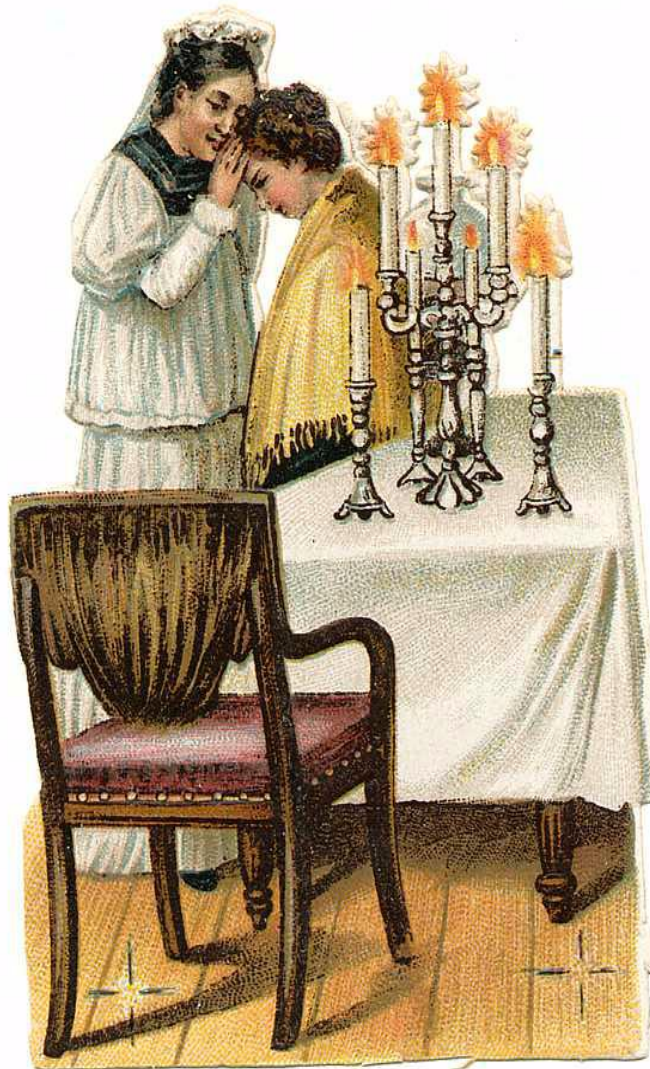


# Wearing Fringes

*Are they for believers today?*



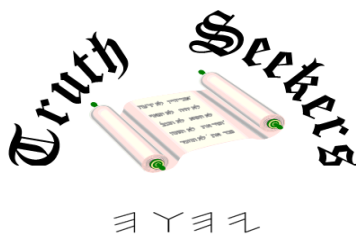
Larry and June Acheson

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# Wearing Fringes:

*Are they for believers today?*

*by Larry and June Acheson*

## I. May We Pick and Choose the Laws We Obey?

One thing we hopefully remember from the history of the nation of Israel is that Yahweh did not back off when it came to letting His people know what He expected of them. Because we know that Yahweh never changes (Malachi 3:6), we likewise know that He has the same expectations for His people today. You either obey Him or you disobey Him: It's your choice. Yahweh, through His servant Moses, made it crystal clear that when you obey Him, blessings come. When you *disobey*, curses come. A good chapter to read to get the gist of this truth is the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, a portion of which is displayed below:

### Deuteronomy 28:1-6

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Yahweh thy Almighty, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that Yahweh thy Almighty will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy Almighty.

Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

To many, the commandment to wear fringes is one of the “least” of the commandments, and is therefore not all that important to *them*.

Do not all of us want to experience the blessings listed above? I want to be blessed, and I'm sure you feel the same way. I could have continued with several other verses from this particular passage in Deuteronomy 28, but hopefully you get the idea! There are blessings in store for those who obey! The key word here is *obey*. The blessings are bestowed upon those who *obey*! It says in verse one: “**IF** thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Yahweh thy Almighty, to **OBSERVE** and to **DO all** His commandments...” He tells us we must **DO** what He says ... we are obligated to **OBEY** Him and do (perform) **ALL** of His commandments! Furthermore, just in case someone might happen to take the notion that we can “pick and choose” which of Yahweh's commandments to obey and which of His commandments *not* to obey, Yahweh concludes in verse 14, “*And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.*”

We should want the “berakah” — the blessings. And how do we obtain blessings? By obeying Yahweh!

Clearly, Yahweh intends for His people to obey Him implicitly, not wavering between deciding whether or not to keep certain of His commandments! If we choose to go *against* anything He tells us to do, then we simultaneously choose to *disobey* Him. It is when we choose to disobey Him that blessings stop and the curses begin. Let's continue reading in Deuteronomy 28, but let's skip over to verse 15:

**Deuteronomy 28:15-20**

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy Almighty, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.

Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy cattle, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

Yahweh shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken Me.

The word translated “blessing” in Deuteronomy 28 is word #1293 in *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, and is pronounced “berakah.” It literally means “benediction or prosperity,” which indeed is the same as a blessing. Interestingly, the word for blessing in Hebrew comes from word #1288 [barak], which means to *kneel*. How appropriate it is when we pray to Yahweh that we *bless Yahweh*, and that we bless Him while we pray on our *knees*. ***We should always “berakah” Yahweh!*** Again, to “berakah” Yahweh means to “bless” Yahweh! And if we honor Him by obeying His every word, He will in turn “berakah” US!

The word translated “curse” in Deuteronomy 28 is the Hebrew word “qelalah.” This word is word #7045 in *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, and means “vilification.” What is a “vilification,” anyway? Well, a vilification is an English word that means to “make cheap, to degrade.” Certainly when our lives are *degraded*, when everything we own is *degraded* and made cheap, this is *not* a blessing. This is *not* a good thing, it is a *bad* thing. It is a curse! Do we want “berakah” in our lives or do we want “qelalah”? We should want the “berakah” — the blessings. And how do we obtain blessings? By obeying Yahweh!

The question of obedience, therefore, is not the issue; rather, it is a question of, “Where do we draw the line between what Yahweh wanted the Israelites to do and what He expects of His people today?”

I could write a treatise enjoining all of us to obey Yahweh, and I would probably get no disagreement, at least not in the presence of most Sabbathkeepers. In fact, I have heard many sermons from Sundaykeeping preachers with similar messages — that if we are to expect to be *blessed* by Yahweh, we must *obey* Yahweh. The message of obedience is a thread that is woven throughout *all* who believe in a Creator, whether we worship on Saturday or on Sunday. If we were to take a poll of all churchgoers, asking them if we should obey or disobey whatever the Creator says, I believe the vast majority would agree that we should *obey* the Creator.

Obedience is, after all, a New Testament teaching *as well as* an Old Testament teaching. Are you familiar with Acts 5:32? You may recall that in Acts chapter 5 the high priest and his followers had Peter and the other apostles arrested and thrown into prison. During the night, though, the angel of Yahweh

released them from prison, and told them to go to the Temple to teach the people. Again, they were brought before the high priest, who said something like, “Didn’t we tell you not to teach in that name?” *What was the Apostle Peter’s response to that question?*

He defiantly stated, in Acts 5:29, “We ought to obey *Yahweh* rather than *men!*”

Then notice what he said in verse 32: “And we are *witnesses* of these things! And *is also* the Holy Spirit, which Yahweh hath given to them that **OBEY HIM!**”

So the importance of obedience to our Creator is not confined to “Old Testament” believers! It is incumbent upon “New Testament believers” to obey *also!* Hence, the debate that rages between Sabbathkeepers and non-Sabbathkeepers isn’t whether or not we should *obey* the Creator, but rather it is, “Exactly *which rules* does the Creator want us to obey?” Non-Sabbathkeepers believe that obedience to the fourth commandment is no longer binding upon believers. They teach that the fourth commandment was “done away” when Yeshua died on the tree. Sabbathkeepers, on the other hand, believe that the commandment to remember the Sabbath day remained “status quo,” continuing on through New Testament times, well beyond the death and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. They do *not* believe it was “done away.” The question of obedience, therefore, is not the issue; rather, it is a question of “where do we draw the line between what Yahweh wanted the Israelites to do and what He expects of His people today?” In other words, “What rules applied back then, but are no longer necessary?”

