

WHAT IS LOVE? WHERE IS THE LOVE?

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 13

24th of the 11th month 2020/2021

Shalom all,

Have you ever heard the following words being asked, **“where is the love?”**

In a time where the true love of many is growing cold, we find that a corrupted perception of what love is, has so many claiming, whenever their disobedience to the Word of Elohim is exposed, that they are not being shown love.

How true can their statements be and can it be one that can honestly be defended, according to the Word of Elohim.

In this message I would like to take a closer look at what Scripture defines as love, both for Elohim and that which is to be shown toward one another.

In doing so, it may become a little clearer to some just how true love was actually being displayed or shown toward them when they may have erroneously accused it as being loveless!

In a day and age where the Word of Elohim has been twisted by falsehood and has been corrupted by the vain traditions and fleshly theologies and doctrines of man, we tend to see how a false ear tickling poison has promoted a lawless system that sets aside the need to guard the commands of Elohim and any attempt at trying to teach that the Torah of Elohim must be obeyed is seen as being one that is too strict and without love, which leaves those who operate under a ‘lawless grace system’, making the drunken statement of **“where is the love?”**

In order to be able to properly answer this, we need to define what love is, according to the Word and not according to twisted interpretations of the Word!!!

Having said that, I would like to take a closer look at some vital passages in Scripture, that clearly spell out for us what love actually is, after which the question of, **‘Where is the love?’**, can be directed back toward those who have felt justifiably unloved when being confronted about their disobedience and refusal to walk according to the Torah of Elohim.

So, in a message called, **“WHAT IS LOVE? WHERE IS THE LOVE?”** I would like us to allow these two questions to be properly explored and understood on the basis of the authority of the Word of Elohim.

We will see from Scripture what love is, answering the first one very clearly, leaving the second question to be asked through the mirror of the Word, giving each one an opportunity to assess their own lives before Elohim and determine if they are walking in love or not.

I did a message a few years back called, **“WHAT IS LOVE?”**, and looked a little closer at what is typically called the love chapter, **Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 13**, and will be revisiting this message and using it as a base upon which I would like to expand upon in both answering as well as asking the question, **“Where is the love?”**

To start off with, I would like to jump right in to a clear definition of what “love for Elohim” is: **Yohanan Aleph/1 John 5:3-4 “For this is the love for Elohim, that we guard His commands, and His commands are not heavy, 4 because everyone having been born of Elohim overcomes the world. And this is the overcoming that has overcome the world: our belief.”**

One cannot get any clearer than the words that we have from these two verses above: Very simply put, we are told the following:

LOVE FOR ELOHIM IS THAT WE GUARD HIS COMMANDS;

And in doing so we are overcomers in Messiah, as our belief with the works of obedience to the Torah is clear and evident in our lives – or rather, it should be!!!

While this is so plain and very simple to understand, we find that so many people cannot grasp this truth, as the twisted lies and traditions of man have tainted the taught understanding of what love is, or rather, what true love for Elohim is!

Our Master and Elohim, **יהושע** Messiah, tells us the following, in:

Yohanan/John 14:15 “If you love Me, you shall guard My commands.”

Yohanan/John 14:21-24 “He who possesses My commands and guards them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I shall love him and manifest Myself to him.” 22 Yehudah – not the one from Qerioth – said to Him, “Master, what has come about that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?” 23 יהושע answered him, “If anyone loves Me, he shall guard My Word. And My Father shall love him, and We shall come to him and make Our stay with him. 24 “He who does not love Me does not guard My Words. And the Word which you hear is not Mine but of the Father Who sent Me.”

Yohanan/John 14:15 “If you guard My commands, you shall stay in My love, even as I have guarded My Father’s commands and stay in His love.”

The reason for me highlighting these three passages from **Yohanan/John 14 & 15** collectively, is to simply present the plain truth of what our Master is telling us, which is that the one who guards His commands and does them is one who loves Him! He also tells us that we stay in His love when we obey Him!

Ok, so that then means that when one does not obey Him then they do not stay in His love and do not love Him!

We are again told very clearly in:

Yohanan Aleph/1 John 2:4-6 “The one who says, “I know Him,” and does not guard His commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever guards His Word, truly the love of Elohim has been perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 The one who says he stays in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked.”

For some ears, these words being presented like this may sound, or be seen as, harsh and unloving, yet what I am trying to set forth here, is the clear understanding of what the Word defines for us as **'love for Elohim'**, for then we can get the basis for any other love that is, or ought, to be shown toward another, because if the true love for Elohim is not being displayed in one's life then the ability to love another according to the clear standards of Scripture is not possible, no matter how emotionally driven it may be!

As one continues reading **Yoḥanan Aleph/1 John** we are also warned against loving that which is not of Elohim!

Yoḥanan Aleph/1 John 2:15-17 **"Do not love the world nor that which is in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 Because all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world passes away, and the lust of it, but the one doing the desire of Elohim remains forever."**

Love is clearly an action and what we must understand is that our choice of action determines our true identity, and we who chose wisely, in choosing to love Elohim and obey His commands, shall remain forever, as we see here that the one "doing" the desire of Elohim remains forever, whereas those who choose to love the world and follow after its twisted ways of lawlessness and pride, shall pass away with the present world – and they will not see the renewed heavens and earth!

In answering the question, **"What is love?"** I want us to be further strengthened in the clear understanding of what love is, and more importantly what the love for Elohim is, so that we may be found to be faithful stewards and servants of the Most-High, when He comes to take up His lovingly-committed Bride, that has set herself apart and made herself ready, through the proper adoring of His Word, seen in the good and fruitful works of an active obedience to His commands and being led forth by the easy yoke of His Torah!

When you ask different people what love is, you may get some very different answers. The majority will most probably tell you that it is a strong affection for another, based on kinship or personal ties.

Some might say that it is an attraction based on sexual desires, or an affection felt by lovers, while others may say that it is an affection based on admiration for another that is stemmed out of common interests or desired goals.

Still others may tell you that it is a warm fuzzy feeling of attachment, enthusiasm or devotion! All of these answers may certainly be partly correct, especially if one did a dictionary study on what the term 'love' is, as seemingly understood by most in the world.

A dictionary may even tell you that love is a concern for another and the devotion that one extends to another, as well as the ability to thrive in passion or the experience of desire – as we often hear many say, **'I love it!'**, when referring to an experience that they desire and enjoy! But, is that all what love is?

In this message, I will be taking a look at what is possibly one of the most popular chapters in Scripture and dig a little deeper into the Greek text in order for us to gain a better understanding on what love is, according to Scripture!

Please turn with me to **Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 13** (READ)

When reading this passage, one has to understand the context of this letter that Sha'ul is writing to the believers in Corinth.

Just before this chapter, Sha'ul speaks of the Spiritual gifts and the importance of them being active in the body and how the body is made up together to be in unity, with each part having its unique role; and then he proceeds to explain what true love is; and refers to the truest expression of love as:

“The Most Excellent Way!”

In **Chapter 14** he encourages the true pursuit of love and the seeking of the spiritual gifts; and in the process, warns against any hypocritical outward expression, or show, that was being done before others, in their vain attempts at trying to show others their love for Elohim and each other!

It is no different for us today and in recognising this, we are able to identify how important it is for us to learn from these words of Sha'ul and do our utmost to be found to be walking in **the most excellent way!**

Sha'ul had already rebuked this assembly at Corinth for still being fleshly, as envy, strife and bitterness was still very active, as they walked according to the ways of man and not the True Way of Elohim, despite having been taught by him the true way!

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 3:1-3 “And I, brothers, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual ones but as to fleshly, as to babes in Messiah. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food, for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is envy, and strife, and divisions among you, are you not fleshly and walking according to man?”

There is a great deal of wisdom that can be learnt from the letters of Sha'ul and this one is no different.

We are able to see how frustrated he was, in seeing how the believers had to be spoken to like little babies, as they were still being very fleshly in their understanding, or lack thereof, of Scripture and their immature dealings with each other.

