



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 2.10.3

Series 2 of the Parables Bookshelf contains a variety of writings covering a wide range of topics related to the Kingdom of God. These writings originally appeared as posts on the Heart4God website, or the Parables Blog, both of which are the websites of Bible teacher Joseph Herrin.

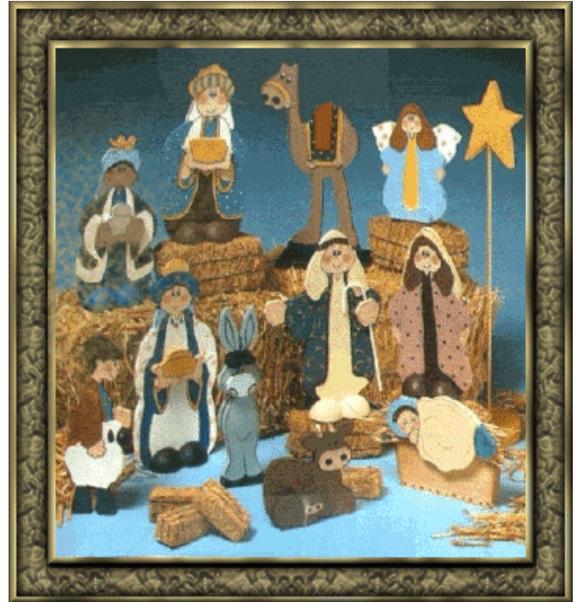
Divorced From Truth

Divorced From Truth - Part 6

Examining the Traditions of Christ's Nativity

I do not doubt that some who read this particular post will be shocked to find that some of the most basic traditions concerning the Christ, the Son of God, that they have heard all of their lives are in fact false. Reshaping the image of Christ is not a new phenomenon. It has been occurring since the birth of Christ when some suggested that He was born of illegitimacy.

At this time of



year, many will be putting out manger scenes depicting the birth of the Christ. I have yet to see a true representation of the actual facts surrounding His birth. A typical

nativity scene includes an image of a baby laid in a feeding trough, a stable, some barn animals, Mary and Joseph, shepherds, three wise men and their camels, a star,

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and angels.

In the presentation *Removing the High Places*, I have shared many things concerning the pagan origins of many Christmas traditions, including the date that birth of Christ is celebrated. You can find this presentation here:

<http://www.heart4god.ws/id585.htm>

Following is an excerpt from this writing.

How did we arrive at the date that Christmas and Easter are observed upon. They are directly related to the worship of the heavenly bodies, particularly the Sun. The following is an entry from the Internet site wikipedia on the topic of Sol Invictus.

Sol Invictus was a religious title applied to at least three distinct divinities during the later Roman Empire: El Gabal, Mithras, and Sol.

The Romans held a festival on December 25 called Dies Natalis Solis Invicti, "the birthday of the unconquered sun." The use of the title Sol Invictus allowed several solar deities to be worshipped collectively, including Elah-Gabal, a Syrian sun god; Sol, the patron god of Emperor Aurelian (270-274); and Mithras.

Emperor Elagabalus (218-222) introduced the festival, and it reached the height of its popularity under Aurelian, who promoted it as an empire-wide holiday.

December 25 was also considered to be the date of the winter solstice, which the Romans called bruma. It was therefore the day the Sun proved itself to be "unconquered" despite the shortening of daylight hours. (When Julius Caesar introduced the Julian Calendar in 45 BC, December 25 was approximately the date of the solstice. In modern times, the solstice falls on December 21 or 22.)

The Sol Invictus festival has a "strong claim on the responsibility" for the date of Christmas, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia.

[End Excerpt]

It is hardly considered today that there is no mention of the church celebrating the birth of Yahshua. The apostles are absolutely silent concerning this matter, and there is little reason to believe that the early church held any celebration that bore even a slight resemblance to Christmas today. They most certainly would not have commemorated the birth of Christ on December 25th. There is no Biblical evidence to support this date as the birth of Christ. This date was chosen solely due to it having already been established as a pagan holiday in celebration of the Sun god.

As mentioned in a previous post, the Roman Catholic Church practiced syncretism. Syncretism is the fusing of diverse beliefs, philosophies or religions. When Rome was declared a Christian nation by the emperor Constantine, the Roman church declared all of the citizens of Rome to be Christians.