In this “topsy-turvy” world we live in, many people are in fact doing things exactly the *opposite* from what we are told to do in Scripture. For example, we are plainly told in Scripture that it is *okay* to *mention* the name of our Creator, the name “Yahweh” (Is. 26:13), yet we are commonly taught by men that it is *wrong* to do so.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, we are plainly told in Scripture that it is *wrong* to call upon the names of heathen deities (Ex. 23:13), yet when we call upon our Creator by the name or title “God,” that is *exactly* what we do.<sup>2</sup> And man teaches us that it is okay to refer to the Almighty with this term. In other words, it is *okay* to do what Scripture tells us *not* to do, but it is wrong to do what Scripture plainly tells us we *should* do.

Does this make any sense? Again, we seem to be living in a “topsy-turvy” world. *How can we “break the cycle” of not doing what Yahweh says to do and doing what He says not to do?* We can only break that cycle by repenting of our sins, turning to Yahweh for forgiveness, asking for His mercy, and then determining to do our best to not go against His commands any more.

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<sup>1</sup> Yahweh (Heb. יהוה) is the name that our Creator gave to Himself, which He revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:13-16. We address our reasons for calling on the name *Yahweh* in our study titled [Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones...But Names Will Never Hurt Me!](#) Judaism’s *Ineffable Name Doctrine* prohibits speaking the Tetragrammaton; in 2008, Catholicism officially joined this prohibition, directing that, “... in liturgical celebrations, in songs and prayers the name of God in the form of the tetragrammaton YHWH is neither to be used or pronounced.”

<sup>2</sup> For confirmation that *God* is the name of a heathen idol, please read the Hebrew text of Isaiah 65:11, where *God* is presented as an idol whose worship is condemned by Yahweh. This name is left out of nearly every translation of Isaiah 65:11 that we have examined. We invite you to read our study [God’s Identity According to Ancient Hebrew Scholars](#) for additional information, including our responses to skeptics.

## II. Has the Commandment to Wear Tassels Been “Done Away”?

Up to this point we have lightly covered a few key areas illustrating that just because we can all agree that obedience is important doesn't mean that we will agree on what we should obey. For example, Sundaykeepers don't seem to grasp the necessity of obeying the fourth commandment in these days. Some Sabbathkeepers do not understand the need to observe the feasts ordained by Yahweh. Many Sabbathkeepers are content to refer to the Creator by a name universally recognized as being false, and they consider those who refer to Him by the name He gave to Himself as being *overly zealous*, if not *completely bonkers*. Certainly, if we can agree that we should all do the will of the Father we need to take our eyes off of what those around us do and focus on what *He* says to do.

One commandment that is often ignored and even taught as being a “sin” to obey is the one pertaining to the wearing of tassels on our garments.

We read earlier that Yahweh expects us to obey *all* of His commandments, yet we have likewise established that man tends to draw the line as to which ones he feels apply to believers in today's age. One commandment that is often ignored and even taught as being a *sin* to obey is the one pertaining to the wearing of tassels on our garments. Let's read about this command as given in the torah. It is found in Numbers 15, displayed below:

### Numbers 15:37-41

And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying,

Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a-whoring.

That ye may remember, and do all My commandments, and be SET APART unto your Almighty.

I am Yahweh your Almighty, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your Almighty: I am Yahweh your Almighty.

The command to make and wear fringes is clearly stated. The children of Israel are required by Yahweh to wear fringes in the corners of their garments. This commandment is even *repeated* in Deuteronomy 22:

### Deuteronomy 22:12

Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself.

This mandate is ignored by the vast majority of people with whom we have associated over the years, including Sabbathkeepers and Sacred Name folk. Yet we have found that these same people normally stand by the claim that **none** of Yahweh's laws have been “done away,” which must of necessity include *this* law. We need to examine why so many believers do not see the need to obey the above commandment in these last days and determine if their reasons are legitimate.

Not only should obeying this command remind us to obey Yahweh's commandments, but we need to remember that this command *itself*, and *by itself* IS one of those commandments! The question we should be asking ourselves is, "*What are we going to do about it?*"

King David was inspired to write, "*Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is truth!*" (Psalms 119:142). If we choose to ignore the law pertaining to the tassels, we simultaneously opt to eliminate a portion of Yahweh's truth from our lives. We shouldn't need to be reminded to obey Yahweh's commandments, but just in case nothing else reminds us to obey, OBEYING THIS COMMANDMENT should do it. Not only should obeying this command remind us to obey Yahweh's commandments, but we need to remember that this command *itself*, and *by itself* IS one of those commandments! The question we should be asking ourselves is, "*What are we going to do about it?*"

**If this is one of those commandments that hasn't been "done away," then the responsibility falls upon us to obey it.**

King David was also inspired to write the following: "*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on His law he meditates day and night.*"<sup>3</sup> When we meditate on Yahweh's law, do we separate from that law one or more portions as not being "for us today"? No, we make no separations. Yahweh's law is as all-encompassing and sufficient in its entirety today as it was during the days of King David. Yahweh does not intend for us to decide which portions apply today and which ones do not. They ALL apply! Once, while discussing the law pertaining to the tassels with a man, he commented, "I don't need to wear the tassels because I don't need anything to remind me to keep His commandments! I meditate on His law day and night!"

My response was, "Then do you meditate on **THIS** law (commanding the children of Israel to wear tassels)? You see, the law pertaining to the tassels is *one* of those laws you're supposed to meditate on! Are you going to obey it or not?" He did not answer my question. How would *you* answer it? Yahweh does not add stipulations that we only need to wear tassels if we should happen to catch ourselves forgetting His law. He tells us to wear them so we can be certain to obey Him as a *preventative measure*. Yahweh doesn't want us to wait and put on fringes "after the fact" of disobedience has occurred. His intention is that we put them on to help ensure that a "*zero amount of disobedience*" occurs!

If this is one of those commandments that hasn't been "done away," then the responsibility falls upon us to obey it. I am aware that some groups teach that this is a commandment that pertains only to the men. However, if we re-examine Numbers 15:38, we don't read anything about the "*men* of Israel," but rather the "*children* of Israel," which is a reference to both *males* and *females*. Yahweh directs *all of His people*, both men and women, to wear tassels.

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<sup>3</sup> Psalms 1:1-2.

### III. Did Yeshua Wear Fringes on His Garments?

**T**he word translated “fringe” in Numbers 15 is word #6734 in *Strong’s* [צִיצִית], and is pronounced “Tsee-Tseeth.” It is a tassel, and in its original sense means a floral or wing-like projection.

The Hebrew word translated “fringe” in Deuteronomy 22 is word #1434 in *Strong’s* [גָּדֵל], and is used in the sense of *twisting*. This word is pronounced “ghed-eel” in Hebrew and it literally means “thread, i.e., a tassel or festoon.”

