

## The Restitution of All Things

*<sup>19</sup> Repent, therefore, and return (be converted) – so your sins might be blotted out, <sup>20</sup> so times of relief (refreshing) might come from the presence of Adonai and He might (shall) send Yeshua, the Messiah appointed (preached) for you. <sup>21</sup> Heaven must receive Him, until the time of the restoration (restitution, KJV) of all the things that God spoke about long ago (since the world began) through the mouth of His holy prophets (Acts 3:19-21, KJV words)*

Evidently, when it is time for Yeshua to return restitution must take place. This is a far-reaching concept in that Scripture: *the restitution of all things God spoke through the mouth of His Holy prophets since the world began.* I asked Dr. Jeffrey Feinberg (Professor at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (GIAL) in Dallas, PhD, MDiv, MBA, and MA), the Head Theologian and Translator of the TLV New Testament for any insights on the word *restitution/restoration* ('*apokatastasis*' in Greek) used in Acts 3:21. Dr. Feinberg wrote: "*The second coming of Yeshua is not represented as an occasion for judgment here. Rather, 'Heaven must receive him (hon dei ouranon men dexasthai, 'whom heaven must receive') until the time comes for God to restore everything'. The word must (dei) indicates that Yeshua's present withdrawal from the earthly scene is an important stage in the divine plan of salvation. His withdrawal will continue (lit.) 'until the times of restoration of all things' (achri chronōn apokatastaseōs pantōn). Some have argued that the translation 'establishment of all things' is more appropriate here (RSV 'establishing'). But 'restoration' is quite suitable (NRSV, ESV, TNIV; KJV, NKJV, 'restitution'), reflecting the conviction that the end will be as the beginning: 'God, through Messiah, will restore his fallen world to the purity and integrity of its initial creation.' TNIV implies that this will take place when Messiah returns. But the Greek could just as easily mean that a process of restoration is already underway and that Yeshua's return will mark its climax and dramatic conclusion.*"

Restitution is a very interesting word. TheFreeDictionary.com web site renders restitution as: **1. The act of restoring to the rightful owner something that has been taken away, lost, or surrendered; and 2. The act of making good or compensating for loss, damage, or injury; indemnification and 3. A return to or restoration of a previous state or position.** Roger Campbell writes in his book *Justice Through Restitution*, that in each of the *Torah* cases in *Parashat Mishpatim*, the "*result was that the victim was restored to a better position than before his loss and the lawbreaker was punished by having to make right his wrongs in a manner that cost more than his potential gain.*" It seems that restitution implies some sort of *better-ing*, i.e., restoring to better than the original. Using this approach, Acts 3:21 implies a *better outcome* to that "*which was spoken by the mouth of His Holy Prophets since the world began*" and not just a resetting to the original. Granted, since all things were perfect to begin with, restoration and restitution achieve the same end. But restitution implies going above and beyond (better than the original) if possible (which is certainly not something casual). Mrs. Pat Feinberg (MA in Bilingual Bicultural Ed and MST in Elementary Ed. UC Berkeley, Univ. of Chicago, Stanford, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) wrote: "*The Greek understanding talks about putting the stars back in their original orbit. It hearkens back to Eden, a pristine image of what God is restoring. Sounds like it's much "better"!*"

An astute Scripture reader can discern that if Yeshua is *the same yesterday, today and forever* (Heb. 13:8) (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. We also know that whatever the Father set forth in the Hebrew Scriptures as details He wanted us to do to worship Him, He still wants the same today. And the *Ruach Elohim* (Holy Spirit) is also consistent and non-changing (Mal. 3:6). Further, if everything is discernible by looking at the past (Eccl. 3:15) then we can know the future and be confident that unless we find the principle or shadow in the past, it is not useful for the future. Some sample questions come to mind: (1) If Yeshua came to Gainesville today, what congregation would He visit and what day of the week would He want to honor? (2) What *Holy Days* would He keep and honor? (3) How would Yeshua dress? (4) What would Yeshua eat? (i.e., would He eat a ham sandwich or a shrimp cocktail?); (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? Therefore, restoring the Hebrew Roots of Christianity is certainly part of the Acts 3:21 restitution process.

About the Hebrew Scriptures (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!): *"<sup>16</sup>All scripture (that is the TNK) is inspired by God, and useful for teaching, for reproof, for restoration, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the person belonging to God may be capable, fully equipped for every good deed"* (2 Timothy 3:16-17) 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: *"<sup>14</sup>But this I confess to you, that according to the Way (which they call a sect), I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything written in the Torah and 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 an Israeli the word Christian is synonymous with Catholic. The Jews in Israel 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.

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 "so-journers" (*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 exult it in 2 Timothy 3:16-17? 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)