While he acknowledged, in **Chapter 1:7**, that ‘in Messiah’ they lacked no gift, their application of these gifts were misguided and therefore their need to understand the true love for Elohim was vital, in utilising the spiritual gifts correctly, in order to be the ready Bride that Messiah is coming for!

In a manner of speaking, Sha'ul was putting before them a true "love test", which can, and should, be done when assessing our walk in Messiah, in assessing how we relate to each other and whether we are walking in His instructions, with joy and without grumbling, or not.

This **chapter 13** describes, what could be called, the love walk, or as Sha'ul calls it: **the most excellent way** – and in essence, this can and should be a love test for each of us too.

This chapter, being a practical definition of love in the daily routines of life, related to the problems that the believers in Corinth were experiencing, as they were walking in the flesh, as we can see from the words of Sha'ul in this letter to this assembly, where the bad fruit of sinful fleshliness was being produces as opposed to bearing the proper fruits of repentance that leads to set-apartness!

Let me briefly highlight some of the bad fruit that was being displayed:

Jealousy – Chapter 3:3 **"for you are still fleshly. For since there is envy, and strife, and divisions among you, are you not fleshly and walking according to man?"**

Bragging – Chapter 4:7 **"For who makes you to differ? And what do you have that you did not receive? And if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"**

Arrogance – Chapter 4:6 **"And these matters, brothers, I have applied in a figure to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you might learn not to think beyond what is written, so that none of you be puffed up on behalf of one against the other."**

Seeking their own good – Chapter 10:24 **"Let no one seek his own, but each one that of the other."**

Taking wrong into account – Chapter 6:7 **"Already, then, there is a failure with you, that you have lawsuits among you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?"**

Rejoicing in unrighteousness – Chapter 5:2 **"And you have been puffed up, and did not rather mourn, so that he who has done this deed, be removed from among you!"**

This letter, written to this assembly at Corinth, in many ways, carries great lessons for us today, as we are able to identify many of the same problems that were happening back then, still happening today. It is therefore vital for us to grasp our need to understand, and fully walk in, the true obedient love for Elohim that we, as His Set-Apart and Chosen Bride, are called to walk in!

For it is only then that we will be able to confidently answer the two questions:

"What is love? Where is the love?"

At Corinth, we had an assembly that was seemingly exceeding in many of the gifts yet were failing in their love.

When understood in the simple terms of Yohanan, that the love for Elohim is to obey Him, then we are able to see how so many today may be excelling in many of the spiritual gifts, on a fleshly level, yet their lack of obedience to the Torah and commands of Elohim, renders them loveless, lawless and in danger of being destroyed and not able to enter into the reign of Elohim!

While the world may romanticise love, we are able to see from the words of Sha'ul that his definition of love is not simply a romantic one but is rather defined in one's actions and choices that are lived out on a daily basis, as opposed to a mere emotional feeling alone!

Chapter 12 ends with the words: ... **"I show you a more excellent way!"**

The Greek words that are used for 'more excellent' are:

- 1) **κατά kata** – Strong's G2596 which is a preposition which carries the meaning, '**down, against, according to**' and
- 2) **ὑπερβολή hyperbolē** – Strong's G5236 which means, '**far more, exceeding, more excellent, abundance, surpassing, superiority**', which comes from the root word **ὑπερβάλλω hyperballō** – Strong's G5235 which means, '**throw over or beyond, run beyond, surpass**'; and this word comes from the two words:
 - 1) **ὑπέρ huper** – Strong's G5228 which is a primitive preposition that can mean, '**over, beyond, on behalf of, for the sake of, concerning, exceed, more so, more than**', and
 - 2) **βάλλω ballō** – Strong's G906 which means, '**to throw or cast**'.

The reason I am highlighting these various words and their roots, is to highlight the image that Sha'ul is using here, in describing the way of love, for it far surpasses any other way!

In the first 3 verses of **Chapter 13**, Sha'ul begins the explanation of the more excellent way in what are seemingly negative statements, yet they clearly express Elohim's love language! To put it plainly – Scripture clearly defines love for Elohim as obedience to His commands, and Sha'ul makes it clear that Elohim is more concerned about the attitude of our hearts than our abilities, and is basically saying that you can have amazing abilities and be able to speak many languages, as well as speak in the language of the messengers, yet if the application of **an active obedience** is not present then you are simply just being a big irritating noise!

He continues to say that even if you are able to have extensive knowledge of the Word and are able to prophecy yet disregard the loving-commitment to obey the Torah, you have nothing at all!

In other words, you might be able to sound all spiritual, in your speech and assumed knowledge of the Truth, yet if you disregard love for Him by casting aside His Torah and instructions, then you have nothing at all!

This is a clear rebuke to those who have positioned themselves in places of authority over others, in sounding correct and true, while they teach and promote lawlessness and have cast the Torah of Elohim behind their backs – and the sad reality is that they have no love at all, despite their very soothing ear tickling massages that they give, in order to make people feel satisfied in the fleshliness of emotions that seek to deviate from obedience and be erroneously justified in their continued stand of the working of lawlessness !

Sha'ul then brings it a little closer to home and says that it doesn't matter if you sell all you have and die for your faith – if you lack true love for Elohim, and disregard His Torah, then you shall profit nothing and your labour will have been in vain!

So many people today are doing a lot of 'good deeds' and are helping the poor, giving their whole lives into serving the church system, yet without Torah obedience they have no profit for their works, due to a lack of obedience!

It is to many that יהושע Messiah will say, **"I never knew you, depart from Me, you who work lawlessness!" (Mattithyahu/Matthew 7:23)**, in His response to those who will claim to have prophesied and done so mighty works in His Name!

Marqos/Mark 7:6-8 "And He answering, said to them, "Well did Yeshayahu prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it has been written, 'This people respect Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. 7 And in vain do they worship Me, teaching as teachings the commands of men.' 8 "Forsaking the command of Elohim, you hold fast the tradition of men."

What we see here in Sha'ul's description and definition of love, is that he begins by making it clear that one cannot assume to love simply by the works of the flesh, when the true walking in the Spirit (which is according to the Torah) is lacking!

Before we get into this chapter, when understanding what love is, we are able, as I have said earlier, to get various descriptions and viewpoints.

In 1973 John Alan Lee wrote a book called '**Colours of love**' and in this book he mentioned 6 types of love as defined from the Greek language, and he described the different kinds of love as follows:

1 - Eros. From the Greek word for "**erotic or passionate**"; a passionate physical and emotional love based on aesthetic enjoyment; stereotype of romantic love and seeks to be satisfied through physical intimacy.

2 - Ludus. From the Latin word meaning "**sport or play**", a love that is played as a game or sport; conquest. It fantasises and engages in playful interactions but carries little or no intimacy and no deep intensity. People with ludus love keep their passions in check – avoid trouble and intensity in relationships. They are uncomfortable about commitment. They easily keep secrets from their significant other and are more likely to have affairs. For them it is 'all part of the game', or part of the conquest, and will run from partner to partner.

3 - Storge. From the Greek word meaning "**friendship**"; is an affectionate love that slowly develops from friendship and is based on similarity. There is strong companionship and shared values, yet little intimacy.

4 - Pragma. From the Greek word meaning "**practical**"; this is love that is driven by the head, not the heart; it is practical and non-emotional. It is a combination of storge and ludus love.

5 - Mania. From the Greek word meaning "**frenzy**"; is a highly volatile love; an obsession; primarily fuelled by low self-esteem. This is what could be classed as 'possessive love', and is really a combination of eros and ludus love. It is also known as the troubled love. This love is shaped by jealousy and dependence (often called co-dependency) – it is dependent upon the possessing of another's love. There is great intensity and little intimacy. People who express love in this way are often very critical of every move their partner makes, always accusing and assuming things that are not there and is the result of having a past of rejection and neglect.

6 - Agape. From the Greek word meaning "**mighty-like or spiritual**"; is a selfless altruistic love; a spiritual and true love. The highest form of love – the love of unselfish regard and has a devotion to the welfare of others. This love gives without asking anything in return, whereas all of the above expressions of love have an expectation of a return.