**Even the book of Matthew provides evidence that Yeshua obeyed this commandment.**

Some have questioned as to whether or not Yeshua wore the fringes. Well, remember the story of the woman who was healed by touching the hem of His garment? This story can be found in Matthew 9:20-22:

**Matthew 9:20-22**

And behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment:

For she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.

But Yeshua turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, ‘Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.’ And the woman was made whole from that hour.

Could it be possible that this word HEM might refer to Yeshua’s wearing the fringes, the “tsee-tseeth”? Interestingly, in the Hebrew Matthew that was critiqued by Spanish author and physician Shem-Tob ben-Isaac ben-Shaprut in the 14th century (known as the *Shem-Tob Version*<sup>4</sup>), the same word that is rendered “hem” in the Greek texts is rendered “tsee-tseeth” (צִיצִית), the very same Hebrew word that is used in Numbers 15. So yes, even from the book of Matthew we find evidence that Yeshua obeyed this commandment. There really shouldn’t be any question as to whether or not Yeshua wore tassels; we know that He lived a sinless life, but if He had not worn tassels, then He would have disobeyed the commandments found in Numbers 15:37-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12.

**Aren’t we supposed to follow the example of Yeshua? Did He obey this command?**

I remember a discussion we had with a certain minister several years ago concerning whether or not we should observe the feast days of the “Old Testament.” He was clearly opposed to observing them, and portrayed them as being a part of the temple services, which are no longer carried out. Hence, as he explained it, the destruction of the temple spelled the end of the necessity to observe the feasts.

At one point in our discussion I mentioned that the “bottom line” for all believers is that we follow the example of the Messiah. The man nodded his head in agreement and said, “You are right.” Suddenly it popped into my mind to ask the minister if Yeshua observed the feasts.

<sup>4</sup> Information taken from the *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, by George Howard, professor of religion at the University of Georgia, Mercer University Press, 1995, p. xi.



“Yes,” he said. Then he changed the subject.

I think we can ask each other the same question with regard to wearing the tassels, or the “tsee-tseeth.” Aren’t we supposed to follow the example of Yeshua? Did He obey this command?

The answer is “yes.”

Did Yeshua come to destroy the law? I think many of us have *memorized* Matthew 5:17-19 by now, so we know He *taught* that we aren’t even supposed to THINK He had come to destroy the law, of which the commandment concerning the fringes is a part.

I hope we can all see the truth about this matter concerning the fringes — that they are commanded to be worn by Yahweh. To many, it is one of the “least” of the commandments, and is therefore not all that important to *them*. For those who are of this persuasion, I suggest re-reading Matthew 5:19, shown below:

**Matthew 5:19**

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Yeshua did not treat this command as one of the “least” commandments. He obeyed it and He is my Example, not those who inform me that all who wear tassels are “in bondage to Mt. Sinai.” More on that teaching later.

**Let’s follow Yeshua’s example of obedience!**

The example set by Yeshua was that of obedience to the Father. Yeshua plainly told us that He did not come to destroy the law, adding that until heaven and earth pass away, not a jot or a tittle will by any means pass from the law till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5:17-18). Has “all been fulfilled”? No, not yet. Therefore, obviously, the law pertaining to the wearing of tassels is still in effect. The Apostle John would encourage us to follow Yeshua’s example in wearing the fringes:

**I John 2:3-6**

And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.  
 He that saith, ‘I know Him,’ and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him!  
 But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of Yahweh perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.  
 He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

Yeshua should be our example. Our goal, our very aim, should be to imitate the lifestyle He lived, follow the example He set, and recognize that He is the only way to the Father. **Let’s follow Yeshua’s example of obedience!**

## IV. Did the Apostle Paul Wear Fringes on His Clothing?

**A**lthough we are not directly informed in the New Testament as to whether or not the Apostle Paul wore fringes on his clothing, we can be certain that he did.

Crucial to our case is the fact that if Paul had not worn fringes on his garments, then he lied in Acts 25:8.

In Acts 25:8, towards the very end of his ministry, Paul made his defense to Festus, the Roman governor of Judea. Paul declared, “I have in no way committed an offense against the *law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against the emperor.*” The key phrase in this often overlooked passage is his testimony that he had not committed an offense against the law of the Jews, which is in reality the law of Yahweh. Had Paul ever broken the Sabbath, then He lied in Acts 25:8. Had he ever eaten pork or other unclean animals, then he lied in Acts 25:8. And crucial to our case is the fact that if Paul had **not** worn fringes on his garments, then he lied in Acts 25:8. Because we trust that the Apostle Paul faithfully performed the mission assigned to him by Yeshua, we are strongly inclined to believe that, indeed, he wore fringes on his garments in accordance with the commandment found in Numbers 15. Furthermore, in those days the fringes were worn in such a fashion as to be easily visible. Had he chosen to not wear them, we can be certain the Jews would have confronted him, demanding an explanation as to why he had chosen to forego obeying that commandment, and there would most certainly be a record of such a confrontation. Instead there is **silence** regarding any such controversy. This silence is telling evidence that nothing in the manner of this law ever changed, and that everything remained “status quo.”

## V. Answers to Objections<sup>5</sup>

For over 20 years, including the year when we originally composed this study, I wore a “tallit katan,” the equivalent of an undershirt with tassels. My reasoning for wearing tassels *under* my garments was to try and not send the wrong message to others. I was aware that some folks regarded those who openly wore tassels as being borderline arrogant and “in your face” with how obedient they were compared to those who didn’t wear them. Wearing tassels under my outer garments allowed me to obey the commandment while simultaneously not flaunting my obedience. To that end, I’m sure the following gentleman was quite surprised that I took exception to an article he composed for his monthly newsletter. Until that time, even though we knew each other fairly well, I don’t think he had any idea of my regard for the law found in Numbers 15:37-41 and Deut. 22:12. Along with his March-April 2000 newsletter, he included a tract titled “Should we Wear Fringes on the Border of our Garments?” Here are some objections that he presented to the wearing of tassels:

1. *Aren’t New Covenant believers already imbued with Yahweh’s Spirit, meaning that the will to obey His laws and be holy are already present in the New Covenant spiritually-minded believer’s heart?*

Our response: What does being “imbued with Yahweh’s Spirit” mean, anyway? Does it mean immunity from temptation, and even immunity from succumbing to that temptation, i.e., SINNING? Obviously not, for even the Apostle Paul, who wrote under the inspiration of Yahweh, ashamedly admitted, *“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but SIN within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but SIN that dwells within me”* (Romans 7:15-20).

Do the Apostle Paul’s words sound like the words of a man who didn’t need reminders to obey Yahweh’s law? ***Absolutely not!***

The only time we would not need a reminder to obey Yahweh’s commandments is when there is no longer any need to obey them.

2. *“In order to understand what YAHWEH had in mind with the fringes, we need to first understand what HE had in mind with the circumcision of the flesh, a token of HIS covenant.”*

We respond: Not so. Nowhere in Yahweh’s word are we offered this explanation of the fringes in relation to anything other than them being a reminder to obey Yahweh’s commandments. The only time we would not need a reminder to obey Yahweh’s commandments is when there is no longer any need to obey them. The issue of circumcision is totally unrelated to the issue of fringes. In fact, any attempt to tie in such laws as the ones pertaining to circumcision and animal sacrifice could be construed as a “red herring argument,” i.e., an attempt to divert our attention from the actual issue at hand.

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<sup>5</sup> The questions/comments addressed in this section are either paraphrased or directly quoted from a tract entitled “Should we Wear Fringes on the Border of our Garments?”, sent with the March-April, 2000 issue of *YEA NEWSLETTER*, published by Yahweh’s Evangelical Assembly, Atlanta, TX.

