

Are you grafted into Israel?

Initially we need to set some basic ground rules to have a standard for discussing and dealing with scripture. Without these ground rules, we will not understand each other or we will misinterpret each other.

- 1) Do you agree that God does not change?
- 2) Is God a respecter of persons? His Word says He is not, and He has one standard for everyone.
- 3) Is the Word of God, the scriptures, the final authority? If not, then anything is up for grabs.
- 4) Scripture interpretation must be based on context. This would include the totality of scripture, not just a few verses before and after or even a few chapters. This requires a time commitment.
- 5) Scripture interprets itself.

As a side note, a Baptist preacher once said that if you can find clear, plain scripture which contradicts what you believe, you have to change what you believe. Ask the question, do we read what we believe or do we believe what we read?

Are we grafted into Israel and are we bearing the same fruit? Coming from a Christian Church and turning to the Torah as the foundation of understanding and obeying the rest of Scripture, many struggle with Jewish tradition. A natural reaction for many is to avoid any Jewish traditions. Each person must decide for himself regarding this matter.

So let us consider: if we are a wild olive branch and we are to be grafted into the natural olive tree, then shouldn't we bear the same fruit? The tree sends forth a shelach or shoot which will be the same as the original tree. For instance, Yeshua, as a shoot sent from the Father, bears the same resemblance as the Father, says the same things as the Father, etc. The wild branch, once grafted into the natural, will lose its leaves in the same season, bear its fruit in the same season, and will come into foliage at the same time.

Obviously if it were not for the tenaciousness of the house of Judah, the rest of the world would not even know to keep the Sabbaths and the rest of the moedim, much less any other of the commandments. They have faithfully copied and observed the Torah at the expense of countless lives and persecution since the Torah was written at Sinai by the finger of Elohim and through the hand of Moses. Thus, we can be grateful to the house of Judah for maintaining the Torah.

What does it mean to be grafted into Israel? Keeping Shabbat? Observing the feasts? Wearing tzitziot? Eating kosher? Learning Hebrew? Well, it is a good start, but that does not make you part of Israel.

When you become a citizen of a new country or Kingdom, you must keep the laws of the land. If you try to do things that were once legal for you in your home country while in the country to which you have moved, you may be transgressing the law. The laws of the land change with the culture and geography of the land. In becoming a citizen of that country, you now must abide by the ruling of the authority of that country, whether you like it or not. For instance, even something like Thanksgiving would change if we move from Canada to the United States, even if it is only a few miles across the border.

When you first begin to follow Torah, one of the first things to cross your mind may be “I am NOT going to do anything Jewish.” We need to ask ourselves, “Are we starting a new denomination or are we grafted in to the olive tree?” If we are grafted in, then we must bear the same fruit, at the same time, in the same manner, under the same jurisdiction of the main tree and root.

Remember that the root supports you! *“Do not boast against the branches. And if you boast, remember: **you do not bear the root, but the root bears you!** Rom 11:18*

Walking in Kingdom principles requires some simple understanding of how a kingdom works. A kingdom is not a democracy. We are all acquainted with a democracy. Laodicea, the lukewarm congregation, actually means democracy or rule by the people. To have a Kingdom, you must first have a King, then a land, and a people, and finally a law. In our case, the Kingdom of Israel has a God given ruling authority, as stated in **1 Chronicles 28:4**. Howbeit the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever: for he hath chosen Judah *to be* the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he liked me to make *me* king over all Israel.

Genesis 49:10 *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

Let us remind ourselves that God cannot go back on His word and through the patriarch Jacob, was this prophecy made. Some will say that Yeshua is Shiloh and He has already come, so this has already been fulfilled. We know that Shiloh means, to bring peace and that is yet to be fulfilled by our returning Messiah. Yeshua Himself said He did not come to bring peace, but a sword. **Matthew 10: 34** Also the fact that He has not yet gathered the dispersed, signifies that Shiloh has not yet come.

See also Judah’s authority as lawgiver in other areas of scripture.

Psalms 60:7 *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; and **Psalms 108:8***

Jeremiah 33:17-26 *For thus hath the LORD said: David shall never lack a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites lack a man before me to offer burnt offerings and to kindle grain offerings and to do sacrifice continually. And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus hath the LORD said; If ye can break my covenant with the day, and my covenant with the night, such that there should not be day nor night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my slave, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites and priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of David my slave and the Levites that minister unto me. Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: Dost thou not consider what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD has chosen, he has even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should no longer be a nation before them. Thus hath the LORD said: If my covenant remains not with the day and the night, and if I have not appointed the laws of the heaven and the earth, then I will cast away the seed of Jacob and David my slave, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; for I will cause their captivity to turn, and I will have mercy on them.*

Hosea 11:12 *Ephraim compasses me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet rules with God, and is faithful with the saints.*

1 Chronicles 5:1-2 *Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's:)*

The Nation of Israel is modeled after the family structure of Jacob/Israel. This is the blueprint of the pattern of authority that we see throughout history, even until today. Judah goes first as seen in ***Genesis 44:18 and 46:28.***

Bezalel of the tribe of Judah leads the work of the building the tabernacle. ***Exodus 31:1-5***

Numbers 7:12 Judah is the first to make the offering of sacrifices and gifts. ***Numbers 10:14*** Judah leads the tribes in their army ranks.