Agape is a sacrificial love – a giving of oneself – and it is the purest form of love that can be expressed in action toward, and in response to, another.

It is an unconditional love for others, in spite of their character flaws and weaknesses, and this is the love that Sha'ul is writing about, as the more excellent way! **ἀγάπη agape – Strong's G26** is used 9 times in these 13 verses of **Chapter 13** in **Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians!!!**

This both expresses the love that Elohim has for us, and what we ought to have for Him as we faithfully obey His commands, and this is the kind of love that we are to express in our daily lives toward each other, as a body that is being knit together in Messiah!

Let us now take a closer look at what love is and what it is not, as we look at **15** characteristics that Sha'ul mentions here!

LOVE IS.../LOVE...

1 – PATIENT – the Greek word that is translated here as 'patient' is μακροθυμέω makrothumeō – Strong's G3114 which means, '*be patient, have patience, not lose heart, to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring trials and troublesome times, be patient in bearing the offences and injuries of others, slow to anger, longsuffering*'; and this word comes from two Greek words:

a) μακρός makros – Strong's G3117 which means, '*long, far, distant*' and

b) θυμός thumos – Strong's G2372 which means, '*passion, angry tempers, fierce, wrath, outbursts of anger*'.

We are certainly able to see from this definition how patient **יְהוָה** is with mankind!

Kěpha Bět/2 Peter 3:9 "**יְהוָה is not slow in regard to the promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward us, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**"

We are also able to identify how we too need to be patient until our Master comes, not losing heart, enduring under trials and being slow to become angry!!!

Ya'aqob/James 5:7-8 “**So, brothers, be patient until the coming of the Master. See, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. 8 You too, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Master has drawn near.**”

A Greek antonym for this word is ἀδημονέω adēmoneō – Strong's G85 which means, ***‘to be faint, depressed and almost overwhelmed with sorrow or burden of mind, be in distress, distressed’***.

There are many today who are deeply depressed and are greatly overwhelmed by the trials that they face and, in the process, they are unable to express true patient love towards others and toward Elohim, which is revealed in their refusal to walk in the commands of Elohim.

There are also some who claim to walk in the commands of Elohim, yet their lives are riddled with compromise, and clear fruit of set-apartness is lacking, under the burdened pressures of the world that chokes out the Word and causes them to be faint!

We are to **‘wait on יְהוָה’**, through diligently obeying His Word and walking in His commands, for then He will renew our strength and we will not grow faint amidst the battles of life! We are to faithfully persevere and endure bravely under trials as we stand steadfast in lovingly obeying the commands of Elohim!

To love is to refrain from outbursts of anger and not letting your anger cause you to sin!

The Greek word μακροθυμέω makrothumeō – Strong's G3114 is used in the LXX (Septuagint – Greek translation of the Tanak – O.T.) in:

Mishlê/Proverbs 19:11 “**A man's discretion makes him patient, and his adorning is to pass over a transgression.**”

The Hebrew word that is translated as **‘discretion’** is the word שֶׂכֶל sekel – Strong's H7922 which means, ***‘insight, discretion, prudence, wisdom’***.

‘Discretion’, according to the Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, carries the meaning, ***‘ability to make responsible decisions, the result of separating or distinguishing’***, and **‘prudence’** carries the meaning of, ***‘the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason, skill and good judgment in the use of resources, caution or circumspection as to danger or risk’***.

To be prudent, in the positive sense, is to be marked by wisdom or judiciousness, which is the ability to exercise or be characterized by sound judgment!

This can only be done when you watch over the commands and do not let loving-commitment and truth be forsaken!

The Hebrew phrase that is translated as **‘makes him patient’** is written as:

הָעֵרִיךְ אֹתוֹ – he'eriya'k apo

This is constructed from three root words:

1) אַרָאֵךְ *arak* - Strong's H748 which means, '*to be long, continue, delay, endure, prolong*'.

2) אָפַח *aph* – Strong's H639 which means, '*a nostril, nose, face, anger*', and this word is frequently used as a reference to the anger of both men and Elohim; and anger is often expressed in the appearance of the nostrils that dilate in anger. This word comes from the root verb אָנַף *anaph* – Strong's H599 which means, '*to be angry, become angry*'. The description of the one who is impatient could literally be described as one who is '*short of face*' and has a quick temper.

3) הוּא *huw* – Strong's H1931 which is a pronoun that means, '*he, she, it*', and when joined to the word אָפַח *aph* – Strong's H639 only the letter 'waw/vav' is used, known as a **holem vav** which carries the 'o' sound.

The literal rendering here can actually be understood as the delay of one's anger, in terms of expressing a man's patience!

A person's ability to make responsible decisions as a result of a proper separation and distinction between what is clean and unclean or between what is set-apart and profane will cause them to be patient and not become prematurely angry.

How often have you simply failed the love test when simply looking at this first characteristic of what love is?

How often have you allowed your temper to flare up and burst out in anger towards another, because you were impatient and didn't get your way?

The More excellent way of love does not do that – even when one is wronged!!!

2 – KIND – The Greek word for 'kind' is χρηστεύομαι *chrēsteuomai* – Strong's G5541 which means, '*be kind, show oneself mild, show kindness*', and comes from the Greek word χρηστός *chrēstos* – Strong's G5543 which means, '*serviceable, good, useful, upright*'. This word is used in the LXX (Septuagint – Greek translation of the Tanak – O.T.) in:

Mishlê/Proverbs 2:21 "For the straight shall dwell in the earth, and the perfect be left in it"

It is used for the word 'straight', which in the Hebrew text is the word יָשָׁר *yashar* - Strong's H3477, and means, '*right, straight, upright and righteous*'.

We, as children of Elohim are called to walk upright and straight, called to walk and do what is 'right' in the eyes of יְהוָה – called to do what is *yashar* – called to walk in righteousness and that is to walk in His Torah!

Debarim/Deuteronomy 12:28 "Guard, and obey all these words which I command you, that it might be well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the eyes of יְהוָה your Elohim."

I encourage you to go and check out the Torah commentary notes on Debarim/Deuteronomy 3-7 for a more deeper understanding of what 'yasher' means!

In this letter to the assembly in Corinth, Sha'ul was making it clear that being kind emphasises the upright expression of love, as seen in being **'upright, good and functional'**, according to the Word of Elohim!

3 – DOES NOT ENVY – The Greek word for 'envy' is ζηλόω zēloō – Strong's G2206 meaning, **'to be jealous, envious, desire earnestly'**, and comes from the Greek word ζήλος zēlos – Strong's G2205 meaning, **'zeal, jealousy, fury'** which is from the word ζέω zeō – Strong's G2204 meaning, **'to be hot, boil, fervent'**. The Hebrew equivalent of this word is קָנָה qanah – Strong's H7065 meaning, **'to be jealous or zealous, be envious, ardent'**, and both the Greek and Hebrew can be expressed as a positive or negative action, but what Sha'ul is referring to here is that true love cannot be expressed in the negative application of this word!

Mishlê/Proverbs 23:17 **"Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be in the fear of יהוה all day long"**

Ya'aqob/James 3:16 **"For where jealousy and self-seeking are, there is confusion and every foul deed."**

Ya'aqob/James 4:2 **"You desire, and do not have. You murder, and are jealous, and are unable to obtain. You strive and fight, and you do not possess, because you do not ask."**

Do you often find yourself being envious of another, be it because of what possessions they have, or what gifts and talents, or physical attributes they have?

If you do then, as Ya'aqob says, you will find disorder and every evil practice.

4 – DOES NOT BOAST – The Greek word for 'boast' is περπερεύομαι perpereuomai – Strong's G4068 which means, **'to boast in oneself, self-display, vanity, excessive display of pride (especially in one's achievements), brag, to think highly of oneself'**.

We are to 'boast' in יהוה and in His Set-Apart Name, and not in self which Sha'ul makes clear here.