**THE APOSTLE PAUL CONTINUED FIGHTING AGAINST HIS CARNAL MIND EVEN AFTER HAVING RECEIVED YAHWEH'S SPIRIT.**

3. *“The reason for the fringes with a border cord of blue was so that the carnally minded children of Israel would remember and do all the commandments of YAHWEH, and to be holy to HIM.”*

We reply: The obvious implication here is that there is a difference between true believers of today and the “carnally minded children of Israel” of “Old Testament” times. Yet, once again, let us allow the Apostle Paul to demonstrate that, even beyond the Messiah’s death and resurrection, true believers continue to fight against their “carnal mind”: “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am **carnal**, sold under sin” (Romans 7:14). The Apostle Paul, whom we classify as a “true believer” and servant of Yahweh, was **CARNALLY MINDED**, as were his ancestors, the children of Israel. He continued fighting against this carnal mind even after having received Yahweh’s Spirit. One way to assist our battle against the “carnal mind” is the use of fringes as prescribed and mandated by Yahweh. Prayer is also recommended!

**If anything, wearing the fringes and observing how, even with those reminders we still disobey from time to time ... this fact alone is all the more evidence of how much we truly *do* need the blood of Yeshua to cover our sins.**

4. *“Fringes or tassels are made by the hands of man. Animal sacrifices are made by the hand of man. Fleshly circumcision is made by the hands of man. If you are wearing tassels, have circumcised the flesh, are performing animal sacrifices (including the Passover sacrifice) then you have engendered yourself in bondage to Mount Sinai which is Hagar. You have taken upon yourself the promise that you can perform and fulfill the demands of the covenant. You have fallen from grace because you are saying, in essence, that you do not need the Messiah. You have been deceived by the deceiver. Repent and turn to embrace the Messiah. Place your faith in Him for He is the fulfillment of Yahweh’s promise in the New Covenant.”*

We answer: This man is here telling us that if we have made the decision to obey a certain law, we need to repent of that decision. First of all, it does not seem likely that Yahweh would put a certain law in effect, only to eventually make obedience to that law a sin worthy of repentance, and indicative that the person wearing the fringes has “fallen from grace.” Nor do we comprehend how wearing fringes can be construed as our believing that we do not need the Messiah. It is obvious from history that wearing the fringes only serves as a reminder — it doesn’t mean the wearer won’t “slip up”! If anything, wearing the fringes and observing how, even with those reminders we still disobey from time to time ... this fact alone is all the more evidence of how much we truly *do* need the blood of Yeshua to cover our sins.

**If we must do away with the wearing of fringes simply because it is a commandment of Yahweh that requires the use of hands, then we must do away with every commandment of Yahweh requiring the use of hands.**

Secondly, we must once again address the futility of attempting to tie in circumcision and animal sacrificing as relating to the wearing of tassels. Neither Yahweh nor any of His servants addressed any

type of relationship between these three commands, so why should we take it upon ourselves to do so? On a separate note, we address our understanding of the Passover sacrifice as it relates to believers of today in a separate study titled "[Should We Kill a Lamb for Passover?](#)"

Thirdly, the obvious point about tassels being made by the hands of man is to infer that in the New Covenant we don't need to DO anything at all, for the Messiah "did it all" for us. While we are not trying to imply that any deed we perform will contribute towards our salvation, nevertheless the Apostle James underscores the fact that "just believing" is not enough. He wrote: *"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled;' notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."*

Indeed, if we must do away with the wearing of fringes simply because it is a commandment of Yahweh that requires the use of hands, then we must do away with *every* commandment of Yahweh requiring the use of hands. Perhaps the most significant commandment involving the use of hands is the fourth commandment. According to Exodus 20:9, *"Six days you shall labor and do all your work."* We are commanded to work six days of the week. Performing work requires use of the hands. If we employ the logic of those who teach against wearing tassels (since they are made with hands), then we must also cease from working six days during the week, or else we "engender ourselves in bondage to Mount Sinai."

Has the Feast of Trumpets been "done away with"? Many believe so. While we are not of the same persuasion, nevertheless if it is true that any commandment involving the use of hands is now "done away with" or otherwise set aside, then the Feast of Trumpets would have to be included on that list. According to Leviticus 23:24, this festival is to be "a holy convocation commemorated with trumpet blasts." The only way a trumpet can be blown is by picking it up with one's hands, then holding it in those hands while blowing it.

For the Feast of Tabernacles, it was ordained by Yahweh that it be celebrated by gathering boughs of goodly trees (Lev. 23:40). This, again, can only be accomplished by the use of hands, and any "New Covenant believers" found to be gathering boughs of goodly trees during the Feast of Tabernacles would have to be considered as being "in bondage to Mt. Sinai."

Thus we see how contradictory it is to teach or even imply that commands involving the use of hands separate the "Old Covenant" from the "New Covenant."

Even in the "New Covenant" period, the use of hands is commanded. Aside from the well-known commands to feed and clothe the needy, which is quite difficult to achieve without using our hands, the believers were commanded to "Repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). In order for them to fulfill that command, someone had to make use of his hands in order to immerse each individual in water. We might add to this the fact that, after baptism, there is to be a "laying on of hands" ceremony. Finally the ancients prayed with uplifted hands and the Apostle Paul told Timothy that he desired for men everywhere to pray with uplifted *hands* (I Timothy 2:8). Thus we see how contradictory it is to teach or even imply that commands involving the use of hands separate the "Old Covenant" from the "New Covenant."

5. “Under the New Covenant, we don’t need fringes on our garments to remind us to obey Yahweh’s commandments because, in accordance with Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 8, He has put His law in our inward parts, and has written it in our hearts. He is our mighty one, and we are His people. And we shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know Yahweh’: for we shall all know Him, from the least of us unto the greatest of us, saith Yahweh: for He will forgive our iniquity, and He will remember our sin no more.”

Our response: First of all, if the “New Covenant” that we are supposedly under right now is *truly* in effect, and if it is indeed true that under this New Covenant “they shall teach no more every man his neighbor,” then we can only wonder in amazement as to why the individual making this point saw fit to send us his tract to “prove his point” that we are in bondage to Sinai if we wear fringes. Unless we are mistaken, this tract was sent as a part of a **teaching ministry**, and was designed to “teach us” that it is wrong to wear fringes on our garments. If this “New Covenant” is *truly* in effect, then no one should be teaching others about Yahweh, for we should all be of the same mind.

If Yahweh’s laws are indeed written on our hearts, then the “heart-writing” isn’t doing very much good.

Secondly, if indeed Yahweh’s laws are written on the hearts of all believers today, then there must be *very, very few* true believers left, for some of the most “Yahweh-like” people we know wear fringes, and we are aware of some other non-fringe wearing believers who, while holding leadership positions, were found to be committing some very grievous sins. If Yahweh’s laws are indeed written on our hearts, then the “heart-writing” isn’t doing very much good.

Any faults with the “Old Covenant” were not related to the laws which governed it, for Yahweh’s laws are *perfect* (Psalms 19:7, James 1:25)!

Thirdly, another vital part of the passage found in Hebrews 8 involves the fact that there was something “faulty” with the first covenant, i.e., the “Old Covenant” (Heb. 8:7). We might ask, “What was wrong with it?” Did Yahweh throw in some laws that He shouldn’t have included? Obviously, we know that anything faulty with the first covenant could not have had anything to do with any of Yahweh’s laws. It was the *people* He entrusted those laws to, and the people who had *agreed* to observe them. It is because man is not able to keep Yahweh’s laws that we need Yeshua, but that’s getting off the subject. Suffice it to say that any problems with the “Old Covenant” were not related to the laws which governed it, for His laws are *perfect* (Psalms 19:7, James 1:25)! Let’s not tamper with any of Yahweh’s perfect laws!