As we marvel at Judah in the land of Israel today, we must acknowledge that Judah's possession of the land is only by divine intervention and respect is due as YHVH's anointed leader. Yah's plan is to restore the lost sheep back to the land of Israel and to bring the two sticks back together as one. Judah is NOT to be restored to the messianics. What a mess that would be! We are too busy fighting over things that we do not completely understand and we do not have the authority to change or decree anything, even if we did have the understanding. It would be impudent to think that we could tell someone who has 4000 years of study behind him what is proper. That does not mean that they are doing everything right, but they have the experience behind them. Judah was anointed and appointed by Yah to hold on to the Torah and preserve it in the face of persecution after persecution.

Deuteronomy 31:16-18 Even before Israel comes into their land of their inheritance, Yah prophesies of their eventual failure, but still He allows them to enter His land. We see this same pattern with Israel in 1948, even though they have not kept the covenant perfectly, Yah has to keep His word to Abraham because of the covenant made with Abraham. God cannot go against His Word. God cannot do anything He wants because if He said it, He has to do what He says. If He does anything He wants, then what is the point of us following Him at all?

Judah has been given the authority to rule for now, as did many kings in Israel's history. We also know that one day, the Messiah, being the Lion of Judah, will be our ultimate King. When that happens, He will bring peace (Shiloh) and He will bring healing and He will bring justice and regather His covenant people. Yeshua has not yet returned to establish His kingdom and the enemy is the ruler in this world right now.

However, for now, we are in a great test. That test is whether or not we will submit to God appointed authorities. If we have come out of North American church culture, we have been born and raised into rebellion. We are being tested to see if we will be among the sheep or goats: as sheep looking to the leader, or as goats being rebellious, wanting to be the leader. Sheep will listen and follow the voice of their leader. Goats are self-willed and when the goats are put with the sheep, they will lead the sheep astray.

Will we be wise or foolish virgins? As wise, we will understand authority while as foolish we will be rebellious to authority. Will we recognize the spots in our love feasts?

We need to be able to recognize the spots otherwise we have no way of knowing whether we have them or not. We need to know what the target is or we cannot know whether we have missed it or not.

Jude 1:8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Jude 1:11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and have perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Jude 1:12 These people are those who lead a wasteful, feasting life and are blemished; they do not shepherd themselves in reverence; they are clouds without rain, driven by winds; trees whose blossoms have withered, without fruit; having died a second time, pulled up by the roots;

Ah, yes. How well we remember the rebellion of Korah. Rebellion, greed and hatred, are spots in our love feasts. Yeshua is coming for a bride without spot or wrinkle. (Eph 5:27)

Num 16:3 And they **gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron**, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Num 16:4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face:

You can go and read the rest of the scripture to see how all of this worked out for Korah.

How many times have we tried to justify ourselves by saying, “We are all kings and priests” just like Korah did?

2 Peter 2:10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

Rom 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Rom 13:2 Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Rav Shaul reminds us in Act 23, that we are forbidden to speak evil of those who rule over us.

Remember that it is not the person, but the office which the person occupies that deserves respect and honor. But because the office deserves it, the person in office should receive it.

Ex 22:28 Do not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people.

Acts 23:1 And looking earnestly on the Sanhedrin, Paul said, Men, brothers, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

Acts 23:2 And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.

Acts 23:3 *Then Paul said to him, God shall strike you, whitened wall! For do you sit judging me according to the Law, and against law command me to be stricken?*

Acts 23:4 *And they who stood by him said, Do you revile God's high priest?*

Acts 23:5 *Then Paul said, I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest; for it is written, "You shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people."*

We are called to be of the royal line, but that does not qualify us to be our own authority. This does not mean that we must be taking on Judaism as a religion, but to merely look to your leaders (Judah or those who have possession of the land) for the framework of the constitution that we are bound to by being grafting into Israel.

Although we need to live according to Torah, we are not beholden to observe all the Jewish traditions. There is nothing wrong with following the traditions, particularly if they bring a richness to our observance of the Torah, and help us to keep the commandments, then there isn't anything wrong with learning from them.

