

The UNION

Get Ready to Meet the King!

God Calls His Church to
Truth, Faith and Holiness

2019

Joan H. Richardson

The UNION

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by Joan H. Richardson

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CHAPTER 11

Where's the End Line?

⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised *nor* uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. (Colossians 3:5-11 NKJV) [*Christ is that Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17)* He is our Source from the Father who unites us in His Spirit.]

Jesus didn't extend forgiveness, mercy, and grace for us to return to slavery. Our goal is to love and forgive one another as God in Christ loves and forgives us. Whereas the commandment tells us to obey and honor our parents; through Jesus Christ, we also love them with His compassion and forgiveness.

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "*Honor your father and mother,*" which is the first commandment with promise: ³ "*that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.*" (Ephesians 6:1-3 NKJV)

What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "*You shall not covet.*" (Romans 7:7 NKJV)

We must not covet; as Yeshua H'Meshiach, we're generous and happy for those who prosper. We discipline our hearts by

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generosity. We go the extra mile, giving our lives and our goods to benefit others. We enjoy freedom from sin, exceedingly better than the law if His Spirit lives in us:

³ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

⁵ For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

⁶ For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Romans 8:3-9)

When we consider the following passage, it becomes clear: the Law was the schoolmaster of the Jew:

²⁴ Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school master. ²⁶ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (Galatians 3:24-27)

The regulations were “weak and beggarly” because they held men in bondage, never promising them freedom from sin:

⁹ But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? ¹⁰ Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. ... ³¹ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. (Galatians 4:9-10, 31) [The law here refers to external works, not moral behavior.]

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Yom Kippur reminds the Jews of their sins and is their most sacred day of the year. By one holy Sacrifice, the Savior has sanctified believers forever, setting us free from regulations by establishing an altogether *new covenant*:

10 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. ² For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. ³ But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.
(Hebrews 10:1-4 NKJV) [Hence, they were repeatedly offered.]

Are we aware of the sanctification process in our own lives, or have we turned back to the shadows of this temporal world? The Jew who turns to Yeshua must step out in faith; he won't lose his inheritance unless he refuses to live by faith. Clinging to the old covenant of regulations and ordinances, he will certainly lose what he thinks he has. We cannot turn away from grace, expecting grace. The grace of God strengthens us if we fall, but an affinity with the broken covenant will break our relationship with the new one. (See Jer. 31:31-32)

Discerning the Word

Consider the following Scripture: *These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat: And whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it is unclean unto you. (Deut. 14:9-10)* Since this is a fleshly commandment, it has passed away. Now we may eat shrimp scampi or lobster Newburg. It is no longer a sin since the nations have received the grace of God through Yeshua, and Jews and gentiles are made one in Him.

Would eating shrimp scampi cause our hearts to despise others? Then it should not be against our conscience to eat it, but the Jew who keeps kosher, thinking it makes him holier than the man who does not, separates himself from converted gentiles who are his brothers; being under the law, he is unjustified; he

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returns to the displeasure of God: *for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.* (See Gal. 2:16)

Can we walk after the flesh and not sin? Are we hypocrites? No, but we establish the moral laws by obedience to His Spirit. If He is not in our hearts, however, we don't belong to Christ; then we aren't His sheep, and God is not our Father. How can we rectify that? only by faith in the life of His Son.

¹⁸ And He said to them, "Are you also as lacking in understanding? Don't you realize that nothing going into a man from the outside can defile him? ¹⁹ For it doesn't go into his heart but into the stomach and is eliminated." (As a result, He made all foods clean.)

(Mark 7:18-19 HCSB) ["Kosher" has to do with foods; it's carnal, fleshly, not spiritual. Now all foods are clean because we are all Israel who believe and abide in Messiah Yeshua.]

Now let's suppose the Ten have passed away: that "*You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery.*" have passed away. *You shall not steal.* would no longer be valid. If such things were true, we may have an affair with someone's mate; or we may murder and not sin by breaking the law of God since it no longer exists. (See Deut. 5:17-19 NIV)

God made moral laws to teach us His righteousness; the Holy Spirit doesn't dismiss them. When we seek the kingdom of God and the will of Christ; we walk after Him, and our obedience to His commandments confirms we are His, free from our sins by activating our faith in His words. We keep His commands by faith in Yeshua who kept them and ordered us to follow Him for the full assurance of our salvation. Being established in the Word by His Spirit is what matters most; our obedience to His commands is the witness of His Spirit in us. (See Rom. 3:21-22)

If obedience is a product of our faith in His strength, then the goodness in us is due to His presence in us; we are not alone. If we are unaware of Him, by casting our cares on Him, we'll hear Him in our quietness. Contrary to popular thought, the only way to be filled is to be emptied of one's own will. By our will, we strain to achieve His righteousness, but never can. When we die to ourselves, we surrender for Him to perform through us, and He begins to take over until He fills us. (See Rom 12:1-2)

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Our Jewish Roots

⁹ Does this blessedness *come* upon the circumcised *only*, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

¹⁰ How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. (Romans 4:9-10 NKJV)

¹³ For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, ¹⁵ because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

¹⁶ Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ¹⁷ (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; ¹⁸ who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." (Rom. 4:13-18 NKJV; cf. Gen 15:5, 17:4-6, 22:17)

By faith, Abram was counted righteous *before* the seal of circumcision. When he acted on his faith, he fulfilled the earlier Word that had imputed righteousness to him. Consistently, faith must activate our obedience to lead us into His holiness:

¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified

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by works, and not by faith only.

