

“The Times of Restitution of all Things”

¹⁹Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; ²⁰And he shall send Messiah Yeshua, which before was preached unto you: ²¹Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution (NASB, restoration) of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21)

Introduction

We have been given principles, keys, instructions, commands, precepts, ordinances, and a plan for living an abundant life. It is found in the Holy Scriptures. The plan is eternal and the life that it promises is also eternal. The Scriptures, that is, God’s Word is the second greatest gift given to mankind—second only to the Messiah himself (see Psalm 138:2 “for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name”). We know God’s Word is eternal because God, Yeshua, and the Holy Spirit (*Ruach Elohim*) are eternal. In fact, everything God does is eternal and thoroughly consistent. We can get a glimpse into the eternal nature of God by considering a principle I will call the Divine Law Principle. The Divine Law Principle is detailed for us in four passages in Scripture—two in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old(er) Covenant) and two in the *B’rit Chadasha* or New(er) Covenant.

“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.” (Ecc. 3:14-15)

“For I am YHVH, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” (Mal. 3:6)

“Messiah Yeshua the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” (Heb. 13:8)

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17)

Armed with this Divine Law Principle, one can thoroughly trust the Lord, having confidence that everything He does, He does forever with precision, truth, reliability, consistency—absolutely perfect. There are many implications by the acceptance of this Divine Law principle. The astute Scripture reader can discern that if Yeshua is the same yesterday, today and forever (and He is for sure), then if we observe His behavior, habits, likes, dislikes, demeanor, etc. in the Gospels, for instance, we can be assured that He would do the same today. Of the Father we know that whatever He set forth in the Hebrew Scriptures as things He wanted us to do to worship Him, He still wants the same today. Also the *Ruach Elohim* (Holy Spirit) is also consistent and non-changing. Further, if everything is discernible by looking at the past (Ecc. 3:15) then we can know the future and be confident that unless we find the principle or shadow of the action in the past, it is not useful for the future. Some sample questions I could ask here are: (1) If Yeshua came to Gainesville today, what congregation would He visit and when, (2) What festivals would He attend?; (3) How would Yeshua dress?; (4) What would Yeshua eat? (i.e., would He eat a ham sandwich?); (5) What would Yeshua call Himself, i.e., a Jew, a Gentile, a Christian? (6) Would Yeshua agree with the teaching that the church has replaced Israel?

A Messianic Jewish Mindset

Jewish thought (⁸I have set YHVH always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” (Psalm 16:8)) is centered upon (1) obedience to the Word (“⁴Sh’ma Israel: YHVH our Elohim is Echad” Deut. 6:4), and (2) proving that obedience with one’s actions. Two occasions in Scripture summarize this concept for us, one before the 10 Commandments were given (Ex. 19) and repeated twice after (Ex. 23) they were given:

⁷And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which YHVH commanded him. ⁸And all the people answered together, and said, All that YHVH hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto YHVH.” (Exodus 19:7-8)

“³And Moses came and told the people all the words of YHVH, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which YHVH hath said will we do...⁷And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that YHVH hath said will we do, and we will obey (be obedient).” (Exodus 24:3, 7)

Sh'ma means to prove one heard by one's actions. When my children were small we knew that they had heard us and obeyed when we would ask them to clean their room or make their bed and later when mom would go in their room if she would find the bed made up and/or the room clean. Otherwise, we would immediately ask them the classic question: “did you hear what I said?” If they said yes, immediately we would ask “if you heard then why did you not obey?” If we sensed rebellion or defiance, this would be followed by a dose of the rod of discipline (and the reading of a few select Scriptures in Proverbs). I am sure you have done the same with your children. So it is with our Heavenly Father. When we do what He says, we show that we heard what He said and that we indeed obeyed. This is the most basic and fundamental principles in *Kehilat Kol Simcha*.

Nearly every Jewish custom and/or tradition comes from the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures. In the cases where the instruction/command is given, but no details are given as to how to carry out the instruction, the Jewish people defer to their Spiritual leaders (the Rabbis) for interpretation and guidance. These 39 books are what was considered Scripture at the time of *Yeshua* and Paul. The oldest known translation of the Hebrew Scriptures is called the Septuagint (LXX), which predates the Messiah by some 300 years and was authored by 70 rabbis in Egypt translated from Hebrew to Greek. The first five books are called the “Teaching” (the word *Torah* does not mean ‘Law’) the second set of books is called the “Prophets” (*Nevi'im*) and the third set of books is called the “Writings” (*Ketubim*). In Hebrew, a scroll is also named by the first book in the scroll except for a *Torah* scroll which is always called the *Torah*. Thus the book of the prophets is called *Yehoshua* (Joshua, since Joshua is the first book of in the Prophets) or for the Scroll of the Major Prophets, *Yeshayahu* (Isaiah, the first book in the scroll of the major Prophets), the first major prophet, and *Hoshea* (Hosea or ‘Osee’ the first book in the scroll of the minor Prophets). About the *TNK*, Paul writes in 2 Timothy (noting that at the time of that letter's writing, the only Scriptures that existed was the *TNK* and none of the New(er) Covenant existed or if it did, it was not canonized until some 300 years later!)