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 9:23-24 **"Thus said יהוה, "Let not the wise boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty boast in his might, nor let the rich boast in his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am יהוה, doing kindness, right-ruling, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," declares יהוה."**

The Hebrew word that is translated here for 'boasts' is הָלַל halal Strong's H1984 which means, **'to shine; to be boastful; to be clear; to make a show; to rave; be foolish; to celebrate; praise, cheer, brag or extol, i.e., extol the greatness or excellence of a person, object or event.'** This is a word that is frequently used for 'praise' and more specifically the praise and boasting we are to make in יהוה and not in self!

When one begins to boast in self, or better yet praise oneself falsely, they are bordering on profaning the Name that is to be boasted in!

Mishlê/Proverbs 25:14 “He who boasts of his gifts falsely is like clouds and wind without rain.”

The imagery of clouds without rain being likened to the false boasting that one does of his gifts carries the picture of a failure to produce what is expected! Just as rain is expected from clouds and wind so are the fruit of one's gifts to be expected from the one who claims to have them. Many people may boast in the assumed gifts that they have yet the fruit of their actions may not necessarily line up with their boasting.

Mishlê/Proverbs 20:6 “Most men proclaim each his own kindness, but who finds a trustworthy man?”

In other words, falsely boasting in one's gifts is actually profanity and brings no true praise to Elohim, just as winds and clouds bring no rain!

With the imagery of no rain, we take note that without rain there will be a severe drought and famine, and so it is with those who falsely boast in what 'they' call the gifts of the Spirit, while they are simply profaning the Name of יהוה through their vain and false traditions of a pagan rooted 'sun-day' worship system and the keeping of pagan rooted feasts, while casting the Torah of Elohim behind them!

Waterless clouds are a picture of false and vain worship and we take note of the words that Yehudah wrote in describing those who have gone in the way of Qayin or have given themselves to the delusion of Bil'am or rebelled like Qorah:

Yehudah/Jude 1:12-13 “These are rocky reefs in your love feasts, feasting with you, feeding themselves without fear, waterless clouds borne about by the winds, late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots, 13 wild waves of the sea foaming up their own shame, straying stars for whom blackness of darkness is kept forever.”

What we have taken note of, in identifying these 'waterless clouds', is that when some will make their selfish boast of how they have the Spirit and make a loud proclamation of this fact so that all will know, while their lives are riddled with compromise and deception. A true servant does not need to tell anyone that they have the gifts as the gifts will be naturally seen in their actions and obedient doing of the Word.

Christianity has promoted a selfish religion of boasting in what one claims to have, and that is why much emphasis is often place on the 'speaking of tongues'.

Sha'ul tells us that the speaking of tongues is for the individual, unless there is one who can interpret so that the body can be edified and encouraged.

Those who boast in their ability to speak in tongues ought to be a warning sign or example of one who may be falsely boasting in his gifts!

Gifts of the spirit are not there to be boasted in but are to be used for the building up of the body, through serving in a proper humility where all boasting and praise is directed to יהוה and not the one who claims to have gifts that they actually do not have but are rather waterless clouds that do not bring forth what is to be expected!

The Hebrew phrase translated here as 'his gifts falsely' is:

בְּמַתַּת שָׂקָר – bemattath-shaquer

This comes from the two root words:

1) **מַתַּת** mattath – Strong's H4991 which means, '*gift, gifts, reward*', and comes from the primitive root verb **נָתַן** nathan – Strong's H5414 which means, '*to give, put, set, appointed, delivered, given, placed*', and a derivative of this word is **נֹתְנִיִּים** Nethinim – Strong's H5411, which is used to describe the '*temple servants*' or '*given ones*' who served in the temple and often did menial tasks, yet their lives were given over to service in the temple under the hand of the Lēwites.

2) **שָׂקָר** sheqer – Strong's H8267 which means, '*deception, disappointment, falsehood, lies*', and comes from the root verb **שָׂקַר** shaqar – Strong's H8266 which means, '*to do or deal falsely, lie*'.

The root word **שָׂקַר** sheqer – Strong's H8267 is used in **Wayyiqra/Leviticus 19:12** in the command to not swear falsely in the Name of **יְהוָה** and profane His Name through false speech!

To boast falsely is no different to having a lying tongue, which **יְהוָה** hates!

A lying tongue speaks of one who makes promises but does not keep them or one who boasts falsely and does not produce what should be expected!

Have you made promises you did not keep?

Have you said yes for something but meant no, or vice versa?

Have you ever boasted in having gifts and have not actually used these so-called gifts for the building up and service of others?

This is an abomination to **יְהוָה** and if one is found to have a lying tongue then they stand the risk of not being a part of the House – for **יְהוָה** is cleaning His Bride and He will not allow an abomination in His House!

Mishlê/Proverbs 12:22 "**Lying lips are an abomination to **יְהוָה**, but those who deal truly are His delight.**"

Love does not boast!

An antonym for the Greek word **περπερεύομαι** perpereuomai – Strong's G4068 is the from the verb **ταπεινῶω** tapeinoō – Strong's G5013 which means, '*to make low, be brought low, be humbled*', and we see this verb being used in:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 18:4 "**Whoever then humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the reign of the heavens.**"

Mattithyahu/Matthew 23:12 "**And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.**"

This verb is also used to describe the pure humility of our Master:

Pilipiyim/Philippians 2:8 “And having been found in fashion as a man, He **humbled** Himself and became obedient unto death, death even of a stake.”

We would do well to follow our Master’s example and walk even as He walked!

Ya’aqob/James 4:10 “**Humble** yourselves in the sight of the Master, and He shall lift you up.”

We either walk in humility and shall be lifted up by our Master or try to exalt and boast in ourselves and try to be important, which will cause us to be put low and humbled by Elohim!

5 – NOT PUFFED UP – The Greek word that is translated as ‘**puffed up**’ comes from the root word φουσιόω phusioō – Strong’s G5448 which means, ‘*to inflate, blow up, cause to swell, make proud, arrogant*’.

This word is used in the Renewed Writings figuratively, in describing pride and self-conceit. Those who disregard the need to walk upright in the clear Torah of Elohim, are arrogant and proud and inflate themselves to an assumed position or height of safety, yet are simply puffed up in their own drunken arrogance:

Habaqquq/Habakkuk 2:4 “See, he whose being is not upright in him is **puffed up**. But the righteous one lives by his steadfastness.”

The Hebrew word for ‘**puffed up**’ is אָפַל aphal – Strong’s H6075 and means, ‘*to swell, be lifted up, presume, be heedless, be proud*’.

The assembly at Corinth were boasting and puffing themselves up in their tolerance of sin, rather than dealing with it!

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 5:1-2 “It is commonly reported that there is whoring among you, and such whoring as is not even named among the gentiles, so as one to have his father’s wife! 2 And you have been **puffed up**, and did not rather mourn, so that he who has done this deed, be removed from among you!”

They were an older version of the television series called “day of our lives” and were quiet puffed up about it too – this kind of tolerance shows no true love for Elohim!

6 – DOES NOT BEHAVE INDECENTLY – The Greek word used here for ‘**behave indecently**’ is ἀσχημονέω aschēmoneō – Strong’s G807 which means, ‘*behave unbecomingly, indecent, to behave in an ugly, indecent, unseemly or unbecoming manner; to disgrace oneself, treat with contempt, dishonour*’.

The Merriam Webster’s Dictionary described the word ‘**unbecoming**’ as, ‘*not according with the standards appropriate to one’s position or condition of life*’.

The Word of Elohim sets for the clear standard of set-apartness, yet there are so many who are behaving indecently as they are not loving according to standards set forth in the Word.

You do not have to look too far today to see how so many people behave in an ugly manner, and we must be on guard against any such behaviour as we seek to love Elohim with all our heart, soul and strength!

This word can also render the meaning of being rude – and this we are to guard against – as we show respect for one another and are not rude toward each other!

Love submits to the proper adherence of the standards that are set forth in the Torah of Elohim and any refusal to submit to walking according to the Torah of Elohim renders one's behaviour as indecent and loveless!