## VI. Wearing Tassels: Inside or Out?

**A**s I mentioned previously, for over 20 years, I wore a “tallit katan,” which is the equivalent of an undershirt that has tassels on the four corners. Eventually I began wearing them on my tee shirts. Then in late December 2012, a believer named Carol challenged me on this decision via e-mail exchange. It became a rather intense discussion; Carol very passionately believes that the commandment to wear tassels applies to wearing them on the *outside* of our garments to be seen, not only by the wearer, but by those who may see us from day to day. From Carol’s perspective, wearing tassels under our garments constitutes a misapplication or misunderstanding of the commandment at best and a sin worthy of condemnation at worst. On the other hand, I am persuaded that yes, the commandment was originally given with the understanding that the tassels would be worn on the outside of our garments, even though this is not expressly stated, but wearing them under our garments constitutes obedience to the commandment at best and at worst is better than nothing. When our discussion began, my custom was to wear tassels on my tee shirts; when it ended, I was wearing tassels on the outside of my garments. What led to this decision?

Our discussion began as most discussions do, very innocently. Carol had read a study on our web site that she appreciated and she commented on it, then she invited me to check out her web site, including a special site where she offers special “tassel belts.” One thing led to another and she soon learned that I did not wear tassels on the outside of my garments. Here’s the explanation I gave her:

I do not wear my tzit-tzits on the outside where I work due to the various reactions I have seen to people who dress “differently.” I try to avoid controversy where I work, although some things are made obvious by virtue of my establishing that I am not available for work on the Sabbath, I don’t celebrate X-mas, Halloween, Easter, New Year’s, birthdays, etc. It is sad, but I work closely with a very nice Moslem woman who wears a headcovering. I support her in this, but frankly, (here’s the sad part) she is ridiculed “behind her back” by people who really don’t even want to know why she believes the way she does. All they care about is how “odd” she is.

I am acquainted with Torah-observant folks who feel I should wear my tzit-tzits on the outside 17/7 (the exception being while sleeping, I suppose). That is fine for them. I personally prefer to let people get to know me personally, from the inside out, rather than the outside in, if you catch my drift, and I am not out to convert anyone to my way of living. Once they get to know me, they will learn that I do wear tzit-tzits and if they want to learn more, I am always glad to share what I believe to be true. If we lived in a society where everyone understood at first glance that a person wearing tzit-tzits was someone who strives to obey Torah, that would be different. Rather, we live in a society where many folks think it looks “odd,” but won’t care to ask why you do it, thus making it counter-productive. At least that has been my experience. Others, who wear tzit-tzits, have shared different experiences & reactions. That is fine because we are all different and bring different perspectives to the table, things that work and things that don’t work all that well.

I will say that on the Sabbath day, I usually wear tzit-tzits on the outside because the people we meet with readily understand why we do it.<sup>6</sup>

Carol replied:

*You said, “If we lived in a society where everyone understood at first glance that a person wearing tzit-tzits was someone who strives to obey Torah, that would be different. Rather, we live in a society where many folks think it looks “odd,” but won’t care to ask why you do it, thus making it counter-productive”.*

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<sup>6</sup> From the e-mail I sent to Carol on 12/23/2012.

Those people may not know exactly why you wear them, but the master they are following (Hasatan) DOES know, which is why they react to you the way that they do. If you are a follower of YHVH, then don't you think that you'd be in the devil's crosshairs? Hasatan uses and influences people to do his bidding. He knows that you are a child of YHVH and he's going to do what he can to discourage you from obeying Him and apparently he's succeeding.

Speaking frankly and lovingly, we cannot be in the mindset of "that's fine for them" because this is not about personal preferences. It's about what YHVH has commanded. If they look at you like you're "odd," then praise YHVH because we are to be a "peculiar people." We are to be a separate, holy people which means we act differently, dress differently, think differently etc. and if we do it right, then we are glorifying YHVH! So why should we care about what others think when we know in the end that they are going to perish like the rest of the world? What happened to fearing YHVH who has the power to kill the body and soul? (Matt 10:28) And in this context, it deals with REAL persecution - the kind where you can lose your life, which is much worse than people looking at you strangely or whispering under their breath.

It all comes down to this, do you place a higher importance on Torah or the cares of the world? Yeshua warned that they hated Him and so if we are His talmidim, then the world will hate us. This should bring us comfort in knowing that we are in good company.<sup>7</sup>

Carol made some great points and she even supplied details about standing her ground during two negative experiences with non-Torah observant individuals while out shopping; however, she approached this topic from the perspective that I was deliberately choosing to not obey the commandment. I was compelled to reply:

One important detail that is missing from your e-mail is an explanation from Scripture of how I am sinning by wearing the tzitziyot on my tee shirts instead of on the outside of my clothing. Is there a mandate that they must be worn to be seen by others? The commandment, as I understand it, is intended for the *wearer* to be reminded to obey the commandments, not *heathens*. As you yourself have experienced, wearing tzitziyot in such a way as to be noticed by heathens does not always bring out the best of reactions, and I am persuaded that this is because tassels are *not* for those who are anti-Torah. I can see tassels as only rarely (I'm being lenient) bringing someone to decide to live by Torah standards. So they don't really enhance your relationship with heathens, but they do seem to create a barrier. If I can simultaneously wear tassels and eliminate the relationship barrier, I will do so. Thus, from my perspective, wearing tassels on the outside creates an unnecessary barrier (analogous to Yeshua's warning about casting your pearls before the swine); from your perspective, unless they are worn on the outside, we are somehow disowning the Messiah.<sup>8</sup>

After four years of wearing tassels (*tzitziyot*) on the outside of my garments, I must say that I stand behind the words as expressed above. I ride public transportation to and from work on a daily basis, encountering people from all walks of life, nearly all of whom are strangers. None have ever remarked about the tassels, positively or negatively. Where I currently work, it is not really feasible to forge close relationships with my co-workers, many of whom are either non-believers or casual church-goers with a very liberal approach to current events. Over the course of four years, I can remember two co-workers asking me about why I wear tassels; in both instances, they found it very interesting, but that's as far as it went. I maintain that wearing tassels really doesn't have much of an effect, if any, on non-Torah observant individuals. They are for the *wearer*. I continued:

I understand that you and I approach this matter from a completely different perspective, so I'm not sure how to express to you the fact that I am not afraid of persecution, but at the same time I'm not

<sup>7</sup> From an e-mail that Carol sent me on 12/29/2012.

<sup>8</sup> From an e-mail that I sent Carol on 12/30/2012.



going to invite it if it isn't necessary. In other words, if Yahweh were to say, "Wear tassels to show the heathen that you are a peculiar people," I would not hesitate to wear them on the outside of my clothing. My understanding of the commandment, however, is that the *wearer* is to look upon the tassels and remember to obey Torah. Since heathens literally have nothing about Torah to "remember," this commandment cannot apply to them, so by wearing tassels, I may be inviting trouble when I could have a better opportunity of success by allowing heathens to get to know me from the inside out instead of the outside in.<sup>9</sup>

As I reflect on the discussion that I had with Carol, I feel that her perspective was that unless you interpret Numbers 15:37-41 the way she does, you are disobeying the command and you are denying the Messiah, even though the commandment doesn't expressly state that the tassels had to be worn on the outside. Nevertheless, as I admitted to her more than once, wearing them on the outside is the best way of following through on what the commandment says, primarily because during the time in which that command was given, *everyone* was to do it and *everyone* understood why. Not so today. Nevertheless, it's difficult to get past the original intent, which was to wear tassels on the outside, not underneath our clothes. Carol thus saw the weakness of my argument and addressed it head-on:

Everything that I told you was said out of true concern for you. I can see that you are really angry at what I said but this was not my intention. It's clear that you are set on your beliefs and I normally wouldn't respond to someone who refuses to reevaluate their beliefs for the possibility that they could be wrong so I'm only responding to address your questions as a courtesy.

