

Who's Running This Place?

He humbled you, allowing you to become hungry, and then fed you with man, which neither you nor your ancestors had ever known, to make you understand that a person does not live on food alone but on everything that comes from the mouth of Adonai. (Deut. 8:3 CJB)

For those of us who have realized and accepted that a Torah submissive lifestyle is included in a relationship with the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob, the issue of authority is foremost. To us, walking with Him is not just a matter of raising a hand, or “going forward,” or taking a bath, or merely possessing “right thinking.” We recognize that true faith consists in acting on the understanding we have received, and continuing to alter every response we have so it lines up with the Will of the Father.

We have passed through the doctrines of men intended to keep us from full maturity in the Spirit, and are pursuing the goal of the Messiah Yeshua.

It is not that I (we) have already obtained it or already reached the goal – no, I (we) keep pursuing it in the hope of taking hold of that for which the Messiah Yeshua took hold of me (us). Brothers, I, for my part, do not think of myself as having yet gotten hold of it; but one thing I do: forgetting what is behind me and straining forward toward what lies ahead, I keep pursuing the goal in order to win the prize offered by God's upward calling in the Messiah Yeshua. (Phil. 3:12-14, CJB)

Therefore, leaving behind the initial lessons about the Messiah, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of turning from works that lead to death, trusting God, and instruction about washings, s'mikhah (ritual of circumcision for conversion to Judaism), the resurrection of the dead and eternal punishment. And, God willing, this is what we will do. (Heb. 6:1-3, CJB, parenthesis mine)

The reason for our full submission to His Instructions (Torah) is our recognition of His right to tell us what to do. Hear and obey is an integral part of our walk. To us, questioning His Word is the same as questioning Him. He is part and parcel of His Words, and to accept Him we must accept His Words. They are very simple and straightforward – it is the doctrines of men that confuse and complicate the issue. These doctrines seem to have one thing in common: they are all forms of “replacement” theology specifically designed to further the premise that “I don't want to obey.”

Examples of these false teachings include:

- 1) The Church replaced Israel, all or part
- 2) The New Testament replaced the Old Testament
- 3) Jesus replaced the Old System with a New System
- 4) Grace replaced The Law
- 5) Christian holidays replaced Jewish feasts

- 6) Jesus replaced the Father as the object of worship
- 7) Paul replaced his Jewish beliefs with Christian beliefs, and taught Christians replaced the Jews.

Torah submission is a repudiation of these types of doctrines, and the “re-placing” of the Father’s Word and Authority back where it belongs. We who have begun to submit have started to hear and obey the plain teaching of His Word and we know according to His Word that:

- 1) The Body of the Messiah has existed since the beginning (also called “called out ones,” the remnant, Hebrew *qahal*, Greek *ekklesia*). New members from the Gentiles are grafted into an existing Olive Tree with Messiah as the root (Rom. 11). Israel still has its place, and always will.
- 2) The New Testament is not a Covenant (although as Scripture it contains revelation concerning the New Covenant), and no part of the Word is antiquated or outdated (Ps. 119:89; Is. 40:8). The Word is One as the Father and Son are One (John 17:11).
- 3) Yahshua came to place the Word (including the OT or Law or whatever you want to call it) on a firmer foundation (Mat. 5:17-19). What He battled was the teachings of men, which battle members of His Body are still fighting (Mk. 7:5-23; Mt. 15:1-20; Col. 2:8). He manifested a new priest hood (Heb. 4-8, context is priesthood NOT covenants – old and new refer to the priesthood), but did not destroy the existing Covenants (they are permanent because they are based on His Word).
- 4) Grace (also called mercy) has always saturated the Father’s dealings with humans (Noah found grace and etc.). What some call The Law is literally loaded to the brim with grace. Grace and Law are not mutually exclusive terms.
- 5) The Feasts are not Jewish. There are no Jews in the first five books of the Bible, only Israel. The Feasts are the Fathers appointed times (Lev. 23:2). We know that the “instead-of” Messiah will try to change the “times and seasons” which refers to the Father’s appointed times (Dan. 7:25).
- 6) Yeshua constantly pointed His followers to worship of, and obedience to, the Father (Mat. 7:21, 12:50). Although they are One, so worship of the Father and Son tend to be the same thing. Yeshua will hand over the Kingdom to the Father (I Cor. 15:24).
- 7) Paul, like Yeshua, taught against man-made traditions, not YHVH’s Word (Acts 21:24, 22:3, 24:14). He followed exactly what some people think of as The Law, and he taught those traditions to others (1Cor. 11:2; Gal. 1:14; 2Thes. 2:15, 3:6).

I thank Brad Scott (www.wildbranch.org) for showing me a meaning of Matthew 24:5 “For many will come in my name saying I am the Christ and will deceive many.” He pointed out that these people would say that “He (Jesus) is the Christ” but these same people would deceive. With a little reflection it is obvious we are seeing this phenomena in full swing today. Many are coming in “his name,” claiming, “Jesus is the Christ,” but

deceiving many into false worship. For a long time people who teach against cults have warned us concerning those who deny the Deity of Jesus, but rarely do you hear warnings about those who proclaim His Deity and still lead the sheep astray.

