

An Authorized Lifestyle

¹"Now, Isra'el, listen to the laws and rulings I am teaching you, in order to follow them, so that you will live; then you will go in and take possession of the land that ADONAI, the God of your fathers, is giving you. ²In order to obey the mitzvot of ADONAI your God which I am giving you, do not add to what I am saying, and do not subtract from it. ³You saw with your own eyes what ADONAI did at Ba'al-P'or, that ADONAI destroyed from among you all the men who followed Ba'al-P'or; ⁴but you who stuck with ADONAI your God are still alive today, every one of you. ⁵Look, I have taught you laws and rulings, just as ADONAI my God ordered me, so that you can behave accordingly in the land where you are going in order to take possession of it. ⁶Therefore, observe them; and follow them; for then all peoples will see you as having wisdom and understanding. When they hear of all these laws, they will say, 'This great nation is surely a wise and understanding people.' ⁷For what great nation is there that has God as close to them as ADONAI our God is, whenever we call on him? ⁸What great nation is there that has laws and rulings as just as this entire Torah which I am setting before you today? ⁹Only be careful, and watch yourselves diligently as long as you live, so that you won't forget what you saw with your own eyes, so that these things won't vanish from your hearts. Rather, make them known to your children and grandchildren. (Deut 4:1-9)

Is it legal or not for non-Jewish believers in *Yeshua* to be faithful to the teachings of the Torah, making it their guide to everyday life in the same way as Jewish believers? The answer is a resounding yes! *Elohim* indeed has given permission for Gentile believers to be *Torah* observant. It is not a must, a should, or a have to, per se. It is this way because because He has written *Torah* in our hearts and we want to please Him.

³¹"Here, the days are coming," says ADONAI, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra'el and with the house of Y'hudah. ³²It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by their hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, violated my covenant, even though I, for my part, was a husband to them," says ADONAI. ³³"For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days," says ADONAI: "I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴No longer will any of them teach his fellow community member or his brother, 'Know ADONAI'; for all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest; because I will forgive their wickednesses and remember their sins no more." (Jer. 31:31-34)

The physical descendants of Jacob are a unique people, with a unique calling—to function as a teaching picture and to function as a light unto the nations. They have been the guardians of *Torah* (though imperfectly in interpretation at times). They have also developed Sephardic, Ashkenazi, and Oriental cultures. Gentiles are encouraged to take hold of their rightful equality with the Remnant of Israel and to feel free to live out their inheritance as fellow citizens. There is importance, purpose and honor to being either Jewish or from the nations. But among those who have understood this *Torah*-based lifestyle, having chosen to embrace this lifestyle for themselves and their families, contrary to nature, they have truly grasped the reality of being grafted into the Olive Tree whose Root is "The Branch," *Yeshua*, the Messiah. For them, there is no question that they have been called to "sojourn" with the People of Israel. Are you one of those "sojourners?"

In this week's Parashat we see that by being faithful to *Torah*, Israel will in fact take possession of the Promise Land. Further, by being faithful to *Torah* Israel will live. And finally by being faithful to *Torah* Israel will function as a living national witness to the wisdom and greatness of *Elohim*.

We see that *Elohim* indeed has a calling for Israel: “⁸What great nation is there that has laws and rulings as just as this entire Torah which I am setting before you today?” Further, He placed Israel in a position to fulfill His calling. He gave them geographical position, in the middle of the world, a connecting link for everyone passed through Israel. And finally *Elohim* has a method for Israel to fulfill His calling. *Torah*, He said, is the source of Israel’s wisdom. Nations would desire to have such a relationship themselves.

Had Israel worked as *Elohim* intended when people would be impressed and would want to place their faith in Israel, what would happen if the answer had been “Sorry...this is for Israel only.” Yet this is the message many Gentile believers are given today from the believing Remnant of Israel. It is obvious that *Elohim* intended for Israel to be a national witness for Him.

Authorization from the Prophets

In the time of Isaiah, Israel was a divided monarchy (because of sin and idolatry). *Elohim* sent his prophets with correction, but His calling was never revoked. Israel was called to be a light to the nations: “⁶I, ADONAI, called you righteously, I took hold of you by the hand, I shaped you and made you a covenant for the people, to be a light for the Goyim, ⁷so that you can open blind eyes, free the prisoners from confinement, those living in darkness from the dungeon.” (Isaiah 42:6-7) He also called Israel to be a servant even though they did not live up to it. The Messiah of Israel enables Israel to be the light of the world. That is why Yeshua said He was this light and then says you (the listening Israelites) are this light.