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No actual conversion was necessary, and the “Christianized” pagans were even able to keep their old religious practices and holidays. The Roman Catholic Church merely reinterpreted the symbols and practices of pagan traditions to give them an appearance of being Christian.

Because Sol Invictus was such a popular holiday in Roman society, the church embraced it. December 25th was celebrated as “the birth of the unconquerable Sun” and was reinterpreted as “the birth of the Son of God.” Many of the original pagan practices are still seen today, mixed in with images of Christianity. I will not detail these here, as they are mentioned in the presentation to which I have provided a link.

What does God think about the mixing of the holy and the profane? The Scriptures are clear.

Ezekiel 44:23

"Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."

II Corinthians 6:14-17

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And ***what agreement has the temple of God with idols?*** For you are the temple

of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "***Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.***"

The church from its early ages has been seeking to find some agreement between the holy and the unholy, between the One True God and idols. Nowhere is this witnessed to a greater extent than the two most celebrated holidays of the modern church, holidays that the early church knew nothing about. Both Christmas and Easter are pagan in origin, and Easter even bears the name of the pagan goddess of fertility, Eostre, which is the same as the Old Testament Astarte and Ashtoreth.

What date was the Son of God born upon? There is much evidence that Yahshua was born on the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles is a foreshadowing of God dwelling with man in fulness. The two are signified to be “tabernacling” together.

God established three festivals that the Jews were to observe annually. All three served as a prophetic foreshadowing of His plan to redeem mankind and bring man into a fulness of fellowship with Himself, and conformity to His image. Yahshua is the great Author and Finisher of the works of God. His life is therefore linked to all of the Feasts of Yahweh. He was born on Tabernacles. He died on Passover, and He sent forth His Spirit at Pentecost.

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One of the names of Christ is Emmanuel, meaning “God with us.” The Feast of Tabernacles is intended to portray God dwelling with man, and it would be very fitting for Christ to be born at this time. There are many resources on the Internet that have delved into this matter, and which provide numerous evidences supporting a conclusion of the Christ being born at the Feast of Tabernacles, which falls in late September, or early October of the year. I will include a few of these evidences.

Many have cited the fact that the gospel of Luke mentions shepherds watching their flocks at night outside Bethlehem when the angels appear to them (Luke 2:8). It was a common practice of the shepherds to keep their flocks in the field from April until October. During the cold and rainy season beginning in October, the shepherds would take the flocks back to their homes and keep them under shelter. Adam Clarke’s commentary has this to say:

As these shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks, it is a presumptive argument that October had not yet commenced, and that, consequently, our Lord was not born on the 25th of December, when no flocks were out in the fields; nor could He have been born later than September, as the flocks were still in the fields by night. On this very ground the nativity in December should be given up. The feeding of the flocks by night in the fields is a chronological fact, which casts considerable light upon this disputed point.

[Source: Adam Clarke's Commentary, Abingdon Press, Nashville, note on Luke 2:8]

The fact of their being shepherds in the field is not enough to establish conclusively that Christ was born during the Feast of Tabernacles. However, it would allow for this to be the date, and it does cast great doubt on December 25th as the date, which history reveals to have been arrived at from pagan sources, rather than the Bible.

The Companion Bible, whose notes were written by E. W. Bullinger, likewise shares the following in Appendix 179.

*Shepherds and their flocks would not be found "abiding" (Gr. *agrauleo*) in the open fields at night in December (Tebeth), for the paramount reason that there would be no pasturage at that time. It was the custom then (as now) to withdraw the flocks during the month Marchesven (Oct.-Nov.) from the open districts and house them for the winter.*

We can find further support for a September to October date in the account from Luke as it speaks of the Roman government issuing a decree for a census to be taken.

Luke 2:1-7

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of

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David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Rome was a well ordered empire, and would not unnecessarily sought to provoke its subjects, nor to disrupt commerce. The most favorable time for a census to be held would be after the harvest season, for much of the Empire was agrarian, and getting the crops harvested was as important to Rome as it was to her subjects. The census would also need to be conducted while travel was still favorable, before the wet and cold of winter set in. This leaves September and October as the best time to conduct a census, for the harvest would have been brought in and winter had yet to arrive.

Let us look to some further Scripture evidence of the birth of Christ. One great clue is found in John's gospel.

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh, and [skeno - **tabernacled**] among us...