7 – DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN – The Greek word that is translated here as 'seek' comes from the root word ζητέω zēteō – Strong's G2212 which means, '*seek for, desire, seek in order to find out by thinking, meditating or reasoning, to strive after, demand*' and the Greek word that is translated as 'own' comes from the root word ἑαυτοῦ heautou – Strong's G1438 which means, '*himself, herself, own estimation*'.

What we see from this, is that when we truly walk 'in love', and guard to do the commands of Elohim and live set-apart lives unto Him, we are not to be seeking our own ways or desires. We are not to be spending our days meditating on what we 'wish for' and spend our time trying to reason out in our minds how we can strive after the things that are not according to the desire of Elohim, but are simply fleshly desires that can often consume our thoughts and time – we are to meditate on and delight in the Torah of Elohim day and night – for then we will be prosperous in our way!

Pilipiyim/Philippians 2:4 "*Each one should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*"

Pilipiyim/Philippians 2:21 "*For all seek their own interests, not those of Messiah יהושע.*"

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 10:24 "*Let no one seek his own, but each one that of the other.*"

In the proverbs of Shelomoh we see the following:

Mishlê/Proverbs 25:27 "*It is not good to eat much honey. Is it esteem to seek one's own esteem?*"

The second part of this parable asks a rhetorical question, for the obvious answer is no! We are to seek the esteem of יהוה.

Yohanan/John 5:41-44 "*I do not receive esteem from men, 42 but I know you, that you do not have the love of Elohim in you. 43 "I have come in My Father's Name and you do not receive Me, if another comes in his own name, him you would receive. 44 "How are you able to believe, when you are receiving esteem from one another, and the esteem that is from the only Elohim you do not seek?"*

Pilipiyim/Philippians 2:3 "*doing none at all through selfishness or self-conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*"

The Hebrew word that is translated as 'esteem' is כָּבוֹד kabod – Strong's H3519 which means, '*honour, esteem, reverence, splendid*', which comes from the root verb כָּבַד kabed – Strong's H3513 which means, '*to be heavy, weighty or burdensome, to give high esteem and respect and honour*', and is often translated as 'praise' that is to be given to יהוה.

Qorintiyim Bět/2 Corinthians 10:12-18 “For we do not presume to count ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13 But we shall not boast beyond measure, but within the measure of the limits Elohim assigned unto us, to reach even to you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we also came to you with the Good News of the Messiah, 15 not boasting beyond measure in the labours of others, but having an expectation, that as your belief grows, we shall be greatly enlarged by you, according to our limits, 16 to bring the Good News in the parts beyond you – not to boast in another’s limits in what has been accomplished. 17 But “He who boasts, let him boast in יהוה.” 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but he whom the Master commends.”

Sha’ul was basically saying here that they were not seeking their own esteem as the foolish do! **Tehillah/Psalm 29:1** “Ascribe to יהוה, O you sons of the mighty, ascribe to יהוה esteem and strength.”

Love does not seek one’s own, highlighting that we do not need to seek to be praised or elevated or promoted for what we do, but rather seek every opportunity to esteem and give praise to יהוה.

8 – IS NOT PROVOKED – The Greek word for ‘provoked’ is παροξύνω paroxunō – Strong’s G3947 which means, ‘*to sharpen, stimulate, provoke, to incite or rouse to anger*’. There are many today who simply just ‘love’ to pick a fight and stir up an argument, in order to try to prove that they are right and that they know better – this of course is not true love – no matter how much they love to do it!

Gossip and slander are very powerful tools in provoking people to anger, which we are to guard against at all costs, for we are to build one another up and not break down!

Many today think that it is just a form of joking around when provoking another in their weakness, and this we must not do!

Mishlê/Proverbs 26:18-19 “Like a madman who throws sparks, arrows, and death, so is a man who deceived his neighbour, and says, “I was only joking!”

9 – RECKONS NOT THE EVIL - The Greek word here for ‘reckons’ is λογίζομαι logizomai – Strong’s G3049 which means, ‘*an account or reckoning, to consider, take count, think, occupy oneself with calculations*’ and the word for ‘evil’ is κακός kakos – Strong’s G2556 which means, ‘*evil, wicked, bad things, loathsome, wrong*’.

We are not to sit and recount in our mind all the bad and wicked thing that are going on, or have been done to us, for this will only stir up bitterness, fear and resentment and render one unable to bear the true fruit of righteousness expressed in loving-commitment toward Elohim!

What things do you consider and recount in your mind – the good and functional way of Elohim, as given through the Torah, or on the wicked and destructive patterns of a lawless world!

This also teaches us that when we walk in true love, we do not sit and recount everyone's wicked past and occupy ourselves with past failings!

Often people relate their past wickedness and laugh and joke at the things they did, when we ought to be ashamed of our past sins, reckoning our lives as having been plucked from the fire, giving esteem and thanks to our Redeemer and King, **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** Messiah!

Our thoughts and speech must not be riddled with the past reckoning and gloating of a lawless life, but rather be esteeming the good way and walk in it with joy!

10 – DOES NOT REJOICE OVER THE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS – BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH!

The first word translated as 'rejoice' here in this statement comes from the Greek word **χαίρω** **chairō** – Strong's G5463 which means, '*be glad, joyful, thrive, give one's greeting and approval*'.

The Greek word for 'unrighteousness' is **ἀδικία** **adikia** – Strong's G93 which means, '*unrighteousness, iniquity, wrong, deed violating law and justice*' and comes from the word that means to be without justice or penalty. This is a very clear and sobering warning of what love for Elohim is NOT – it does not rejoice over lawlessness!!!

We also take note of the words we see in:

Yohanan Aleph/1 John 5:17-19 "**All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death. 18 We know that everyone having been born of Elohim does not sin, but the one having been born of Elohim guards himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are of Elohim, and all the world lies in the wicked one.**"

When we guard righteousness, we are guarded against the deception of the lawless one!

Yohanan Aleph/1 John 3:4 "**Everyone doing sin also does lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.**"

The Greek word for 'sin' is **ἁμαρτία** **hamartia** – Strong's G266 which means, '*sin, failure, miss the mark, to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honour, to do or go wrong*', and also carries the meaning of, '*wandering from the law of Elohim, violate the law of Elohim*'.

I am sure some of you know where I am going with this!

The Greek word for 'lawlessness' is **ἀνομία** **anomia** – Strong's G458 meaning, '*lawlessness or lawless deeds, unrighteousness*' and comes from the word **ἄνομος** **anomos** – Strong's G459 meaning, '*lawless or without law, transgressors*'.

When shooting an arrow or other object to a target, the distance that one misses is measured with a cord.

The wrong actions of one are also measured against the correct action!

The Torah is, in a manner of speaking, the ‘chord’ or ‘plumb-line’ that we are ‘measured against’; for we would not know what we have missed if there were no measuring line to guide and instruct us!

Sinners are those who walk contrary to the Torah and ‘miss the mark’, so to speak, of the called for set-apartness and obedience to the Torah.

Yohanan Aleph/1 John 3:4 spells it out very plainly for those who seem to miss the fact that to not walk in the Torah is sin! It is as though Yohanan was spelling out this fact very bluntly and straightforward for those who struggle with a Greek mind-set and see no need to walk in the Torah – well right here in the Greek it is clear – If you are lawless (that is to walk contrary to the Torah) then you are indeed sinning!

Sin is **lawlessness**: ἁμαρτία **hamartia** is ἀνομία **anomia**!

Ok...so... **unrighteousness** is **sin** - ἀδικία **adikia** is ἁμαρτία **hamartia** – that is pretty clear! That means that **unrighteousness** is **lawlessness**, which is **sin**.

Love for Elohim does not rejoice in the nullification or the disregard of the Torah of Elohim. Those who ‘**rejoice**’ that the ‘**law has been done away with**’ do not know what love is – and they certainly can never love Elohim!

The second Greek word that is translated as ‘**rejoice**’, in declaring that love rejoices in the truth, comes from the root word συγχαίρω **sugchairō** – Strong’s **G4796** which means, ‘**rejoice with, rejoice together, share joy, congratulate**’.