³A foreigner joining ADONAI should not say, "ADONAI will separate me from his people"; likewise the eunuch should not say, "I am only a dried-up tree." ⁴For here is what ADONAI says: "As for the eunuchs who keep my Shabbats, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant: ⁵in my house, within my walls, I will give them power and a name greater than sons and daughters; I will give him an everlasting name that will not be cut off. ⁶And the foreigners who join themselves to ADONAI to serve him, to love the name of ADONAI, and to be his workers, all who keep Shabbat and do not profane it, and hold fast to my covenant, ⁷I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples." ⁸Adonai ELOHIM says, he who gathers Isra'el's exiles: "There are yet others I will gather, besides those gathered already." (Isaiah 56:3-8)

In Isa. 56:3 the prophet uses the word (בן הנכר) “Ben Hanekher” which means that which is foreign, of another family tribe or nation. Notice that it did not use the word Goyim. These are foreigners who join themselves to Adonai. Of them He says (1) they will be included in the Remnant and have access to *Elohim*’s holy mountain, (2) these believers from the nations will keep Shabbat, (3) they will also be gathered together with Israel. Believing Gentiles assured by *Elohim* to be on an equal footing with Israel and they are also equal participants with Israel’s covenants. Even though they are not born Jews, they can embrace a *Torah* lifestyle. Since when? Since Acts 2 through today and until the return of Messiah.

Authorization from Yeshua

During Sukkot, *Yeshua* teaches about the sheepfold and the Good Shepherd. He is the door of entrance to the sheepfold. Not all of the descendants of Israel are included in the fold, and other sheepfolds exist but they will become one in Him. Both the saved Remnant of Israel and the saved Remnant of the Gentiles.

¹Yes, indeed! I tell you, the person who doesn't enter the sheep-pen through the door, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²But the one who goes in through the gate is the sheep's own shepherd. ³This is the one the gate-keeper admits, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep, each one by name, and leads them out. ⁴After taking out all that are his own, he goes on ahead of them; and the sheep

follow him because they recognize his voice. ⁵They never follow a stranger but will run away from him, because strangers' voices are unfamiliar to them." ⁶Yeshua used this indirect manner of speaking with them, but they didn't understand what he was talking to them about. ⁷So Yeshua said to them again, "Yes, indeed! I tell you that I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All those who have come before me have been thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn't listen to them. ⁹I am the gate; if someone enters through me, he will be safe and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only in order to steal, kill and destroy; I have come so that they may have life, life in its fullest measure. ¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, since he isn't a shepherd and the sheep aren't his own, sees the wolf coming, abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf drags them off and scatters them. ¹³The hired worker behaves like this because that's all he is, a hired worker; so it doesn't matter to him what happens to the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd; I know my own, and my own know me - ¹⁵just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father - and I lay down my life on behalf of the sheep. ¹⁶Also I have other sheep which are not from this pen; I need to bring them, and they will hear my voice; and there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷"This is why the Father loves me: because I lay down my life - in order to take it up again! ¹⁸No one takes it away from me; on the contrary, I lay it down of my own free will. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. This is what my Father commanded me to do." (John 10:1-18)

It is evident that John 10 continues the sentiment of Isaiah 56. The Messiah states that He will bring others, those who sh'ma His voice, and do what He says. These are certainly the foreigners of Isaiah 56 who heed to His Living Torah and become part of one sheepfold, that is, Israel. There are not two Olive Trees, or two streams of branches from the same root. There is one root and there is but one branch, Messiah and his people Israel. These are not meant to "replace" the original sheepfold, but instead to become part of the original sheepfold. Yeshua is stating that He will enlarge the borders of Israel, so to speak, by bringing "other sheep" into it. When they enter into this sheepfold, it is with all rights, emoluments thereunto appertaining. This is part of the message of Matthew 5:17-20, He came to fill full the Torah. What was it the great commission ordered them to teach? Was it a new religion? Or was it whatsoever I have taught you...

¹⁷"Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. ¹⁸Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the Torah - not until everything that must happen has happened. ¹⁹So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. ²⁰For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven! (Matthew 5:17-20)

¹⁸Yeshua came and talked with them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim, immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20)