The Greek word skeno is found in this passage. Strong's concordance defines this word in the following way:

skeno (skay-no'-o); from NT:4636; **to**

tent or encamp, i.e. (figuratively) to occupy (as a mansion) or (specifically) **to reside (as God did in the Tabernacle** of old, a symbol of protection and communion)

During the Feast of Tabernacles the Jews were instructed to construct booths, or dwelling places, outside their homes. These were primitive affairs of boughs and branches as defined in Leviticus.



Leviticus 23:40

"Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God for seven days."

These booths were constructed everywhere and anywhere that they could find room to construct them.

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Nehemiah 8:15-17

So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written." So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. The entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them.

E.W. Bullinger, once more in appendix 179 of *The Companion Bible* provides this insight.

The word tabernacled here receives beautiful significance from the knowledge that "the Lord of Glory" was "found in fashion as a man", and thus tabernacling in human flesh. And in turn it shows in equally beautiful significance that our Lord was born on the first day of the great Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, viz. the 15th of Tisri, corresponding to September 29 (modern reckoning).

The Circumcision of our Lord took place therefore on the eighth day, the last day of the Feast, the "Great Day of the Feast" of John 7.37 ("Tabernacles" had eight days. The Feast of Unleavened Bread had seven days, and Pentecost one. See Lev. 23).

Many other authors and teachers have set forth evidences of the Feast of Tabernacles as the date of the Messiah's birth. Eddie Chumney in *The Seven Festivals of the Messiah* writes of this matter. He uses the more traditional Hebrew word Sukkot when speaking of Tabernacles.

As we have stated earlier in this chapter, the Feast of Sukkot is called "the season of our joy" and "the feast of the nations." With this in mind, in Luke 2:10 it is written, "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings [basar in Hebrew; otherwise known as the gospel] of great joy [Sukkot is called the 'season of our joy'], which shall be to all people [Sukkot is called 'the feast of the nations']." So, we can see from this that the terminology the angel used to announce the birth of Yeshua were themes and messages associated with the Feast of Sukkot.

I will give one final testimony in this matter of Christ being born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. This also has bearing on the tradition that depicts Christ as being laid in a manger, which is assumed to be a feeding trough for barn animals. Following are the words of Andy Thomas.

Why was there no room at the inn? Bethlehem is only about 5 miles from Jerusalem, and all the men of Israel had come to attend the festival of Tabernacles as required by the law of Moses. Every room for miles around Jerusalem would have been already taken by pilgrims, so all that Mary and Joseph could find for shelter was a sukkah. And in a normal sukkah

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there is a "bread trough" for the celebrants to store their food. It can be, also, translated as a "manger." Since Jesus Christ is the BREAD OF LIFE, it would make sense that He was laid in the "bread trough" or "manger" in the sukkah they were staying in.

[Source:
http://www.ljcf.org/What_day_was_Jesus_born.html]

This is indeed a marvelous testimony. The Son of God came to tabernacle among men. He was born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and because there was no other room available, His parents found lodging in a Sukkah, or booth, constructed for this feast. The "bread that came down from heaven" was laid in the "bread trough" in the Sukkah where the bread would have been kept to feed those dwelling there.

John 6:51-56

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" So Yahshua said to them, ***"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My***

flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."

Many more witnesses could be provided as testimony. For my part, I believe that what I have shared here describes the actual details of the birth of the Son of God. I can state emphatically that He was not born on December 25th, and there is little doubt that many of the other images and details that the church has embraced are equally erroneous. We are called to "examine all things carefully." I think it is fair to say that very few Christians today have ever examined the traditions the church observes today concerning the birth of Christ and the observance of Christmas.

I corresponded with Glen Pickren this past week regarding these things, and he wrote out the following timeline of events surrounding the birth of Christ which reveals further errors in the traditional story.

That is a great study supporting Jesus' birth during Tabernacles (referring to the link above). I had thought that was likely for some time for the reason that for the shepherd's to be in the fields it would have to be after the harvest and before winter. Second, the similitude of God tabernacling among us was simply too rich to be ignored, especially since we know Jesus is also the fulfillment of Passover and Pentecost.

This leads to the matter of the error placing the magi at Jesus' birth. The scrip-

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tures clearly indicate that this was not the case. After Jesus' birth, his parents remained in Bethlehem or Jerusalem until Mary's period of uncleanness had ended. Then, they went to the temple to dedicate Jesus to the Lord. After that, the scriptures say they returned to Nazareth.