Num 15:38-40 "Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the **corners of their garments** throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassels of each corner a cord of blue. It shall be a tassel **for you to look at** and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God."

"corners of their garments" - this tells us WHERE to put them. Do a word study on "corner" and you'll see that it means extremity or border of your garment. Same with the "four corners of the earth" which is the outer-most part.

"for you to look at" - this is for you, the wearer to look at. Not for others to look at. It is also NOT a witnessing tool.

It is a physical reminder to obey that which is spiritual i.e. His mitzvot. That which is seen (the natural) is often used to show that which is not seen (the spiritual). Just like wearing a wedding ring - it's a physical sign of something spiritual i.e. your marriage covenant. Baptism (submerging) is a physical, outward sign of a spiritual change.

If you wear your tzitzit tucked inside your clothing, then you cannot "see" them and the command is for you to look at them. They are to be displayed on the extremity of your garment again, to ensure that you can **look at them**. If you choose to wear them on your t-shirt, then that's fine as long as you can see them, as the command states.

You brought up many objections regarding heathens and I'm telling you that they do not factor into this whatsoever. This has nothing to do with what THEY think, how they react, whether or not you build bridges with the heathen or whether you burn them. It doesn't matter whether they know what the tzitzit means or not because it's not for them. It's for you.

I was not trying to put you on a guilt trip. What I said was said out of true concern for you because I see several errors in your reasoning but I only addressed one. I'm not saying that I'm the Grand Puba when it comes to interpreting scripture because I'm not. I have no credentials or initials after

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<sup>9</sup> From an e-mail that I sent Carol on 12/30/2012.

my name. I can admit if I'm wrong on things and in fact love to be shown I'm wrong because that means I'll learn truth. However, I CAN understand the clear meaning of scripture just as its written.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of her great insights, Carol did not prove that wearing tassels tucked inside one's clothing constitutes disobeying the command in Numbers 15:37-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12. Nevertheless, when she expressed understanding the "clear meaning of Scripture just as it's written," I could not argue that wearing tassels on the outside was the clear original intent behind the words and that did it for me. One of my recurring themes has been to "go for the best" and when it comes to Scripture, we should always aim for the original intent, not some modern application. In ancient times, they did not wear tassels under their clothing as a "personal assessment" of how well they had remembered to obey the commandments. They just didn't and I could not ignore this fact. I decided to make a change. Nevertheless, I felt compelled to share with Carol that sometimes circumstances *do* force us to make adjustments:

You approach this matter as though we are living in the same, identical culture as ancient Israel. The fact of the matter is, this culture is vastly different from theirs. In their culture, YHWH was in charge; in our culture, ha Satan is in charge (II Cor. 4:4). That is why, for example, you cannot lawfully stone someone for gathering wood on Shabbat in this day and age. In their culture, when you walked out of the door of your home (or shortly thereafter), you would expect to be warmly greeted by a fellow Torah-observing Israelite. In our culture, you can expect to see (but not necessarily be greeted by) a heathen.

Over time, we know the Israelites abandoned their faith in YHWH and they were eventually overcome by the enemy and taken captive, resulting in what is commonly known as the dispersion or Diaspora. Later, the same thing happened to Judea, but many of them returned to the land after 70 years.

Later still, Antiochus Epiphanes and his marauders massacred Jews by the thousands, focusing especially on those who refused to abandon Torah observance. Many Jews went into hiding to save their lives and the lives of their families. I understand that in today's culture, most people have no idea what the wearing of tassels is all about, but back then it is likely that tassels were an immediate signal pointing to an individual openly identifying himself or herself as one who refused to abandon Torah. Knowing this to be true, knowing the risks involved in openly identifying yourself in this way, would you, even then, advise me that I am "disowning Yeshua" for not wearing my tassels on the outside? This is a question that really does need to be addressed. The way I worded this question in my previous e-mail was, "Knowing this potential danger, would you dress your children for school in garments having tzitzit on the outside?" Would you?<sup>11</sup>

In a previous e-mail I had also shared how Jewish soldiers would hide from Antiochus Epiphanes' army in caves on the day of the weekly Sabbath instead of fighting on that day. When the news of a band of soldiers' hiding place was discovered, then they were massacred on the Sabbath because they would not fight, the Jews agreed that going forward, they would at least defend themselves on Shabbat. They made an adjustment based on circumstances. I am persuaded that we should not be ignorant of the various potential circumstances with which we all may one day be faced. To answer my own question above, if I had children that I had to send outside for any reason, but I knew that wearing tassels on the outside of their garments would make them a target, I would seek to make any adjustments that would simultaneously not constitute a violation of the commandment. Maybe there's a reason for why Yahweh didn't specifically mandate that tassels be worn on the outside to be seen by others? He could easily have included such a contingency. Nevertheless, when we come back to the aspect of original intent, I am

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<sup>10</sup> From an e-mail that Carol sent me on 12/30/2012.

<sup>11</sup> From an e-mail that I sent Carol on 12/30/2012.

inclined to agree with Carol: Tassels (*tzitzyt*) were understood to be worn on the outside of the Israelites' garments. In conceding this understanding to Carol, I let her know that going forward I would be wearing tassels on the outside of my garments. I also shared the following:

Carol, I do believe the best way to obey the commandment of Numbers 15:38-40 is by wearing tassels on the outside of our garments. That is not in question. I have, for all these years, opted for a suitable alternative that will simultaneously allow me to meet others on their level. I know that, going forward, this will no longer be the case.

Thankfully, today we at least live in a culture in which most heathens will not want to kill you for your faith, but at the same time, knowing the "box" that I will be relegated to before even being given an opportunity to explain myself, is not something I look forward to. It is regrettable that I cannot walk in an environment where other like-minded believers will have the same Torah-based mind set that I do.<sup>12</sup>

Although Carol was pleased with my decision to wear tassels on the outside of my garments, she wasn't satisfied that I was doing it out of a 100% solid decision to obey the command no matter what. What she apparently needed to hear from me was a concession that the only proper way of obeying the commandment is to wear tassels on the outside of our garments. Her impression was that I was more afraid of what men may think than I am of what Yahweh thinks:

I don't mean to beat a dead horse and I don't want to but I feel I have to tell you that based on everything you've said, it looks to me like you're afraid of what people think of you and you are willing to forego the commandment and do it properly. Really, it doesn't matter what I think because I think I said it before, you have to answer to God yourself. And so will we all. What I'm trying to say is that I don't want you to reply, and have fellowship if you stand by everything you said. And it's not just you, I feel this way towards everyone. There are Messianics I've run into who hate Israel, or think they are "true Israel" because they are African American. These people I will not tolerate being around and this is only a couple of examples.<sup>13</sup>

I only include the above aspect of Carol's contention because it mirrors similar assessments that I have heard from others tassel-wearers when they found out I was wearing them under my garments: that I'm afraid of what others may think of me. To that perspective, I offered the following lengthy response:

Carol, may I please share a personal perspective to hopefully help you to better understand my feelings? I personally believe that if I am so blessed as to make it into the Kingdom, I will find myself shocked at those who also make it in. This is because I am persuaded that our Heavenly Father is so abundant in mercy and love that no human can come close to comprehending it. I have made the acquaintance of so many kindhearted, yet Torah-deficient, people over the years. I have known both single mothers and single fathers who were likewise raised in single-family homes, struggling to bring up their children in a cold world that really doesn't care whether or not they make it. These parents do not know much about the Bible (after all, they had no motivation to do so from the day they were born), but they nevertheless try to instill basic Scriptural values into their children. My heart still goes out to the single mother who was working a dead-end job just trying to keep a roof over their heads and who was still managing to give me a kind smile as she told me of how she had to bury her son a few months earlier. I know she is just one of many others and while I am by no means qualified to be anyone's judge of whether or not they make it into the Kingdom, I cannot help but get a sense that we don't call Yahweh our Heavenly Father for nothing. He is a loving Father, full of mercy and not so quick to write us off as we oftentimes seem to be towards each other.