From childhood it is our natural tendency to find fault with our authorities, to justify our rebellion.

Isn't it just like rebellious teens to try to disqualify their authority by discrediting the character of their authority?

By looking at some of the examples of authorities in scripture we see that they were not without fault and Yah continued to honor them in their position.

We all know that Moses was not perfect and made mistakes in his leadership, but Yah continued to use him to lead the people.

Num 20:11, Rom 11:29 *For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.*

King David never tried to overthrow Saul, because David knew that it would not be wise to touch YHVH's anointed. Judah has obviously been anointed to be in the position of leadership right now, and we see that in other areas of scripture.

For example, in the second journey to Egypt, Judah acts again as the spokesperson for his brethren and the one leading the way. He is the first to approach Joseph then the rest of the brothers do likewise.

When Jacob and family arrive in Egypt we read: "*Then he [Jacob] sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way...*" (**Gen 46:28**).

Judah's lead will become a scripturally repeated pattern (e.g. *Num. 2:3; Jud. 1:2; 1st Ch. 5:2a*), applicable all the way to our present days. In Zechariah we read: "*...For YHVH of Hosts will visit His flock, the House of Judah, and will make them as His royal horse in the battle. From him comes the cornerstone. From him*

the tent peg, from him the battle-bow, from him every ruler together. They shall be like mighty men who tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle. They shall fight because YHVH is with them, and the riders on horses shall be put to shame. I will strengthen the house of Judah ..."

(Zech 10:3b-6a).

All this is to show how Judah is and has been the first contingent of the People of Israel to return to the Land, and as such is fulfilling this prophecy and pattern of leadership.

Now that we have established our God given authorities, we can see the importance of submitting to our authorities to confirm the timing of our moedim.

If the timing is so simple to figure out, why do we have so many arguments and disunity about when to keep the feasts? If it was so precise, Yah would have just stated the formula in the word. Can we be honest with ourselves? The first time that we read the scriptures, without an outside influence, could we come to a definite conclusion regarding the timing of the moedim? If the timing is so simple, then why do we have various opinions of the calendar? Maybe, it is because, it is not something that we need to concern ourselves with, because we do not have the authority to make the decree.

Even our Master taught us to listen to the Pharisees as they sit in Moses seat. **(Matt 23:1-3)**

When we look at the pattern in 2 Chronicles 30, King Hezekiah made a decree to do the feast the second month for two weeks and YHVH accepted it, (the feast of Passover) because they had a singleness of heart. Or should we say, "they were in one accord", as we see in Acts 2:1. So, it isn't necessarily about being right but being in unity and in submission to the authority.

2 Chronicles 30:2 *For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the Passover in the second month.*

Therefore, based on 2 Chronicles, if they kept the feast in the second month, what did they do on the first month? Would they have just gone about their business as usual? And would they have eaten leavened bread in the first month? They were not ready to do the Passover, so they didn't do it the first month, but who made the decree to do the feast at a later time? The King and the leaders of the council.

Another example would be in 1Kings 8:65, King Solomon, kept the feast of Sukkot for 14 days rather than the commanded eight days.

Why should we look to Judah for support and understanding of the ways of YHVH? Because to them were given the oracles of God.

Rom 3:1 *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?*

Rom 3:2 *Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

Judah has been studying and handling the oracles a lot longer than we have. In 70 AD Israel was dispersed and the calculated calendar was developed to keep the dispersion in unity. We are still in the dispersion.

Jer 32:39 *And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:*

Therefore, we know that there is protection in the submission to our authorities. If they are wrong in their leading, they will be responsible for the consequences, and he that is submitted will be blessed.

Ecc 10:4 *If the spirit of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your post, for calmness lays to rest great faults.*

1 Peter 5:5 *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.*

Heb 13:17 *Obeys them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

Ecc 8:2 *I counsel thee: keep the king's command, and that in regard of the oath of God.*

Ecc 8:3 *Be not hasty to go out of his presence; stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleases him.*

Ecc 8:4 *Forasmuch as the king's word hath power; and who may say unto him: 'What doest thou?'*

Moses was a great example of showing respect to the authorities. Did he not ask Pharaoh to let the people go? (Ex 5:1-3) YHVH put Pharaoh in that position and only Yah could have removed him.

This is not a presentation based on theory. This comes from a heart of experience by some who have received the blessings of Abba, for submitting to an authority, even if we think that authority may be wrong. Does this mean that we should all just accept Judaism as a religion? No, however we should give honor where honor is due and unify our walk with YHVH. This means that we walk like the Messiah and be part of His plan to bring all unto one flesh. Then, just maybe, Judah will recognize us as the lost little brother and welcome us home. Can you just imagine the power of our prayer as we stand submitted and united to the nation of Israel which has been preserved by our Great King?