Luk 2:39

(39) When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

However, Luk 2:41

(41) Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

This leads to Matthew's account of the magi. He does not say the magi were there. He merely says, "after the child was born in Bethlehem wise men arrived from the east."

These wise men showed up at Herod's palace looking for a king having been led there by a star that had appeared...

Mat 2:7

(7) Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared.

The wise men leave the palace heading for Bethlehem and:

Mat 2:9-10

(9) After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. (10) When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

They had seen the star in the east which had guided them in the general direction, but since they were looking for a child who was king, they went to the king assuming the child would be in the palace. But, having left, the "star" not only reappears but moved as it "went on before them" until it "came and stood over the place the child was..."

But, we have another clue. The child is not in a stable.

Mat 2:11

(11) After coming into **the house** they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

As soon as they leave town secretly to avoid Herod, Joseph is told in a dream to flee to Egypt, which he obeys being fully provided with finances for the journey by the gifts of the magi.

Going to the calendar, we believe Jesus was born in the Fall during tabernacles,

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we know that Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth about a month after His birth and we know that they went to Jerusalem every Passover. Given that they were so poor they could only afford to sacrifice two doves, it is unlikely they would make the journey at any other time. Therefore, the magi came during the first or second Passover after Jesus' birth when He was either roughly six months old or 1 1/2 years. This is supported in that Herod, having been told the exact time of the appearance of the star, ordered all of the male children under two years old to be killed.

While it takes a little digging to come up with the dates, even a cursory reading of the scriptures shows that there is no way the magi were at the birth. If so, why the persistence of the three kings in the manger scene. I think the answer comes from the tradition of Christmas. Without the wise men's "presence," we have no biblical cover for the "presents."

This last statement is a very good insight. The church has placed the wise men at the birth of Christ to provide some rationale for giving gifts. The Bible clearly teaches that the wise men did not show up at the birth of the Messiah. They came a couple years later.

Matthew 2:16

Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vi-

cinity, from *two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.*

Herod discerned from the wise men that the sign of the Messiah had appeared less than two years previously. He concluded that the child was no older than two and slew all of the children under the age of two. In Matthew 2 we read of the angel appearing to Joseph and telling him to take the CHILD and his mother and flee to Egypt. The Greek word from Matthew 2 translated as child is *paidion*. This is in contrast to the word that spoke of Mary giving birth to a BABE in Luke chapter 2, which is *brephos*. *Brephos* means "a baby," while *paidion* means "little child."

To put a final nail in the coffin of the false representation of the wise men appearing at the birth of Christ, we read in Scriptures that the wise men came to Joseph and Mary in "the house." No longer do we read of an inn, or a manger, or a booth. They were at that time dwelling in a house.

On the Roman feast of Sol Invictus, or Saturnalia, held on December 25th, it was customary to give gifts.

The custom of giving gifts at the start of a new year, for example the handsel in Britain or the étrenne in France, began with the strena of Roman times. During the holiday season of the Saturnalia, Romans exchanged a variety of gifts and favors. Wax candles or lamps, tied up with bits of

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holly, were offered to adults to light the way in the coming year. Sometimes they were presented with bags of nuts during the festival, which were probably used as marbles or as gambling stakes. Children were often given small clay figurines called sigilla.

<http://lonestar.texas.net/~robison/saturnalia.html>

The church had to come up with some justification to continue this pagan tradition. They therefore altered the story of Christ's nativity and had the wise men arrive a couple years earlier than the Scriptures suggest. The star over the manger scene is therefore also out of place, belonging to another time, and leading to a different destination - a house, not a stable.

It should also be noted that the Bible nowhere identifies the number of magi, or wise men. Current church tradition always says there are three. There may have been a great many more. The number three is erroneously adopted because it is mentioned that the wise men brought three different gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

We cannot conclude this study without mention of the angels. They too provide evidence that Christ was born at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Luke 2:13-14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the high-

est, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles is called Hashanna Rabba - The Great Hosanna. This day was the climax of the entire season of feasts, or holy days. Hosanna is a Hebrew word that means "save now." Is this not the cause for the angels' rejoicing, and for the shepherds to rejoice as well? God had sent His salvation! There truly was peace and good will toward men. On this date the priest recited the Hallel (praise) Psalm 118, to which the people respond at every line with the word "Hallelujah!"

This is a Messianic Psalm, including the following lines:

Psalms 118:15

The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous...