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<sup>12</sup> From an e-mail that I sent Carol on 12/30/2012.

<sup>13</sup> From an e-mail that Carol sent me on 01/03/2013.

About my own heart. I could open up and tell you lots of things about me, but if you've already reached the conclusion that my heart is "hardened," then what would it benefit? Nevertheless, as I'm sure you already know, only Yahweh knows my heart and yours. He knows that I have not tucked my tassels inside my clothing out of fear or shame, yet that is the first impression that tassel-wearers tend to have of me. I was hoping I could somehow help you see into my heart to better understand my reasoning, but obviously that didn't happen and maybe it never will. However, that doesn't mean I'm giving up on you ever understanding me, especially after that very kind e-mail you sent me early this morning! Maybe someday you will. Until that time, I can only ask you to try to not see things from such a "black & white" perspective. For example, the impression I've had from you is that one may as well not even wear tassels at all if all they're going to do is tuck them inside their clothing. From my perspective, even though the BEST WAY is to wear them on the outside, wouldn't just wearing them at all, regardless of which "four quarters" they are attached to, be better than nothing? And if the wearer looks at those tassels as he or she gets dressed and uses that time as a time of reflection/introspection/commitment/remembrance, then isn't that better than the individual who quickly gets dressed without giving any thought to our Heavenly Father and His commandments? I did not see any room for any such acknowledgement from you -- only black and white.

Today was my third consecutive day of wearing tassels on the outside of my clothing while at work, and as I write this to you, one thing I am "reminded" of is the fact that while I'm at work, I may well be the only one who really does not see my tassels. Today, for example, I saw them in the mirror while in the restroom and that was it. I'm not one of those who likes to look at himself and while I'm working at my desk, I tend to not look down at my waist area. Thus, the only real difference between wearing tassels on the outside versus the inside may lie in the fact that others will notice and single you out as being "different." I don't mind that too much; if I did, I probably wouldn't have made the decision to observe the weekly Sabbath, as well as other commandments. At the same time, I would be lying if I told you I wanted to distance myself from my co-workers.

There are still some aspects of tassel-wearing that we haven't even discussed, such as the fact that this is indeed one of the "new" commandments that was not observed prior to the Israelites' departure from Egypt. There is evidence that ancient believers, prior to Joseph being sold into slavery, observed not only the Sabbath, but feast days as well. However, there is no evidence that they wore tassels. I can presume many things about why not, but one recurring impression I have is that the wearing of tassels was commanded at a time when Israel existed as a separate nation of people fully committed to Torah observance. Why didn't pre-Joseph believers wear tassels? Was it because they dwelt among heathens who would regard the tassel-wearing as a reminder that they (the heathens) were living outside the shadow of the Almighty, which in turn could cause friction? I mean, other areas of Torah observance were not "advertised," if you will, and I'm specifically referring to circumcision. My point is, we can be a Torah-observant society without broadcasting it to others ("broadcasting" would be their perspective), which people will sometimes take the wrong way, as you yourself have experienced. If we are wearing the tassels, outside or underneath, either way we are not disobeying the commandment to wear them on our garments (unless we close our eyes while putting on the tassels). Are those who wear them under their garments not wearing tassels? If they only see them once during the day and that one time instills a commitment to remember to obey the commandments, is that a sin? Does the command state that they must be worn to be seen by others?

In case you haven't been able to discern this much about me already, I will go ahead and tell you that I have always been a very private person. I never like calling attention to myself, even though I am very different from most people. Some people really enjoy being different and making sure others know about it. Not me. A creed that June and I strive to live by is that of pursuing scholarly inquiry with the respectful sharing of ideas. To achieve that, we try to approach others at their level, not so much as giving them a hint of a reason to perceive us as thinking we are better or more educated than they are. As an example of what I mean, June and I once attended a seminar which, prior to our attending it, I thought was a Torah-based seminar. We were mistaken, but I had already

made the decision to wear my tassels on the outside, so I decided to let the chips fall where they may, so to speak.

After the speaker was finished with his presentation, there was time for mingling and questions. No sooner did he and I engage in a private side discussion than he asked me if I was a teacher. When I said no, he immediately looked puzzled and he asked me why I was wearing the tassels. I'm not sure if my explanation left an impression on him or not, but I would be inclined to say that it didn't. My point is, he regarded my tassels as some sort of status symbol, not a private desire on my part to obey the commandments. My other point, which I'm not sure that you understand, is that I am not afraid to wear tassels in public. However, and here is where we really clash, my conviction is that wearing tassels underneath our garments is better than not wearing them at all (and is not a sin), and this in turn means that if I knew that tassel-wearers would be shot on sight, I would wear them 100% privately and not on the outside. You can call that fear if you want (and I realize you already have). I regard it as self-preservation while not compromising the command. I think there's a difference between fear and a death wish. If I know that within five minutes of stepping outside of my home (and wearing tassels on the outside of my garments) I will be executed, I will search for alternatives while not disobeying the command. It's a command and remembrance that is for me, not them. I guess, in that situation, an alternative would be to wear tassels on the outside of my clothing while simultaneously hiding from society. It may come to that, but if it does, it would simply be a return to the "Israel in the Wilderness" experience, allowing only our fellow Israelites to see us.

Nevertheless, we are not living in a time where tassel-wearers are being targeted for execution and from what I hear the communal "Israel in the Wilderness" experience doesn't work out very well (too much bickering, in-fighting and ousting), so I see no reason why I should not wear them in public.<sup>14</sup>

You may wonder why I've added this chapter to our study. I can think of a few. First, I think it's wise to consider options when it comes to making the decision to wear tassels. I think if we're truly honest with our reading and interpreting the law pertaining to tassels, we should be able to agree, as I agreed with Carol, that the original understanding was that of wearing tassels on the outside of our garments. Yet, if someone tells me, "Yes, but I've chosen to wear a tallit katan under my outer clothes," I cannot say that he or she is sinning. When this commandment was given to Israel, they were one nation under Yahweh. Literally. Everyone did it. Over a thousand years later, during the rule of the tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes, those found in obedience to Torah were killed. What did those Jews do? I do not ever remember reading anything in the books of Maccabees regarding how Torah-observant Jews obeyed this commandment while living in danger of execution. Maybe wearing tassels on the outside of one's clothing was considered acceptable attire. Or maybe this is where the tallit katan traces its origin. Without additional information, all I can do is speculate.

