

KEEPING A BALANCE FOR THE GENTILE MESSIANIC



BALANCE

In most areas of our lives we have to be careful to walk in a balanced way. Too far to one side or the other can cause us to “fall off the tight rope” or be too extreme one way or the other.

To find a balanced view we must study carefully the words of scripture. To do this we have to look at a number of scriptures and come up with a balanced view.

PAUL HIMSELF

Apostle Paul declares at Caesarea that he was a circumcised Jewish Pharisee of the tribe of Benjamin.

He continued to follow Jewish law. His habit was to worship on Shabbat and to attend the Feasts as a believer, it is clear.

ACT 17:2 As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

ACTS 20:16 Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

But if we say that the Gentile Church must follow the Law of Moses this implies there is no difference between Israel and the Church. This is actually substitution theology.

GENTILE REQUIREMENTS

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Gentiles believers in Yeshua in Colossians. This is in the bible!

COL 2:16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Messiah.

Who was the “anyone” in this verse? Those who were false brethren /Judaizers who insisted all new converts must first be Jewish converts living a Jewish lifestyle.

This verse doesn't say these Jewish things are wrong. It just says don't criticize a Gentile believer if he doesn't follow the following:

1. Kosher laws.
2. Attending religious festivals – IE Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, etc
3. New moon celebration – Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)
4. A Sabbath day.

But they are completely free to follow them if they wish. We will see more later.

What does the bible say in Romans 11?

RO 11:17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.

The nourishing sap is the Spiritual blessings of Israel. This includes our salvation and our participating in the wonderful Shabbat and 7 feasts of the LORD. We are allowed to “share in it”.

THE SABBATH

In the Torah the Sabbath is not primarily about worship but rest.

God decreed that the Sabbath day was to be Kaddosh or set aside from the other 6 days as a rest day for God's people.

EX 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them,

but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Kadosh - separate).

The Sabbath was a reflection of God's creative work where after it was completed He rested. The Sabbath command also includes their servants/slaves, this points to when Israel as slaves was delivered from the burden of slavery in Egypt and had come to Mt. Sinai.

The Sabbath was Israel's sign of covenant with God. The ongoing regular weekly rhythm of work and rest was following God's pattern in a ever-renewed sign of their covenant with God.

EX 31:12 Then the LORD said to Moses, 13 "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

WORSHIP

Actually God wants his people to worship Him always not just on one day a week!

DT 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

SABBATH BLESSING NOT LEGALISM

Messiah Yeshua explains clearly the real purpose of the sabbath. The Sabbath is for man's benefit. As a blessing.

EX 20:11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Kaddosh - set aside).

And He explains something. This is basically "a higher priority thing overrides a lower thing". And so Yeshua Himself is above the Sabbath! "Lord of the Sabbath". And it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

MT 12:3 He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? 4 He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread-which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. 5 Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? 6 I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. 7 If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

MT 12:9 Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, 10 and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

MT 12:11 He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? 12 How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

MT 12:13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other.

Yeshua was clearly making a stand before them all. Yeshua does not want legalism on the Shabbat and doing good is allowed.

But for Jews it is God's requirement as the sign of their Covenant with God.

Gentiles are welcome to partake of the nourishing sap of the Shabbat too, but are not under the First Covenant as Jews so it is their choice not obligation as Col 2:16 says.

For Messianic Gentiles who fellowship together with Messianic Jews the day of worship, of course, should be Shabbat or Friday night.

THE FEASTS

The 7 Feasts listed in LEV 23 depict the whole redemptive story. Yeshua is actually there in them too. The Feasts of the LORD all point to Him and God's purposes.

Yeshua has already fulfilled the 1st 3 feasts (Passover as He is our Passover lamb, the First fruits as He is the First fruit of the resurrection, Unleavened bread as He is pure of sin and Pentecost as the Holy Spirit has come to start the Church).

The next 3 feasts to come are (Trumpets, Yom Kippur, Tabernacles) these point to major things to come in God's plan. The Final day of the LORD as Yeshua returns for His people, The wrath of GOD on sinful mankind by the Messiah and the Millennial reign under the Messiah.

Oh what a joy to joyfully participate in these biblical feasts not as a compulsion but willingly.

THE CHURCH

It is time for the Church to discard the vestigages of the early Church fathers anti-Jewish bias. To embrace the God given festivals and where possible worship at the same time as Jewish people do on the Sabbath. This is not "going under the law I.E. legalism" it is partaking of Israel's nourishing sap!

This is part of the Jewish roots of the Church that are it's inheritance. Not to distain but to embrace.

PS 119:97 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Having experienced the regular weekly Shabbats and the yearly feast cycles over the last 10 years I have definitely found my life enriched and grounded in God given blessing. I look forward so much to these days coming around again each year as old friends.

BALANCE

On one hand we can say the Jewish things of the Old Testament are no longer relevant or beneficial to us and reject good things that can bless the Gentile Believer in Yeshua, on the other hand one can insist that Gentile believers must follow all the Jewish law. Both views are not brought out in the New Testament and especially in what happens in ACTS 15 and the epistles.

Both will cause us to fall off the tight rope of balance. Let's stay on it and be blessed.

RESOURCE

The book below is an excellent resource for information on the Feasts of the LORD.
The Feast of the LORD Kevin Howard/ Marvin Rosenthal. Highly recommended.