Can you imagine the shepherds arriving at the tent, (booth, sukkah) that Joseph and Mary were residing in with the young babe? There would truly have been joyful shouting in the tents of the righteous. This Psalm continues:

Psalms 118:26-27

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of Yahweh; We have blessed you from the house of Yahweh. Yahweh is God, and He has given us light...

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As these words were recited the light of the world was finally dwelling among man. What a glorious story God had written!

The traditions of man are a cheap substitute for the truth. It is my hope that in these last days that Yahweh might restore His people to a foundation of truth. May He lead us back to a knowledge and understanding of His feast days and what they foretell, and deliver us from the pagan corruptions that the church has embraced.

Divorced From Truth - Part 7 **Yahshua - Carpenter, or Master Builder?**

In the previous post we examined some of the traditions of the church surrounding the birth of Christ. In this post I want to look at a further tradition of the church, and I invite you to test the things shared here. Examine them to see if they are true. The tradition I am speaking of is that which declares that Yahshua was a carpenter, and the son of a carpenter.

I had never looked into this matter until some months ago a brother in Christ, Randy Barnes, sent me some of his thoughts on the matter. Since then I have looked into this topic further, and I think there is much reason to question the traditional view of Christ being a carpenter.

There is little said in a direct manner concerning the life of Christ before He began His ministry. The church tradition that de-

clares Him to be a carpenter is based primarily upon the following verse.

Matthew 13:55

"Is not this ***the carpenter's son***? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?"

It was common in the day in which Yahshua lived for the sons to learn the trade of their father. It is assumed that Yahshua was instructed by Joseph in the same trade in which he was employed. Much is based upon the translation of the Greek word *tekton* which is rendered here as *carpenter*.

The Greek word *tekton* is not the equivalent of the English word *carpenter*. It is a much more general term denoting one who is an artificer, a tradesman, or builder. This term was used to speak of architects, stone masons, builders, and those who worked in cloth and fabric. Were the translators correct in choosing to render this word as *carpenter*? There is much evidence to suggest that Joseph was a builder who worked in stone, and that Yahshua was Himself a master builder.

Some of the evidence was not available when the King James Version of the Bible was written in 1611. It was not until the 1980s that the city of Sepphora was discovered and excavated. Sepphoris was built as a Roman city and it lies only four miles from Nazareth, the city in which Yahshua grew up. Nazareth was a small town of ap-

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proximately 400 residents, while Sepphoris had a population in excess of 30,000.

What is very interesting to note is that Sepphoris was a new city in the time of Christ. Its homes and large public buildings were being constructed during the period in which Yahshua lived. Josephus mentions this city in his writings, praising it as the most beautiful city in the region. Sepphoris was an affluent city and the homes and public buildings in it were well constructed, and often ornate. It had a Roman theater, homes with spectacular mosaic floors, and a water system of unparalleled construction.

As this city lay so close to Nazareth, it would have been quite practical for Joseph and Yahshua to make the short trip there to work in the construction trades that were booming at the time. Yet, there is much Scriptural evidence that would make the occupation of the Lord as a Master Builder more certain.

First, let us observe that this word tekton is used in reference to one who is a builder.

I Corinthians 3:10

According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise **master builder** I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

The Greek word translated *master builder* is *architekton*. Strong's Concordance pro-

vides the following definition.

architekton; from NT:746 and NT:5045; a chief constructor, i.e. "architect":

This Greek word is formed from the root word tekton, which we have mentioned refers to one who is an artificer, or builder, or skilled tradesman. The prefix arche has been added to the word to indicate one who is a "chief," or a "master." It is easy to see how the English word architect resembles this Greek word. An architect is not simply a carpenter, but is one who understands the entire design of a building. He is often the one who has originated the design of a building and who draws up plans for it, and oversees the construction of all phases of the building.

Christ certainly fulfills this description in a spiritual sense. He came to "build" His church. The people of God are referred to as a temple constructed of living stones.

Matthew 16:18

"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."

It must be noted that wood was not the chief building material in Israel. Stone was the primary tool, being readily available and very durable. It also had the added benefit of being resistant to fire. We must remember that fire was a great threat in those days. A city constructed of wood would be very vulnerable, particularly considering that Israel knew many wars and an

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enemy would have quickly razed any town that was built of wood.

