

Four Pillars of the Faith

by John Robinson

In the world of architecture, pillars are used for structural support. As we build the house of true worship, there are certain pillars that cannot be left out. Among genuine seekers of biblical truth today, there are differing perspectives of the significance of these pillars. In this article, I will describe the four pillars, which are prominent in the Scriptures.

#1 THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

Some people are very Torah-conscious and have a healthy respect for the law and the prophets. One of many scriptural examples used to justify that position is the story of King Jehu of Israel, who was a mighty man of war whom Yahvah used to destroy the house of Ahab. His downfall was similar to many believers today in that he failed to heed the law of Yahvah, thereby depriving his descendants of the continued blessings promised to Abraham's offspring. (Genesis 26)

Yahshua, our mediator of the new covenant, chided His disciples because they were slow to believe all that the prophets had spoken. (Luke 24:25) He told His followers that they were in error, not knowing the Scriptures. (Matthew 22:29) It's significant that the phrase "it is written" occurs about 82 times in the writings of Matthew through the Revelation. I don't think there is any room for dispute that the Scriptures referred to were the writings of the *Tanak*, commonly called the Old Testament. **TaNak** is an acronym for Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim, which are Hebrew words often translated into English as the law, the prophets, and the writings.

Regarding the Torah, some people have studied themselves out of a relationship with the Messiah; so it's important to remember the law is only one pillar of the house, and that truth out of balance is a lie.

#2 HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERMENT

Some people are extremely aware of the necessity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These people are often called Pentecostal or Charismatic. They base their position on the dramatic change experienced by Peter and the other apostles after the Holy Spirit fell on them on the day of

Pentecost. This promise of Yahvah is the only antidote to dead religion. If Yahshua had ascended into heaven and we had never heard from Him again, we would still be in the Old Testament and be unable to do the greater works He promised we would do. As glorious as the giving of the Old Covenant was at Sinai, it was only the beginning of Yahvah's revealing Himself to mankind. The law defines sin, but the Holy Spirit supernaturally empowers people to overcome sin.

The Apostle Paul made it clear that he didn't want his students to be ignorant of spiritual gifts, and he told them to desire these elements of the faith. He said that he wished they all spoke with other tongues, but more importantly, that they would prophesy. Would his message be different for us today? Some ministries seem to specialize in constructing this pillar of the faith. While it can be a wonderful thing, many times a zeal for spiritual gifts can cause a person to neglect maintenance of other pillars in the spiritual house. For example, some "Spirit-filled" people remain in a carnal, immature state, as recorded in 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, 11-17. Remember that truth out of balance is a lie.

#3 HOLINESS

This pillar can be hard to define because Satan has muddied the waters, but it's a crucial pillar because without it we will not see Yahvah. (Hebrews 12:14) According to Peter's writings, holiness has much to do with our conduct. Some people suggest it includes the food we eat and the clothes we wear; while others scoff at that idea as "legalistic." A thorough review of Pillar #1 would illuminate this issue. The word "holy" is found about 78 times in the book of Leviticus. Peter quotes Leviticus 11 in the first chapter of his second epistle, saying that we are to be holy in the same way Yahvah is holy. Evidently, we need to learn about the holy nature and character of Yahvah. Both Pillars #1 and Pillar #2 are essential in this quest.

Some people interpret holiness to include refraining from television and worldly entertainment in general. They also consider most modern fashion to be immodest or indecent, blurring gender roles. These people have allowed their whole lives to be directed by their concept of holiness; whether eating, drinking or whatever they are doing, they do it to the glory of Yahvah. On the other hand, some professing believers don't seem to have even a concept or an opinion about holiness.

The Apostle Paul put it well when he said, "...let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of [Yahvah]." (1 Corinthians 1:7b)

#4 EVANGELISM

Some ministries stress the importance of soul-winning and for good reason. Proverbs 11:30 states, "...he that winneth souls is wise." Daniel 12:3 states, "and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Yahshua's last instructions to His disciples included, "Feed my sheep." (John 21:17) Just before He ascended, He told them to go and teach all nations the things that He had taught them. Among the various types of evangelism are: jail ministry, foreign missions, street ministry, and youth ministry, to name a few.

Some evangelists will randomly tell people that Yahvah loves them, which is sometimes an appropriate message but not always the place to begin. "Repent and believe the gospel" is the most common biblical pattern for evangelism. Some ministers travel from city to city, introducing people to the Savior; but often there is no follow-up discipleship to help converts endure to the end.

The key thing to remember is that you can't share something you don't have. If your cup is not running over, you'll have nothing to share. Yet, if we have all the other pillars and fail to erect this one, our building will be in vain. I believe there are Spirit-filled, commandment keeping, holy brethren who have hope for their lost brothers and sisters because they remember that they, too, were once lost without hope. I also pray that those who lack the fundamentals of the faith but have a heart for evangelism will be aware of the missing elements of their ministry so they can fully equip people to produce fruit for the kingdom.

FOUNDATION

Now what do these four pillars sit on? A foundation of course: the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, the most important being Yahshua, our Messiah. The cement of the foundation is the fear of Yahvah—a holy, healthy, motivating fear—which is the beginning of all wisdom. (Proverbs 9:10) Yahshua said to fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. (Matthew 10:28) Paul said to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12) King David said to rejoice with trembling. (Psalm 2:11) The author of

Hebrews says to fear lest we come short of entering into His rest. (Hebrews 4:1) Those who get victory over the beast will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, asking, "Who shall not fear Thee?" (Revelation 15:3-4)

The fear of Yahvah displaces the fear of man. Fear of man weakens our foundation and erodes the pillars of our faith. Peer pressure puts a kink in commandment-keeping. Caving into criticism can quench the fire of the Holy Spirit. Worrying about the opinions of others will lead you to be conformed to the world instead of to Yahvah's standard of holiness. Fear of rejection will stifle your outreach.

The person who loves Yahvah as the Torah says—with all his heart, mind, soul and strength—will be receptive to His Holy Spirit, leading him to define and apply scriptural holiness, which gives him something to share and authority to convey that message in such a way that it cannot be ignored.