I also wanted to include the above excerpt from my e-mail to Carol because I want to emphasize that I am still persuaded that I worship a Heavenly Father whose love and mercy transcends human comprehension. To that end, I refuse to judge those who do not wear tassels, let alone those who wear them under their clothes. I cannot worry about what you do or what you believe; I hope to be with you in the Kingdom for all eternity regardless of how you respond to the commandment found in Numbers 15:37-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12. Although I do not believe this commandment was "done away," I do not believe it is up to me to judge those who think it was. On top of all this, I feel that I should also point out that I have seen various attempts to obey this commandment and I pray that Yahweh is honored by each one. I knew one man who wore them on his arms. Last I checked, all humans have two arms, not four, so yes, I questioned how his practice could possibly constitute proper understanding of the commandment. He became quite defensive and explained that for his job he does a lot of driving and having them on his

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<sup>14</sup> From the e-mail I sent Carol on 01/03/2013.

arms allowed him to have quick and easy view of the tassels. He gave a neat visual demonstration of what he meant and hey, if those oft reminders helped bring him to a closer relationship with Yahweh, who was I to tell him to do things differently? Another guy wears very short tassels that his co-workers have dubbed “fishing lures.” All I can say is, if they’re reminding him to obey Yahweh, then who am I to tell him the precise interpretation and understanding of how to properly obey this commandment?

In my own case, I am persuaded that I have come up with the best means of wearing tassels on the outside of my garments. *Of course I have!* Everyone thinks they have the best understanding, so again, I see a need for us to be slow to judge, including in my situation. When I made the decision to “go outside,” I wanted to transition from being what some would describe as overly discreet (i.e., under my clothes) to something as discreet as possible. As we have already seen in this study, people are often quick to judge and there are bound to be those who will regard my decision to wear tassels on the outside as flaunting them, just as I was previously judged as being afraid of what others think of me when I had them hidden. Is there a “happy medium”? The best solution I could come up with was the notion of finding colored threads to match whatever color of shirt I wore. Whenever I purchase a new shirt, I first make certain that it is square cut, giving it the “four quarters” that I need to work with. Then I insert grommets in each corner. For black shirts, I made black tassels with a thread of blue. For orange shirts, I have orange tassels with a thread of blue. You get the idea. Having tassels to match the shirt color makes them seem more like actual extensions of the shirt instead of distinctive additions that stand out, which in turn have served to make some people think we’re “flaunting” our obedience. For me, it’s a means of visibly seeing the tassels while subtly allowing others to see as well. I attach the tassels before putting on the shirt, so I use that time as an opportunity for self-examination and a commitment to strive to please the Father that day. As I mentioned in my e-mail to Carol, it is actually rare that I notice the tassels while performing my daily activities. I sometimes reach for them just to feel them, partly to make certain they’re still there, and that in and of itself serves as a reminder.

Shown below is a photo of me taken back in November 2015 when I joined my Navy son on a “Tiger Cruise” on his aircraft carrier in Pearl Harbor. If you look very closely, you *may* be able to see one of my tassels, and that’s the point: I try to not flaunt them or otherwise make them appear obvious:



*Reminder to do what?* Of course, wearing the tassels serves as a reminder to obey the commandments, but when in public I have felt that it's an even higher calling and maybe that is one of the most significant changes that I have felt since "going outside." You see, I know that we are all like "bugs in a jar" – people will observe us like bugs in a jar and they will judge us accordingly. So I know that if I'm wearing tassels, I'd better step things up a few notches to show that I truly represent the Father in everything I think, do and say. I'm reminded of when I first began a job as a Customer Service Representative. I had been trained for two weeks before taking my first call and I was extremely nervous. There are skilled computer experts who had difficulty navigating our system during phone calls, so the job was by no means a simple one. When the day came for me to start taking calls on my own, I went to my trainer and told her that I couldn't do it. I realized I just couldn't do the job and there was no point in my kidding myself. I wanted to spare them the inconvenience of firing me. To my surprise, my trainer told me, "YES, YOU CAN DO IT!" She told me things like how she knew I had the knowledge and skills, even though I knew deep inside that she was wrong. However, she would not take no for an answer. She told me to get on the phones and just do it.

My head was spinning because I knew I couldn't handle the calls. From my training experience, I knew that callers will ask questions that require accessing a certain screen for the answers, but before that screen even opens they're asking you another question that requires going to another screen. Little do they know what they're putting the representatives through when they do that and on top of that, they tell you that they are in a hurry! They truly think that we can quickly answer all their questions by looking at one screen. So why am I telling you all this in a study pertaining to tassels? It's because when I was so overwhelmed over how to cope with my responsibility of handling those phone calls, I could think of only one potential saving grace that might help me to succeed on the phones: Just be as friendly and helpful as you can and hopefully the callers will pick up on that and show themselves to be friendly as well. The bottom line is, it worked! I succeeded and I am still with the same company today by the grace of Yahweh.

So again, how does this story relate to wearing tassels on the outside of my garments? It's simple. To cope with being overwhelmed by how to successfully handle the phone calls, I broke it all down to the most basic solution I could think of: *Just be nice*. When I'm wearing tassels on the outside, that same basic solution should kick in: *Just be nice*. Frankly, I encounter more rude people these days than I used to, so being nice isn't quite as easy as it used to be. The world has also grown colder. I frequently meet people passing by on the sidewalk who seem to know I'm present because they make movements to avoid walking into me, but at the same time they look straight ahead, almost going to pains in order to avoid making eye contact. I was taught to look others in the eye, smile, and greet them as we meet. Those days seem to be gone, but now that I'm wearing tassels on the outside I have to be doubly ready for that one person who actually *does* look me in the eye so I can give them a warm, friendly hello. *Just be nice*. When all else fails, just try to be nice to others. When you're kind to others, it makes obeying the other commandments so much easier. It's a high calling and I hope I show Yahweh that I'm up to the challenge.

As I mentioned above, this world is getting colder, much like Yeshua prophesied in Matthew 24. I'm afraid we haven't seen the tip of the iceberg yet. As it is, the Bible is becoming more and more an object of ridicule. A few years ago, there was a Creationist vs. Evolution debate on national TV and as I understand it, the general consensus was that the evolutionist side won. Of course, I disagree with the general consensus, but the media in general has become very secular and those found to support Scripture are frequently ridiculed. It didn't used to be that way. Adding salt to the wound is the fact that there are ultra-rich mega-church pastors out there raking in millions of dollars who are paraded as examples of those

who promote themselves as Bible teachers. It should be clear that these “preachers” are false preachers, which should also mean that there is such a thing as “true preachers,” but the media’s focus is on the negative. It’s embarrassing. But even more concerning is the fact that anyone who dares to speak out against non-Torah-supported practices such as the gay lifestyle is in danger of being charged with a hate crime. Some are saying that the Bible itself will eventually be targeted as hate literature and banned as such. Only recently, a man was [arrested and charged with a hate crime](#) for quoting the Bible to a gay teen who asked what the Bible says about homosexuality. Is the day coming when anyone seen wearing tassels will be a target for abuse or worse yet, execution due to the foregone conclusion that the wearer is pro-Torah and therefore opposed to the gay lifestyle? If you can be arrested for quoting the Bible, we should not expect things to get better for Torah-observant believers anytime soon. At least not in this day and age.

It is due to the above potential circumstances that I can see the day coming in which it may not be safe to leave one’s home while wearing tassels on the outside of our garments. This sad turn of events may not occur in this generation. It may be something my grandchildren will be faced with. I hope they wear tassels because I hope they revere our Heavenly Father and His ways above all else, but if wearing them on the outside of their garments puts them in physical danger, I support wearing a tallit katan. Preserve your life and the lives of your children while simultaneously obeying our Heavenly Father.