Christ speaks to Peter and tells him that He will build His church upon “this rock.” In instance after instance in which Christ and His disciples speak of building stonework is mentioned. The evidence leads to the conclusion that Christ was very knowledgeable in constructing buildings out of stone. He was not a carpenter in the sense that we are familiar with in the West. Few homes in America are constructed of stone.

Let us look at some more evidence that reveals Christ’s familiarity with stone construction.

Mark 13:1-2

As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Master, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" And Yahshua said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."

Some of the common English translations have used the word *teacher* in this passage, rather than *master*. This word is not translated from the Hebrew word Rabbi, which indicates a teacher, but from the Greek word didaskalos. This Greek word refers to someone who is a master in his field. It is at times translated as *doctor*. It is understandable that the translators would render this word as teacher, for a teacher must be a master of the field in which he seeks to

instruct others. Yet, what is being inferred in this passage is not that Yahshua is a teacher, but a master in his field.

If Yahshua were a master builder, then it would be very fitting for the disciples to refer to him as “master” when pointing out to him the stone work of the Temple. The Hebrew equivalent of the Greek didaskalos is rabboni (not to be confused with rabbi).

John 20:16

Yahshua said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Master (didaskalos)).

We see then that among Christ’s closest associates He was referred to by this title that indicates one who is a master. In what sense was Yahshua a master? It was common in that day to identify a man by his occupation.

Matthew 13:55

"Is not this the (tekton’s) son?"

In this verse we see Joseph is completely identified by his occupation. His name is not even mentioned. Similarly, the Scriptures identify the occupation of all of the disciples, many of whom were fishermen. Religious teachers of the Jews were called “Rabbi,” which would be similar to someone addressing a man today by the title “Teacher.” Paul’s companion on many journeys was Luke.

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Colossians 4:14

Luke, *the beloved physician*, sends you his greetings...

In other places we read of men being identified by their occupation.

II Timothy 4:14

Alexander *the coppersmith* did me much harm..

Acts 10:32

He is staying at the house of Simon *the tanner* by the sea.

Women who had an occupation outside the home were likewise identified by their occupation.

Acts 16:14

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, *a seller of purple fabrics*...

We can understand therefore, that Yahshua would also have been referred to in ways that referenced his occupation, especially is He had been known to be a master of His craft. It seems reasonable to conclude that the Greek word *didaskalos*, and the Hebrew *Rabboni*, when used as a title for Christ, were employed as references to His former occupation as a master builder. This title would certainly have been appropriate for other reasons as well, a fact I am

not seeking to refute. Certainly there is an aspect of this word being used as a reference to one who has authority, and Christ had authority.

John 13:13-14

"You call Me Master (*didaskalos*) and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master (*didaskalos*), washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

A very intriguing passage that sheds light on the occupation of the Son of God is the following.

John 2:19-20

Yahshua answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

It is interesting to note that the Jews did not question whether Yahshua had the skills necessary to construct a temple, one which we know was built of stone. They merely questioned the time frame. How could Yahshua build in three days what it took them forty-six years to build? That they did not question His knowledge of construction of large public buildings could be taken as evidence that He had a reputation as a master of such construction. Perhaps He had even overseen some of the large public buildings in Sepphoris.

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The temple in Jerusalem was a magnificent structure. It would be similar to someone today standing in front of a great architectural wonder, perhaps the Empire State Building, and saying, "Tear this down and I will rebuild it in three days." Would we not protest not only that the time frame was impossibly unrealistic, but also question the knowledge and abilities of the one making the claim? Yet the Jewish leaders did not question the abilities of Christ. If He were merely a carpenter, as some suggest, certainly they would have sneered at His claims.

For me, some of the greatest evidence supporting the conclusion that Yahshua was by occupation a master builder, and was well versed in stone construction, comes from many of the analogies employed in Scripture in reference to His spiritual work. Christ was Himself often found employing terms that dealt with stone construction.

Matthew 16:18

"I also say to you that you are Peter, and **upon this rock I will build** My church..."

Luke 6:47-48

"Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: **he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock**; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because **it had been well built.**"

Christ reveals some knowledge of what it took to construct a "well built" house. Did He come by this knowledge while constructing houses for the affluent residents of Sepphoris? In many places we find the Lord making references to building substantial edifices out of stone.

Luke 20:17-18

He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written, **'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone'**? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

A master builder would have understood the principles of calculating the cost to construct a building, and would probably have had encounters with people whose desires overreached their abilities to pay for that which they wanted. Yahshua used such an analogy when urging those who wanted to be His disciples to first calculate the cost.