Hear and obey is no easy or arbitrary statement. Not everybody agrees with this philosophy, even many of those who say they wear his name; it has been thus since the beginning, and will ever be so. But what do I mean by the Authority of Yahveh? According to the Scriptures, His authority comes from at least four factors that I can see. First, He owns everything (and is omnipresent):

See, the sky, the heaven beyond the sky, the earth and everything on it all belong to Adonai your God. (Deut. 10:14 CJB)

"I made the earth, humankind, and the animals on the earth by my great power and my outstretched arm; and I give it to whom it seems right to me." (Jer. 27:5 CJB)

"Can anyone hide in a place so secret that I won't see him?" asks Adonai. Adonai says, "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" (Jer. 23:24 CJB)

Second, He is perfect, without sin or shadow of turning:

Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father who made the heavenly lights; with him there is neither variation nor darkness caused by turning. (James 1:17 CJB)

Third, He has all the power (omnipotent).

God made the earth by his power, established the world by his wisdom, spread out the sky by his understanding. (Jer. 10:12 CJB)

And fourth, He knows everything (omniscience).

"Blessed by the name of God from eternity past to eternity future! For wisdom and power are his alone; he brings the changes of seasons and times; he installs and deposes kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those with discernment. He reveals deep and secret things; he knows what lies in the darkness; and light dwells with him." (Dan. 2:20-22 CJB)

There are many other things we can say about His character and attributes that contribute to answering the question of why He has authority, but these pretty much cover the basics.

Since the beginning, beings that He created have constantly questioned His authority. From the time they were made, these created beings were capable of contradicting His Will, and some immediately began to give voice to dissenting opinions on His Name and Authority. The mouth that was made for them by Him began to question His character, His intentions, His methods, and motives. It seems plain to me that they did this because they wanted what He had (authority, power, whatever) but they didn't want Him. They desired His position for themselves. Actually the first one (haSatan) wanted it for his self, but that deceiver has managed to convince some others that they can have the power too. Little do they know he is much more powerful than they and he doesn't share or play well with others.

According to the record we have, starting in the Garden with the Serpent (“Did ‘Elohim really say?”); to the time of the judges (“every man did what was right in his own eyes”); to the time of the Kings of Israel (“but the king did not take down the high places”); to the time of the physical walk of Yahshua (“you set aside the Torah for the sake of your traditions”); to the split between Jews and Gentiles after the apostles (we replace you and your Torah); to the Catholic Church (changing the times and seasons and making more “high places”); to the Protestant Reformation (each man should do what is right in his own eyes); to our present day (“has God really said?”); the authority of Yahveh embodied in His Word has been doubted, deliberately mistranslated, and otherwise ignored.

The leaders of Israel constantly usurped His authority by using their authority to promote their own ideologies. After the time of the apostles, as the Gentiles gained stronger influence in the fledgling church, teachings were developed specifically designed to increase authority over the believer. The Catholic Church solidified this control, but rather than use this authority for anything good they ended up in the same corruption as Israel's leaders. The protestant reformation was supposed to return authority to Yavheh's word and allegedly promoted the idea of the “priesthood of the believer,” but all they really did is replace the Catholic masters with a plurality of denominations, all teaching that “each man should do what is right in his own eyes,” while continuing nearly all of the Catholic pagan practices. In one form or another, the thought is the same – “I don't want to obey.”

I may be un-schooled, but I can spot a wolf a mile away, even if he is wearing a custom-made, hand-tailored, three-piece, \$2,000.00 Armani suit made out of 100% virgin wool. He's still a wolf to me no matter how dressed up he is. And these wolves are today gleefully leading the flock to the precipice, all the while proclaiming “Christian love” and “peace,” attempting to silence those who shout warnings and plead with the sheep to hear and see.

I just read a sad and bizarre news article where a woman in Texas is accused of murder for hitting a man with a car. Apparently the man ended up going through her windshield and getting pinned there with his legs broken and could not extricate himself. The sad/strange part is that she drove home, put the car in the garage while the man was still alive, and for three days ignored his pleas for help. He finally bled to death the authorities think. The bizarre part is that she apparently kept going out to the garage and “apologizing profusely” for her actions, all the while refusing to render aid or call somebody who would.

My point in bringing this up is that, as deeply disturbing as this incident is, the Church frequently acts in a similar manner. They “drive” in a reckless fashion, not caring who gets hurt. Someone ends up broken and bleeding right in their “house,” but they think that as long as they “act nice” or “apologize” then they are okay. They “agree to disagree” while continuing in hypocrisy, and just watch people die. Their words do not

match up to their actions. There is no possible way that “thinking right” or “saying the right things” is really right if their actions do not line up with those that Yahveh has commanded.

But don't listen to me; listen to His Word. Me, I'm just your embarrassing relative from the country, a buck-toothed hillbilly from the back woods standing in bare feet with pants held up by rope holding a jug of moonshine. My words aren't smooth, I trip over my frustration sometimes, and I'm generally an embarrassment to more civilized company. So don't pay any attention to me, but study the Father's Word. You will see that I, and others, have not departed from the Way.

“So now, Isra'el, all that Adonai your God asks from you is to fear Adonai your God, follow all his ways, love him and serve Adonai your God with all your heart and all your being; to obey, for your own good, the mitzvot (commandments) and regulations of Adonai which I am giving you today. (Deut. 10:12-13, CJB)

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as when you were called you were called to one hope. And there is one Lord, one trust, one immersion, and one God, the Father of all, who rules over all, works through all and is in all.” (Eph. 4:4,5 CJB)

May the One Father continue to conform you into the image of the Messiah
Bruce Bertram