary remodel including: carpet \$16,000, lighting \$3,000, painting \$1000, reupholstered pews \$5000 etc.
- \$4,000 -\$6,000 for signage to replace temporary banner that has been hanging for years.
- \$40,000 to re-pave the parking lot & driveway
- Ongoing maintenance

Gift Pledge Levels:

Imperial Legate: \$10,000+ Commander of two or more legions. Served as governor of the province where his legions were stationed.

Legatus: \$1,000+ Commanded a Legion, also served as senator where his troops were stationed.

Centurion: \$100+ The backbone of the army, commanded a century (100 soldiers). There are about 60 centurions in each legion.

Decurion: \$10+ Commanded a Calvary unit of 10-30 troops.

Imaginifer: \$7+ Carries the standard that bears the image of the Emperor

have direct access to results! Results are a life filled with redemption, purpose, and glory regardless of the cards you currently hold. You have the power in your hand to unlock and unshackle whatever is stopping you in life. Stagnation can give way to quick and amazing changes that you have never dreamed of. God wants you and is pulling for you to be enlivened with His supernatural power! Power to overcome offenses with forgiveness, choosing to not be offended, and supernatural love.

May you be exceedingly, abundantly blessed beyond all you could hope, think or ask!

*In Yeshua's love,
Rabbi Joe ☞*

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*Lion of Judah
Messianic Congregation*



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