Luke 14:28-30

"For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"

Consider also, that even as earthly fathers

Divorced From Truth

teach their sons the trade they are familiar with, so too would the heavenly Father have instructed His Son according to His own trade. Is Yahweh not the architect and builder of all things?

Hebrews 11:10

For [Abraham] was looking for the city which has foundations, ***whose architect and builder is God.***

I have found in my own life, as in the lives of many others, that one's physical occupation often is used by God to symbolize the spiritual call upon their lives. Thus we read of many of the disciples being fishermen, and Yahshua tells them He will make them "fishers of men." God directed me for two years to teach classes at a local technical college. While there He showed me that this was a symbol of His call on my life to teach "higher education" to His children.

Would we not anticipate that the physical occupation of our Lord would also be symbolic of His spiritual occupation? Consider the following parallels. Yahshua stated that He would "build His church." This church is compared to a temple of living stones. If He were employed as a master builder who was skilled in stone construction, then the parallel would be readily seen. Yet consider also what the Lord told His disciples He was going to do when He departed from them.

John 14:2-3

"In My Father's house are many ***dwelling***

places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for ***I go to prepare a place for you.*** If ***I go and prepare a place for you,*** I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

Had Yahshua also been employed in building residences for the citizens of Sepphoris, which Josephus refers to as the most beautiful city in the region, we can once again readily see the parallel between physical and spiritual vocation. Of course, the dwelling places Christ has gone to prepare in heaven are not that which is built with hands. They are the glorified bodies the saints are to inhabit.

II Corinthians 5:1-3

For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.

It is these dwelling places Yahshua has gone ahead to prepare for His disciples. As a wise master builder, He knows very well what He is about. These dwelling places will be wonders to behold. I am sure that whatever Christ did in His earthly vocation, that He did all with great wisdom and a spirit of excellence. If He were a builder, He would have been a Master Builder. Truly the word Rabboni would have been an appropriate accolade.

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If any should disagree with the conclusions of this writing, I will not be offended in any regard. This writing is not shared to be contentious. I do find that there are many things the church has received as traditions that arise from disputable sources and reasoning. We are called to “examine all things carefully.”

It has been my intent to provoke consideration of some of the basic “facts” which have been delivered to the body of Christ. As it is evident in the last two writings, these “facts” are not always derived from a careful examination of Scripture. Many church teachings have arisen from sources outside the Scriptures. I think it is a marvelous thing that the Spirit of Christ is leading many of God’s people to a new examination of those things they have received as traditional beliefs concerning the Son of God. As long as the Spirit and the Word are our guides, we will do well.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days.

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Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Bible Devotion

"I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."

[Isaiah 48:10](#)

Comfort thyself, tried believer, with this thought: God saith, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Does not the word come like a soft shower, assuaging the fury of the flame? Yea, is it not an asbestos armour, against which the heat hath no power?

Let affliction come—God has chosen me. Poverty, thou mayst stride in at my door, but God is in the house already, and He has chosen me. Sickness, thou mayst intrude, but I have a balsam ready—God has chosen me. Whatever befalls me in this vale of tears, I know that He has "chosen" me.

If, believer, thou requirest still greater comfort, remember *that you have the Son of Man with you in the furnace*. In that silent chamber of yours, there sitteth by your side One whom thou hast not seen, but whom thou lovest; and ofttimes when thou knowest it not, He makes all thy bed in thy affliction, and smooths thy pillow for thee.

Thou art in poverty; but in that lovely house of thine the Lord of life and glory is a frequent visitor. He loves to come into these desolate places, that He may visit thee. Thy friend sticks closely to thee. Thou canst not see Him, but thou mayst feel the pressure of His hands. Dost thou not hear His voice? Even in the valley of the shadow of death He says, "Fear not, I am

with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God."

Remember that noble speech of Caesar: "Fear not, thou carriest Caesar and all his fortune." Fear not, Christian; Jesus is with thee. In all thy fiery trials, His presence is both thy comfort and safety. He will never leave one whom He has chosen for His own. "Fear not, for I am with thee," is His sure word of promise to His chosen ones in the "furnace of affliction." Wilt thou not, then, take fast hold of Christ, and say—

*"Through floods and flames, if
Jesus lead,
I'll follow where He goes."*