It comes from the previous word that we looked at for ‘**rejoice**’ (χαίρω **chairō** – Strong’s **G5463**) but also has the preposition σύν **sun** – Strong’s **G4862** which denotes union, togetherness!

The Greek word that is translated as ‘**truth**’ comes from the root word ἀλήθεια **alētheia** – Strong’s **G225** which means, ‘**truth, truly, according to truth**’.

Our Master יהושע Messiah tells us clearly in **Yohanan/John 14:6** that He is **the Way, the Truth and the Life** – and to walk **in** the Truth is to walk **in** Him – in Him in whom there is no spot or blemish – to walk in Him is to walk according to the Truth and in the purity of the Truth, as we hear, guard and do His commands – And in this we rejoice together as a Bride that is being built up in the Master!

Mishlê/Proverbs 14:9 “**Fools scoff at guilt, but among the straight there is delight.**”

The foolish who rejoice over lawlessness scoff at their guilt, while with the upright and straight – that is the lovers of Elohim – there is true unity in rejoicing!

11 – COVERS ALL – The Greek word here for ‘**covers**’ is στέγω **stegō** – Strong’s **G4722** which means, ‘**to cover closely, to bear up under, endure, put up with**’.

In other words, as we walk in true love, we are to ‘**put up with each other**’, which for many may be hard to do at times!!!

This means we are to make a concerted effort at not getting irritated with each other and be able to share openly with each other and have the freedom to speak into each other’s lives without the fear of being rejected or offended!

12 – BELIEVES ALL – The Greek word here for ‘believes’ is πιστεύω pisteuō – Strong’s G4100 which is a verb that means, ‘**to trust, to be committed to, be entrusted with, be persuaded and placed confidence in to do**’, and comes from the root noun πίστις pistis – Strong’s G4102 which means, ‘**faith, faithfulness, pledge, conviction of the Truth**’ which in turn comes from the primary root verb πείθω peithō – Strong’s G3982 which means, ‘**to persuade, to put confidence in, to follow, have confidence and rely upon**’.

When looking at these root terms it is very clear, even in the Greek mind-set, that ‘**to believe**’ involves action and a confident response to the one you put your trust in and follow.

13 – EXPECTS ALL – The Greek word for ‘expects’ is ἐλπίζω elpizō – Strong’s G1679 which means, ‘**to expect, to hope, to anticipate**’, and from a spiritual perspective it can render the understanding of, ‘**wait for salvation with joy and full confidence**’.

Romiyim/Romans 8:24-25 “For in this expectation we were saved, but expectation that is seen is not expectation, for when anyone sees, does he expect it? 25 And if we expect what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with endurance.”

Ib’rim/Hebrews 11:1 “And belief is the substance of what is expected, the proof of what is not seen.”

True love for Elohim is expressed in the complete trust in him, by guarding to do all His commands with joy in the sure expectation of our deliverance to be made complete when He comes for us, His set-apart Bride!

This complete expectation in regards to love is understood by staying steadfast in walking in the truth, knowing that the expectation of that which is to come will not disappoint, and therefore we expect ALL His Word to be the Truth and actively choose to believe His Word and guard to do what is commanded, holding firm to the assurance of the sure expectation we have in Messiah!

Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 1:13-16 “Therefore, having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober, set your expectation perfectly upon the favour that is to be brought to you at the revelation of יהוה Messiah, 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts in your ignorance, 15 instead, as the One who called you is set-apart, so you also should become set-apart in all behaviour, 16 because it has been written, “Be set-apart, for I am set-apart.””

Another aspect of love ‘accepting all’, when understood from the perspective of the fact that true love for Elohim is obedience, is that we, as obedient believers, expect all that is written in the Word, as we trust the written Word of Elohim and firmly believe all that has been written and live as such, by walking in obedience to the Torah:

Yohanan/John 5:45-47 “Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Mosheh, in whom you have set your expectation. 46 “For if you believed Mosheh, you would have believed Me, since he wrote about Me. 47 “But if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My words?””

Love expects all!

This certainly means that when you walk in the True Love for Elohim you expect all that they Word says to be true and valid for giving you direction and instruction for living set-apart lives. Having said that it is clear then that when you expect all that is written to be valid for instruction and teaching and training in righteousness, then there is a greater urgency in ensuring that no compromise to obedience is entertained in one’s life, for the true effects of disobedience and the result of continued resistance to walking in disobedience is very clear in Scripture – and that is the disobedient shall not see, nor inherit the reign of Elohim – this too we can certainly expect!

You either believe the Word and live accordingly or you do not, as there are no half measures in living according to the kingdom reign of Elohim!

14 – ENDURES ALL – The Greek word for ‘endures’ is ὑπομένω hupomenō – Strong’s G5278 which means, ‘to stay behind, to await, endure’, which comes from the two words:

1) ὑπό hupo – Strong’s G5259 which means ‘under, in subjection to’, and

2) μένω menō – Strong’s G3306 and means, ‘to stay, abide, remain, stand’ – this word is the word used in **Yohanan/John 15** where we are told to ‘stay in, remain in’ Messiah!

As faithful talmidim (disciples) of Messiah, we recognise that while He ascended to the Most Set-Apart Place, where He continually intercedes for us as our High Priest, we who are here, and have ‘remained behind’, need to endure and be steadfast in staying in Him as we walk in subjection to His clear Torah.

Proper endurance in the Master calls for us to ‘stay in’ Him and ‘be in subjection to’ Him, by guarding His commands!

This call to possess our lives by endurance implies that endurance is certainly needed, especially as we live in a world that is corrupt and wicked and if one does not ‘possess by endurance’ they may just see their lives being stolen away through the influence of sin and compromise.

As faithful talmidim (disciples) of Messiah, we recognise that while He ascended to the Most Set-Apart Place, where He continually intercedes for us as our High Priest, we need to **endure** and be steadfast in staying in Him, as we walk in subjection to His clear Torah, bearing the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

To 'endure' means 'to remain firm under suffering or misfortune without yielding'.

Though it gets difficult we must endure!

A good faithful soldier endures, suffers and shares in others hardships. He does not stay behind and look for an escape and refuse to carry his load. No, he does not give in to the enemies' attack, no matter how long or hard it may be.

A true soldier endures, sacrificing all he has for the cause!

We, as faithful soldiers of Messiah must too, endure hardships, sacrificing all for the sake of the Good News of Messiah – for the sake of walking obediently in His Torah – for the sake of His Name!

Mattithyahu/ Matthew 10:22 "And you shall be hated by all for My Name's sake. But he who shall have endured to the end shall be saved."

Many are sadly giving up the fight of faith, for they cannot take it anymore – it seems easier to compromise the truth for a short lived and false comfort, and do not want to stand up for the Truth and fail to endure the hardships.

Mattithyahu/Matthew 24:12-13 "And because of the increase in lawlessness, the love of many shall become cold. 13 "But he who shall have endured to the end shall be saved."

Lawlessness is simply living without the Torah of Elohim!!!

This verse has struck me this week in a major way and brought great clarity as to understanding why many are so cold, and why so many who say they are friends can be so cold hearted and hate you!

As lawlessness increases...!

In other words, as the refusal to walk in the Torah increases, so will their love grow cold.

The Greek word for 'cold' is ψυχρός *psychros* – Strong's G5593 and is understood as being a metaphor for 'sluggishness' and comes from the verb ψύχω *psychō* – Strong's G5594 which means, 'wax cold' and is used as a metaphor for waning love.

Without Torah there can be no love, but only a superficial counterfeit emotion that proves false through trials! יהוה is Love – יהוה is our Salvation through the Blood of יהושע – יהושע is the Living Torah – the Torah made flesh. יהושע Messiah is Love.

Therefore, the Torah is, in effect, our Love language that teaches us how we are to live and communicate in this world!!!

Without Torah there is no Love!

As people increase their ignorance and rebellion to the Torah, so will the love they have diminish and grow cold.

But we who endure to the end, walking in the Torah of Elohim, walking in Love, shall be saved!!