This is an example of following our authorities even when they seem to be in error. (Gen 22) In Genesis we see that Abraham has a working knowledge of YHVH's sacrificial system and operates in the order of Melchizedek. Isaac also has this knowledge as seen in Gen 22:7. Both would have known that YHVH does not accept human sacrifice. (Lev 18:21, 20:2, Deut 12:31, 18:9-13) Isaac submits to Abraham willingly even though this act of his father seems to contradict God's word. Isaac at any time could have physically overpowered Abraham, but submits completely even unto death and Yah intercedes and delivers him.

Who is the first king of Israel? Saul which is the same root word that forms Shaul or "to replace" which also means "he who is borrowed." Does this indicate that when human will is appeased it is of necessity, short lived. Saul is from the tribe of Benjamin located between Judah and Ephraim. However Judah still held the scepter (Gen 49:10) the kingly portion, with Ephraim the double portion. This attempt to set up Benjamin for the position of unifying all Israel is doomed from the start.

Yah's choice for a king is from Judah, David. David's disobedience causes curses to fall on his children with Absalom usurping his father and dividing the kingdom. David flees to Mahanaim and refuses to fight against his son. Even after Absalom's death David does not return to reclaim his throne. Why? His reasons for doing this may reveal why the Messiah, the king of Israel, son of David also tarries and will not at this time come back to reign in Jerusalem.

David sends Zadok and Abiathar to Judah saying, "Ask the elders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his palace, since what is being said throughout Israel has reached the king at his quarters? You are my relatives, my own flesh and blood. So why should you be the last to bring back the king?' 2Sam 19:11-12. These words turn the heart of Judah back to the King. (vs 14)

May this be true of the house of Judah in our generation. May they likewise acknowledge the greater son of David and invite him back to Jerusalem. Is the Messiah waiting for the house of Judah to not only realize that Yeshua is "my bone and my flesh" but also that they (like the rest of Israel) are in need of the heart circumcision which will remove the reproach of Egypt or the infestation of the world. Judah's kingly position, scepter, and leadership in the family has to be respected and honored by the Northern tribes. (Rom 11:29) We are the lost sheep of Israel in the diaspora reawakening to who we are in the Messiah. Fighting against Judah at every turn cannot unite the Kingdom, but only divide. David realized that if only one house recognized his God appointed authority that the divided Kingdom would not stand.

Matt 12:25 And Yeshua knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

Could it be until the Messiah has a united kingdom where Judah and Israel are willing to walk together in humility, repentance and reconciliation under His rule and divine order, He will stay where He is, just as it is written about Him in Acts 3:21.

I would like to leave you with the words of Rabbi Meir Hai Uziel in establishing the new Sanhedrin council. Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel (Hebrew: **בן ציון מאיר חי עוזיאל**, born 1880, died 4 September 1953) was the Sephardi chief rabbi of the Mandate of Palestine from 1939 to 1948, and of Israel from 1948 to 1953. Two days before his death he dictated his testament. It said, inter alia,

"I have kept in the forefront of my thoughts the following aims: to disseminate Torah among students, to love the Torah and its precepts, Israel and its sanctity; I have emphasized love for every man and woman of Israel and for the Jewish people as a whole, love for the Lord God of Israel, the bringing of peace between every man and woman of Israel—in body, in spirit, in speech, and in deed, in thought and in meditation, in intent and in act, at home and in the street, in village and in town; to bring genuine peace into the home of the Jew, into the whole assembly of Israel in all its classes and divisions, and between Israel and its Father in Heaven."

May our heart also be to the oneness or unity of YHVH's people. Remember our Messiah's prayer for us to be one/echad/unified.

John 17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

Just maybe it is not about being right, it is about being echad. It is about showing respect to Israel and being grafted into them.

From Calendar History source: The Rabbinic Calendar is a calculated calendar governed by a set of rules. It is often referred to as the Hebrew Calendar, the Jewish Calendar, or the Hillel II Calendar. Reduction of calendar rules to mathematical statements yields a mathematical model providing a perpetual calendar. Unfortunately, only since the 4th century CE has this method, with all of its intricacies, uncontrovertibly been in use. At that time the rules governing the Hebrew calendar were kept secret, known, and presumably used, only by a select number of the Sanhedrin.

When the persecution of Roman emperor Constantius (337–361) threatened the very existence of the Sanhedrin, the body responsible for officially proclaiming the *moed*, its president, Patriarch Hillel II,

took an extraordinary step to preserve the unity of Israel. In order to prevent Jews scattered all over the earth from celebrating their own new moons, festivals and holidays at their own chosen times, he made public a fixed system of calendar calculation.

Shalom Craig and Lorie Zulauf