“¹⁶All scripture (that is all of the TNK) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

“²⁵Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ²⁶Ought not Messiah to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? ²⁷And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself...⁴⁴And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the psalms (i.e., the Ketuvim, because Psalms is the first book of the Scroll), concerning me. ⁴⁵Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures” (Lk 24)

All of what is called the Early Church adhered to the teachings of the *Torah* and the *TNK* and the deep teachings of *Yeshua*. Even the ‘Apostle of the Gentiles,’ adhered strictly to the *TNK*. Here is what he said before Felix and Agrippa **AFTER** his missionary journeys and after writing the bulk of the letters (Epistles) which we today consider part of the New(er) Covenant: *“¹⁴But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.” (Acts 24:14)*

The church of the Book of Acts, in my opinion, is the correct way to have ‘church.’ This Church of Acts was Messianic Jewish. Acts is a model for having church: a church composed of both Jews and Gentiles, one in Messiah, one in *Yeshua*, one in the Olive Tree. The people who became believers in Acts did not stop being who they were: neither the Jews nor the Gentiles. The Gentiles did not become Jews and the Jews did not become Gentiles. In fact, if anyone did any changing, it was the pagan Gentiles who had to be taught the “*ways of the One, True God and His Son.*” But today, many who profess to be Believers in *Yeshua* maintain that once a

Jewish person gets saved, they should stop being a Jew and become a Christian. To the Jewish people, the symbols of Christianity bring memories of the slaughter in WWII Concentration Camps, the Crusades, and the Jewish genocide of the middle ages. In fact, to a Jew the word Christian is synonymous with Catholic. Jews are not aware of the myriad of denominations in Christianity or the fact that evangelicals are a totally different breed of believer than the classical denominations (Lutherans, Episcopal, Orthodox, Presbyterians, etc.) Protestant Believers ought to take notice since that the last thing a Protestant Christian wants to be called is Catholic! There is as much misinformation in the Christian camp about Jews as there is in the Jewish camp about Christians.

The Christianity that traces its roots from Catholicism and Lutheranism ought to be aware of the anti-Semitism in the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. and the claims and edicts given by Constantine {who proclaimed himself the “*Pontifus Maximus*” (that is, the ultimate Pontif, or pope) and who is responsible for nearly all of the Hebrew roots of Christianity being removed from the Early Church and who was not a Believer!}, and the anti-Semitic statements made by Martin Luther near the end of his life when he called the Jewish people ‘Christ killers.’ The fact is that it was the Romans and not the Jews who executed and tortured *Yeshua*. However, the Jews are guilty for inciting the crowd and requesting for it to be done for them and they are guilty by association. But if the Jews killed the Messiah, so did the Romans (and the people of the Church of Rome, the so-called One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church). Today, you and I understand these things, but the people of the 1500’s did not! And so the fact is that Jews were murdered in WWII in the name of my precious *Messiah* while Hitler justified their killing by quoting Luther’s writings! (They even played Christmas Carols and Christian songs for the Jews to march into the gas chambers). For this reason, Messianic Jews call themselves “Believers in the Messiah” rather than use the terminology Christian, especially when dealing with Jewish people. Messianic Believers are also much, much more than “Jews for Jesus,” which is primarily a Christian evangelical organization created by a believing Jew named Moshe Rosen that targets Jews for preaching salvation. JFJ did not establish Messianic Synagogues for the Jews that became Believers to attend and instead sent them to churches.

It is Time for Restitution & Restoration:

A Messianic Jew is a “Jewish or Gentile Believer” in *Yeshua* as the true Messiah of Israel A worshiper of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and His Son *Yeshua* who has the Spirit of God (Holy Spirit) joined with his own spirit and lives his life in the context of a Jewish lifestyle and identity. The KJV called Gentile Believers “sojourners” (*Gerim*, in Hebrew) and not Gentiles (*Goyim* in Hebrew, meaning foreigners.) Messianic Jews along with the Gentile believing brothers and sisters comprise the Body of Messiah. These are those who are grafted into the one true *Olive Tree* of Romans 11.

Did *Yeshua* abrogate the Torah? If yes, then why does the Psalmist state: “The Law of the Lord (*Torah of Adonai*) is Perfect...” (see Psalm 19). What does Matthew 5:17 really say? Here is a literal translation of the Greek text: “*Do not think I came to annul the Torah and the Nevi'im, I did not come to annul the Torah but to complete it in perfection*” (fill full, not the modern English meaning of fulfill which implies completing a task so there is no more responsibility toward the task). If *Yeshua* meant for the *Torah* and Prophets to be useless after He came, then why did He Himself used them in Luke 24 to preach the Gospel and why did Paul say in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that ALL of the *Torah*, Prophets, and Writings (the *TNK* which were the only known Scriptures), is inspired and *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness* for the man of God (that is, for Believers as opposed to unbelievers)? In fact, Paul makes clear in Romans 6-7 how important the *TNK* is (through the use of the idiom *God Forbid!*). In fact, he teaches us that the *Torah* is the schoolmaster.

As a Believer, we should be exceedingly glad that all of the Bible, old and new is God’s Word and that all of the Bible (and in particular the *TNK*) is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. We are no longer under the curse of the Law because *Yeshua* died for us (see Galatians 3). But we are most definitely under the **instruction** (that is, *Torah*) of the **entire** Bible. Paul said: “**Do we then make void the law (Torah) through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law (Torah).**” (Romans 3:31)