²⁵ Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:19-26 NKJV)

What an enlightening passage! *A man is justified by works, not by faith alone!* Works are either of the flesh or of the Spirit; the righteous works of the Holy Spirit justify us, but the righteous works of the flesh are unclean to God. The question is, “Do we work, or do we yield to obey the Lord?” Led by His Spirit, if we bear fruit by yielding to His will, we’re His sons. (See Rom. 8:14)

A common teaching is that Abram was credited as righteous by faith alone, period. That disregards much of Romans; James discloses, Abraham's faith was credited as righteousness before the accreditation was *fulfilled*. His later *actions perfected* his earlier faith by offering Isaac as a sacrifice; his faith in action fulfilled the scripture. Do we *act* like we believe God, or not?

Consider this: even devils believe about Jesus. They believe He is the only begotten Son of God, born of a virgin, who died to save sinners and rose from the grave; they are certain He saves believers and will return to earth for saints. What they believe, however, is to no avail since they remain slaves of their father the devil. But we say, “Christ has set us free from our sins,” and we behave like we believe it, or is the devil still our father?

If we put ourselves under the law, we are convicted as sinners, still walking after the strength of our flesh. Conversely, if we practice sin, we put ourselves under the judgment of the law again. This brings tormenting fear of condemnation along with guilt, which convict us to confess our sin and repent. But if we will not turn to God, we’ll lose all that we’ve presumed is ours. We have been warned: Do not cleave to sin.

If a sin ensnares us, then the law condemns us; i.e., the law judges our wrongdoing, though not eternally—unless we will not repent. Repentance and faith in Christ correct and cleanse our ways, freeing us from sin and death. (See Gal. 2:11) God knows each heart, but sin must not master us. (See Gen. 4:7)

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Yeshua prayed for the union of Jews and gentiles as a sign to the world that He is Messiah, and that the God of Israel is God of all:

²⁰ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may know that You sent Me. (John 17:20-21 NKJV) – Jesus

Jesus reprov'd the Laodiceans because their complacency gave them an arrogant sense of security. The same presumption is characteristic of many American churches today:

¹⁴ And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

¹⁵ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. (Revelation 3:14-16) – Jesus [As firstborn from the dead, Christ is the first new man of the new creation.]

The Council of Laodicea created Canon Fifty-nine,³⁶ which omitted the book of *Revelation* from the Bible! They failed the test of the Word:

² Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. ... ⁵ I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. ⁶ If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. ⁸ Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (John 15:2, 5-8) [First, angels will gather withered branches to burn them. We bear fruit in Messiah by His faith.]

⁵ And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. ⁶ Whosoever abideth in him

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sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. (1 John 3:5-6) [Living by faith, we live by His Holy Spirit, empowering us to stop practicing sin.]

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16 NKJV)

The Engraving

An engraver doesn't erase his sketch but enhances it. If the Ten Commandments sketch righteousness in our hearts, then the Spirit elaborately completes the work with His Signet, impressed on our souls.

By embracing dietary rules, circumcision, or former ordinances and feast days for holiness, men mislead others into bondage with doctrines that divide believers. The truth is in our Savior who abolished these things in His flesh because they divided us, which had been their purpose for centuries until He came to establish a different covenant: one that unites and saves us all by His blood and by His Spirit; making peace on the cross. If we turn from the union for which Christ died, then we turn from the cross of our salvation. This is that important:

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. (Galatians 5:24-26 NIV)

For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. (Romans 8:6)

Moral laws are inscriptions, written in new hearts by a new covenant. As we abstain from hatred and rage, we avoid murder and its emotions and imaginations that would condemn us; by abstaining from covetousness and lust, we avoid thievery, fornication, lawlessness, adultery, and perversions that consume and destroy us.

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¹¹ Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." ... ¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

(Galatians 3:11, 14 NIV)

More than abstentions, we have a commission: Jesus told us to be kind and to emulate Him. His standards are enhanced by the writings in our hearts; they are enriched by the depth of the Scribe's needle as time passes. We enjoy His victories over sin as we journey with Christ in His Spirit.

The vocabulary of God is living and active: His words, *have faith*, and *believe*, are living and active also. The Jews agree that entering Shabbat is the deliberate daylong cessation of work on the particular day of rest. The greater rest is our abandonment to God as living sacrifices for the Holy Spirit to command.

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2 NIV)

The letter to the Hebrew believers mentions the rest in which no man works, the surrender of the soul to the will of God:

⁹ There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

¹⁰ For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His.

¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:9-11 NKJV)

His scourging healed us; His death destroyed the body of our flesh; His crucified flesh removed all carnal ordinances. His torn body was the curtain that hid the holiest place in the temple, torn top to bottom, removing the partition between Jew and gentile. His blood washed away our sins, and His soul took our guilt far away. *Yet it pleased ADONAI to bruise Him. He caused Him to*

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suffer. If He makes His soul a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the will of ADONAI will succeed by His hand. (Is. 53:10 TLV) His Spirit equips us to enter His righteousness, rising in glory, living by faith in the truth.

6 We then, as workers together *with Him* also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.² For He says:

*“In an acceptable time I have heard you,
And in the day of salvation, I have helped you.”*

Behold, now *is* the accepted time; now *is* the day of salvation. (2 Corinthians 6:1-2 NKJV; cf. Isaiah 49:8)

7 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
(2 Corinthians 7:1 NKJV)

Our Redemption

Holiness is the purity of God, the fire of truth, the empowerment from heaven. Father seals us as His own with His holiness in clay containers, our bodies. Neither cherubim nor seraphim can look at God, but we will see Him face-to-face. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (See Mat. 5:8)* He makes us His children who walk in His Spirit. The faults we have today will be gone tomorrow because God is able to make us holy!

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with

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joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.
(1 Peter 1:3-9 NKJV)

He not only washed away our sins but went the extra mile when His soul received our guilt, and the Father rejoiced in His act of propitiation. We reciprocate by faith in Him; we obey His commandments, proving our love. If we falter, we repent and confess our sin; then we approach Him with renewed confidence, living by faith in His power to deliver us:

⁵ Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, (Jude 5-6 NASB)

¹⁸ Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. ... ^{19c} even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. ²⁰ For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. ²¹ What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. ²² But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:18, 19c-23)

We have the right to become the children of God, created in His likeness, in true holiness—how high a calling! He doesn't command us to be more than He can perform within us; perfect holiness is our goal. We will reach the finish line at last, and the wonderful thing is, our Father will be there, cheering us on!

¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.
(Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV) – Yeshua at His ascension

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²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ Whom God hath set forth to *be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ²⁶ To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.
(Roman 3:24-26)

³ His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. ⁴ By these He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4 HCSB)

Our ungodliness led us to despair, but He drew us out of despondency into this phenomenal experience of our great hope:

¹⁷ Fools, because of their rebellious way,
And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.
¹⁸ Their soul abhorred all kinds of food,
And they drew near to the gates of death.
¹⁹ Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;
He saved them out of their distresses.
²⁰ He sent His word and healed them,
And delivered *them* from their destructions.
²¹ Let them give thanks to the LORD for His
lovingkindness,
And for His wonders to the sons of men!
²² Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And tell of His works with joyful singing.
(Psalm 107:17-22 NASB)

The Abundant Life

YHWH gives us an abundant life in His Holy Spirit that can't be explained to the carnal man but is evidenced by His radiant life within us. How can we escape if we neglect the Holy Spirit who would fill us with the presence of the risen Messiah—if we were only willing to trust and obey! Has the church been led astray by teachers who have chosen the fork in the road?

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“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly. (John 10:10 NKJV)

Have we, with all our hearts, desired the kingdom of God to be established within us, or have we been wanting the riches and pleasures of this earth as a backup plan? A double-minded man vacillates in all his ways, but the Lord who searches the intentions of every heart also knows the thoughts of every mind. *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. (Jas. 4:8)*

We must embrace Jesus and leave our “possessions” behind. Nothing else is consequential but knowing the crucified One. There comes a time in every life when the choice must be made: will it be the Savior or this world?

We must not assume we know another man's heart. Only each individual knows his own life's journey; nobody else is competent to know him as he knows himself. We make false judgments when we think others are like we are; our judgment falls on us who judge ourselves in others. The people we think we know best, we often understand the least. Since we haven't lived in their skin, it's foolish to think we understand their suffering, their joy, or their experience; our empathy has its limitations. At best, we can be a concerned and faithful friend. *Who knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? (See 1 Cor. 2:11)*

⁵⁴ He went to His hometown and began to teach them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “How did this wisdom and these miracles come to Him? ⁵⁵ Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't His mother called Mary, and His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶ And His sisters, aren't they all with us? So where does He get all these things?” ⁵⁷ And they were offended by Him.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his household.” ⁵⁸ And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief. (Matthew 13:54-58 HCSB)

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¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but it is God's power to us who are being saved. ¹⁹ For it is written:

**I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and I will set aside the understanding
of the experts.** (1 Corinthians 1:18-19 HCSB) cf. Is 29:14

Unlike all others, the Judeo-Christian faith confesses God has a Son. (See 2 Sam. 7:14; Is. 9:6, 7:14; Ps.. 2) By faith in His words, we receive the Jewish Son of God who gave His innocent life as a substitute for all who would believe in Him, even for the nations [gentiles]. (See Is. 53) This was the faith of those who foresaw the covenant of the Savior, their King. (Jer. 31:31-34) The record of the Son of God is contained throughout the Hebrew Tenakh, and all who search its words diligently with an open and honest heart will find Him.

Everything made of flesh has a carnal nature in it, including the brain, the figurative "lump of dough," as Paul said. (1 Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 5:9) Receiving the Scriptures into our hearts by faith, we renew our minds as the old covenant disappears for all who live by the Spirit, not the flesh.