The fullness of our salvation for which we have been sealed in the Spirit will be completed at His return. May we certainly be found to have endured and held on to His love by walking in His perfect Torah!

15 – LOVE NEVER ENDS! The Greek word for ‘never’ is οὐδέποτε oudepote – Strong’s G3763 which means, *‘neither at any time, NEVER’*, and the Greek word for ‘ends’ is πίπτω piptō – Strong’s G4098 which means, *‘to fall, break down, fail, fallen, be destroyed’*.

Wow!

This is very clear – Love never ends – and when we realise that love for Elohim is to do His commands, then we realise that our obedience to His commands will never end and can never be broken down or destroyed through compromise and the false and misled teachings of lawlessness!

Walking in the most/more excellent way – that is to walk in a true and pure love for Elohim – will cause us to never fail – for it is the sure way – the only way, as we stay steadfast in Messiah!

Love (true joy filled obedience) enables us to endure everything; and it enables us to keep on believing in every circumstance; to keep our confidence in יהוה and to remain patient no matter what happens to us.

We are to grow up in these things and put away childish attitudes, which are sadly embraced by many grownups!

If we truly desire to show יהוה that we love Him, we have to be more than willing to simply say “I love You יהוה”.

We must commit ourselves to יהוה’s language of love – the love that pays more attention to heart matters like attitude, compassion and obedience.

As you consider this ‘love chapter’ so to speak, and assess your life in taking this much needed love test – how are you doing?

Do you understand what love is and can honestly answer the question, **“What is love?”**

Having said that, as you undergo a true assessment of love by looking intently into the mirror of the Word, does your life effectively answer the second question, **“Where in the love?”**, positively or does the mirror reflect an absence of true love for Elohim and others.

This is a call to the obedience of love – that is – obedience to יהוה. Are there any areas of love where you have been disobedient?

You may have been using your gifts, just like the Corinthians, but without love?

Have you, or are you, holding a grudge, or are you envious, or have you been boastful?

Have you rejoiced in evil and called it light fun?

Perhaps you have not forgiven someone and have kept score on those who have wronged you. Perhaps you have retaliated, whether it be in thought or action and not exercised patience in affliction.

As you carefully consider what true love for Elohim is... then heed this call to walk in the More Excellent Way as you guard to do all He commands us, with great joy, rejoicing as a body being built up in unity, amēn! Love is a choice and an action – choose to act according to יהוה's most/more excellent way.

In **Hazon/Revelation 2-3** we are given the clear words of our Master to the 7 assemblies, of which Ephesos was the first.

This assembly in Ephesos could have basically been described as the careless assembly or the backsliding assembly.

This was an assembly that had fallen from its election as a chosen people by losing their grip on the required love, belief and expectation in the Master that must be clung to continually, no matter the circumstances!

Hazon/Revelation 2:2-6 “I know your works, and your labour, and your endurance, and that you are not able to bear evil ones, and have tried those who say they are emissaries and are not, and have found them false; 3 and you have been bearing up and have endurance, and have laboured for My Name's sake and have not become weary. 4 “But I hold this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 “So remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the first works, or else I shall come to you speedily and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. 6 “Yet this you have, that you hate the works of the Nikolaites, which I also hate.”

Sha'ul brought the Besorah to Ephesos and stayed there for 3 years, and later sent Timotiyos to oversee the assembly here.

Yohanan, in his later years, moved to Ephesos – and this once very vibrant assembly had lost its first love! Sha'ul's letter to the Ephesians was written at least 35 years after Sha'ul had established this assembly, which teaches us how quickly true fervent and zealous love can grow cold.

In this message to Ephesos, in **Hazon/Revelation**, a clear rebuke was given to this assembly for the fact that they had grown cold and was commanded to remember from where they had fallen, repent and repeat their first works as they had lost their first love!

What/who is our first love?

Yohanan Aleph/1 John 4:19 “We love Him because He first loved us.”

How did He first love us?

Yohanan/John 3:16 “For Elohim so loved the world that He gave His only brought-forth Son, so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but possess everlasting life.”

In **Yohanan/John 15** Messiah clearly tells us that we did not choose Him, but He chose us and appointed us to bear fruit!

The only way we can bear the true fruit of righteousness is to be grafted into the true root of righteousness, by the Blood of the Lamb; by the Blood of our Righteous Redeemer and King, יהושע Messiah.

One thing Ephesos had going for them at this stage, was that they hated the works of the Nikolaïtes.

The word Νικολαΐτης Nikolaitēs – Strong's G3531 means, '*destruction of the people*', who were a sect of people that were charged with adhering to the teaching of Bil'am and causing the people of Elohim to stumble! It is one thing to hate falsehood, yet love for the Truth must not grow cold or lost

The name of the city of Ἔφεσος Ephesos – Strong's G2181 is of an uncertain origin yet is believed to have the meaning, '*permitted, permissible*', which I find very interesting as we consider how much was permitted to go on in the assembly!

Ephesos was considered to be the most important commercial city of Asia Minor, and was the capital of Ionia on the western coast of Asia Minor between Smyrna and Miletus.

The city was surrounded on three sides by mountains and on the west by the Icarian Sea.

Ephesos was a very wealthy city. It boasted the temple of Diana, one of the wonders of the ancient world.

Today, Ephesos is an archaeologist's paradise, but all of its wealth and splendour is gone.

In the message given to the believers in Ephesos they were commended for their works, labour and endurance and that they had not become weary.

These words are remarkable when one considers how challenging it must have been for the early believers to live and minister in Ephesos.

The ruins of this city enable us to better understand the faith of the early believers who lived there and help us discover what gave them the strength to testify of Messiah so diligently in such an unlikely place.

In the ancient world this was the centre of travel and commerce and was considered as the crown jewel of Asia Minor.

It had a population of nearly 250,000 people and was home to more than twenty pagan temples. Artistic beauty, cultural learning, erotic pagan worship, world trade, criminal activity, and sorcery flourished amidst great wealth.

As residents of one of the most sophisticated cities of the Roman Empire, the Ephesians enjoyed such luxuries as running water, indoor toilets, fountains, gardens surrounded by magnificent columns, colonnaded streets paved with marble, gymnasiums and baths, a library, and a theatre that could seat an estimated twenty-five thousand people.

At the heart of the city's life and economy was the worship of Artemis, the ancient fertility goddess.

The temple dedicated to Artemis was 450 feet long, 220 feet wide, had more than 120 columns sixty feet high and was one of the seven wonders of the entire world.

Because it was believed that Artemis was considered to be so powerful and protective of her temple, people from all over the world deposited money there, which in turn was loaned out at a high rate of interest.

Thus, the Ephesians became extremely wealthy and naturally were very protective of the goddess who they believed had made them successful, powerful, and rich.

It took passionate commitment and courage for the early believers to stand up for their beliefs and face some serious persecution amidst this pagan centred culture.

The believers of Ephesos publicly spoke out for **יהושע** Messiah and lived for Him in a loving way.

They endured great hardships for the Name of **יהושע** and never became weary of living for Him.

The implications of Sha'ul's teachings at Ephesos were huge, as the Ephesians realised that if what Sha'ul and other true believers in Messiah shared was indeed the truth, then Artemis and the other pagan deities of Ephesus that were worshipped were worthless and the city's entire belief system, economy, and lifestyle could collapse.

As a result, Sha'ul and other believers in Ephesos began to face intense opposition.

So much so that unless they bore the 'mark' of pagan beliefs by living out those beliefs in daily life, true set-apart believers were viewed as second-class citizens. They were hated and severely persecuted. You can read **Ma'asei/Acts 19** in regards to the uprising that was stirred against Sha'ul by the idol makers in Ephesos.

By the time Yohanan went to Ephesos the Roman Emperor Domitian had the upper hand in attracting the religious loyalties of the Ephesians.

Demanding that people worship him as a god, Domitian insisted on being called 'Lord' and 'God' by everyone, including his wife.

The Ephesians built huge structures dedicated to Domitian, including a prominent temple designed to be the world centre of Domitian worship. One of its features was a twenty-seven-foot-tall statue of Domitian.

Anyone approaching the city by sea or by land could see the temple and its statue and know that the Ephesians, as a whole, believed Domitian to be king of the gods.

Along the city streets, altars reminded the people of Domitian's lordship and their allegiance to him. Once a year, the people had to say publicly in front of the altar, 'Caesar is Lord'.

Anyone who didn't recognize Domitian's lordship was sentenced to be put to death.

Why I am mentioning some of this history, is to highlight how extremely tough it was for true believers to stay lovingly committed to living set-apart lives and not falling prey to the false pagan worship customs that were being enforced as law.

It took courageous faith and passionate commitment for the early believers to stand up for their beliefs in the face of this 'mark of the beast' that they faced each and every day.

Despite serious persecution, which included the denial to conduct business in the markets and obtain water from public fountains, the chosen set-apart ones of Messiah publicly spoke out for **יהושע** and lived for Him in a loving way.

They endured great hardships for **יהושע** and never became weary of living for him.

Many may ask then, if they had this much commitment in their work, labour and endurance, why did the Master then say that the one thing He had held against them was that they had lost their first love?

He was challenging them to look at the way that they had been living and that they were to get back to the fervent love that they had in the beginning.

Many, under prolonged periods of persecution, may hold firm to their works of belief and do their utmost at not compromising the Way of set-apartness, yet their love sometimes grows cold and under the onslaught of persecution they are so busy being consumed with their own lives that they neglect the proper love and commitment that should be shown toward one another.

Yohanan/John 13:35 “By this shall all know that you are My taught ones, if you have love for one another.”

In order to live consistently and publicly for **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ**, as faithful ambassadors of His reign, they needed to believe in Him and care about each other.

Messiah quotes **Debarim/Deuteronomy 6:5** in **Mattithyahu/Matthew 22:37**, when He was making it clear that we are to love **יְהוָה** our Elohim with all our heart, all our mind and all our strength, and while we know this to be true, we take note that in many passages of Scripture we recognise the love we have and show for one another is a certain sign that we love Elohim!

The love we have for Elohim is what makes the body or community of Messiah distinguishably different from those who do not love Elohim, or so it should!

Sadly, this is not the case in the world today as we see more loyalty being expressed to each other in worldly groups and associations while the fellowship of believers is often riddled with backbiting, slander and gossip, and this should not be so!

We can understand why we see in Sha’ul’s letter to Ephesians the clear encouragement to love one another and the encouragement to build and guard the unity of the assembly.

The love that the initial believers in Ephesos had for one another, may be one of the primary reasons that the whole of Asia Minor heard of the Good News that Sha’ul had taught there, as they lived as they should, working, labouring and enduring in the belief, love and expectation of Messiah.

Losing their first love, highlights the clear fact that divisions had occurred and that the believers were no longer displaying the proper love for one another.

They had certainly held fast to their belief and had not been swayed by false teachings yet the display of their first love was lacking.

They had left the first love that they had!

The Greek word used for ‘left’ is **ἀφίημι** **aphiēmi** – **Strong’s G863** which means, **‘to send away, leave alone, abandon, divorce, forsake, to disregard’**, and can also carry the meaning, **‘give up a debt, forgive, give up or keep no longer’**.

What is clear is that they were abandoning one another and not defending one another against persecutions that were being faced, either from the wicked culture of the day or from the Nikolaites who taught falsehood and brought in divisions among the true set-apart chosen ones!

This was an assembly that certainly showed great endurance and works of belief yet their love for one another was clearly lacking and the Master rebukes them for this and commands them to **REMEMBER** from where they had fallen.

The Greek word that is translated as ‘remember’ is μνημονεύω mnēmoneuō – Strong’s **G3421** which means, ‘*remember, bring to mind, recall, think about, remember and mention*’. They were to bring to mind the position from where they had fallen from in order for them to realise the need to get back to that first position they had in the Master!

The Greek word for ‘fallen’ is πίπτω piptō – Strong’s **G4098** which means, ‘*to fall, break down, fail, fallen, be destroyed*’, and what is interesting to take note of here is that this word is translated in Sha’ul’s letter to the Corinthians as ‘fails’ when he explained what love is and said in **Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 13:8** that “**Love never fails**”!!!

True love never fails or falls, yet the rebuke being given here to this assembly is that it had and they needed to repent of this and return to doing the first works of love!

The Greek word for ‘repent’ is μετανοέω metanoēō – Strong’s **G3340** which means, ‘*to change one’s mind or purpose, to repent, relent*’ and involves a complete change in one’s attitude and thought.

They had to change their loveless attitude toward one another and make a serious turn around to get back to what they should be doing, and that was to love one another, as they guard the Truth and walk in the Truth without compromise!

Do the first works!

The Greek word translated as ‘do’ here is ποιέω poieō – Strong’s **G4160** which means, ‘*to make, do, accomplish, keep, work, acts*’.

A derivative of this word is ποιητής poiētēs – Strong’s **G4163** which means, ‘*a doer, a maker*’, and is seen in:

Ya’aqob/James 1:22-25 “**And become doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 Because if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror, 24 for he looks at himself, and goes away, and immediately forgets what he was like. 25 But he that looked into the perfect Torah, that of freedom, and continues in it, not becoming a hearer that forgets, but a doer of work, this one shall be blessed in his doing of the Torah.**”

The word translated as ‘doing’ (of the Torah) is also a derivative of ποιέω poieō and is the word ποίησις poiēsis – Strong’s G4162 which means, ‘*deed, making, doing, performing, in his doing (in the obedience he renders the law)*’.

These verses are very clear, in telling us that the true hearer of the word guards it and performs it, as his obedience renders the law under which he submits!

Doing the Word involves a proper loving of one another as the body covers and protects each other from the falsehood and trickery of those who claim to know Elohim yet deny Him in their confession and works!

This assembly had tried those who said that they were emissaries but were not, so they were diligent in testing the confession and beliefs of many who claimed to be servants of Elohim and they had hated the work of the Nikolaites that oppressed people with falsehood, yet what was needed here was a love within the body to be properly restored!

What is clear here, is that this assembly was certainly very diligent in testing and proving whether those who claimed to be emissaries were true sent ones or not and would therefore not put up with false hypocrites who claimed to be ambassadors of the Master, yet what this assembly had fallen from and now lacked was the ability to love one another, which includes defending and protecting one another and building each other up in the Most Set-apart faith!

This message is as alive for us today as it was to the hearers back then, as we see the urgent rebuke and call of our Master to His True Bride who confess who He is to get back to loving as they should and this involves everything that love is, as Sha’ul taught to the believers in Corinth!

I am sure that what we find in the world today, is what went on back then for there is nothing new under the sun, as Shelomoh so discovered, in seeking out wisdom in all matters!

Today we find that the love and unity that ought to be displayed within fellowship groups that the Master is building, is lacking at times and more loyalty and love is shown to those who are outside while those who are inside are neglecting one another and as a result the body is suffering harm, which needs to be repaired and restored with a proper restoration of true fervent love for one another!

What is love? Where is the Love?

How are you answering and responding to these two very vital questions?

As we consider this message that contains both encouragement and rebuke, how do you measure up as you look intently into the mirror of the Words of our Master?

Sha’ul warns against those who do not take warning from the examples that have been written for us in the Word and the one who thinks he stands should take heed lest he fall!

יהוה disciplines those He loves!!!

Do not let the disciplining of the Word, when needed, cause you to think that love is not being shown toward you – embrace it and grow in love!

May you be equipped, strengthened and stirred to love Elohim as you should and let not your love grow cold as you cling to our Master and always be ready to give a reason for the hope you have. When someone asks you, “**where is your love?**”, show them your love in your obedience to Elohim!

WHAT IS LOVE?
LOVE = OBEDIENCE TO ELOHIM
WHERE IS THE LOVE?
LET YOUR OBEDIENCE SHINE FORTH!

יהוה bless you and guard you; יהוה make His face shine upon you and show favour to you;
יהוה lift up His face upon you and give you Shalom!