

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Grafted Into the Tree of Israel

Romans 11:17

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them, and did become a partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree;

When grafting there are certain rules and laws that one must abide by or else the graft will not take and then it will die. Each one of these rules of the physical realm in grafting trees has an application in the spiritual realm. Please note the following passage.

Yochanan (John) 3:12

“If I told you earthly things and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”

If one does not understand the physical realm in which we live, how can he understand the spiritual realm in which YHWH dwells? If one does not understand the life we live in this world how can he understand life eternal? If one does not understand earthly things how can he live a spiritual life pleasing to YHWH?

Such is certainly the case in understanding being grafted into the root of Israel. For grafting is a very precise undertaking in which if things are not done according to certain procedures then the graft is sure to fail and thus die. Likewise, how often have men failed to understand this basic principle of grafting and thus when the attempt is made to graft a man into the tree of Israel which is Mashiach Yeshua the graft does not take and is doomed to failure simply because the protocols set forth in Scripture are not properly followed?

One of the key elements in doing a graft is the age of the branch, called a “scion,” which is being grafted into the root stock. While the root stock can be of any age and size this is not true of the scion which is being grafted into the stock. In order to have a successful graft the scion branch can only be in the first year of its growth. This means that it has gone through the previous growing cycle, lost its leaves in the fall and has made it through the winter months. Spring is nearly here as the buds of the chosen branch are swelling, getting ready to push forth

with its second year's growth. It is only such a branch as this that is eligible to be grafted in to the root stock. Older branches cannot survive the trauma of being cut from the tree and grafted into another tree. It is also important to note that successful grafting is done in the spring of the year. It is in the spring of the year that Pesach always falls, which is important to note as this is a vital part of a person being successfully grafted into the tree of Israel.

The Pesach lamb which is sacrificed upon Pesach is a foreshadowing of Mashiach. But how many have considered that this same lamb is also a picture of Israel, even more specifically the individuals of that set apart nation? How so? Has anyone ever explained to your satisfaction why the lamb had to be in the first year of its life? How does that actually relate to Mashiach? It does relate to Mashiach, but it also relates to Israel.

What this does point to is a new person coming into the fullness of the covenant and a covenantal relationship with YHWH and being a full part of Israel. How so? Let us illustrate. Please consider the ruling of the council of Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15. In this council it was debated about the place of circumcision in the life of a new follower of Mashiach, and specifically when that circumcision should be done. Should it be done at the beginning of one's spiritual journey, as some argued that it was the act of circumcision which saved a man? Or, was it as the council ruled, that one was saved by faith alone and that circumcision would naturally follow later as one chose to obey Scripture in its fullness? It was the latter to be sure!

Ma'aseh (Acts) 15:19-21

19 "Therefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Nations are returning to Elohim;

20 but that we write to them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood.

21 For Moshe from generations of old has in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Shabbat."

As Ya'aqov renders the judgment of the council he states it in the format of four negative commandments and one positive commandment. It is upon the positive commandment that we wish to focus at present. But before we do, let me pose a question to those who are Christians. Are you personally keeping those four negative commandments as scripturally given requirements to be a bona fide follower of Mashiach Yeshua? Most Christians do not. In fact, most Christians do not even know what these four prohibitions are dealing with, let alone follow them. So, if one is not following these four prohibitions found in the New Testament, then what does that say about their relationship with Mashiach Yeshua?

Okay, back to the positive commandment in which we are told that Moshe is read in the synagogues each and every Shabbat. First, this tells us that the council expected the followers of Mashiach to be gathering together on Shabbat to learn the commandments of Moshe. Second, it tells us that the followers of Mashiach were not only to learn these commandments, but they were and are expected to do them, that is, to keep and obey the commandments.

In a typical year one would go through the whole Torah cycle and through the entire festival cycle, learning how to do and keep each of the festivals and how to live a life every day according to Torah. Then, when the cycle was renewed and begun again the new follower of Mashiach Yeshua was faced with a question: Did he truly want this life and did he want to be grafted into the root of Israel permanently? If so, then he would become circumcised understanding that this is not what saved him or even saves him, but rather it was an acceptance of the full yoke of walking a Torah life.

Galatians 5:3

Yea, I testify again to every man that receives circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole Torah.

Shaul rightly understood the council that it was not the circumcision that saves a man; but what circumcision actually does is put one into a covenantal relationship with YHWH. In this covenantal relationship each party of the covenant is expected to live up to the agreed upon covenant. That covenant is referred to as Torah. The people of that covenant are the people of Israel. To be saved means one is grafted into that tree. The tree is Israel and the root of that tree is Mashiach.

Romans 11:16b

and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

The root can be no one or nothing else except YHWH. Israel was and is in need of a Savior. Israel is not holy or set-apart in and of herself.

Yochanan (John) 15:6

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

It is Mashiach who gives life to the branches. He is the root and branch of David.

Please note that it is the root which supports the tree and not the tree supporting the root.

Romans 11:17-18

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them, and you became a partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree;

18 glory not over the branches; but if you glory, it is not you that bears the root, but the root bears you.

Now this brings us to a second rule about grafting that cannot be violated. Only trees of like kind can be grafted from one to another. One cannot graft an orange tree onto an apple tree. In the above passage we see a wild olive branch being grafted onto a tame olive tree. But the

point is that both are olive trees. If one does not come from this same family of trees, then how can he be grafted into the tree of Israel? He cannot!

Another rule about grafting, as simple as it may sound, is that the root supports the branch, not the other way around. Why is this important to understand? If the graft does not take it is the branch which dies, not the root! This is important to understand as we will see more precisely below.

Now there are different types of grafts and the type of graft one chooses to use is based upon the size of the scion being grafted into the stock as well as the size of the stock branch into which the scion is being grafted. Ideally, it is best to select a scion to be grafted of the same size as the stock. This type of graft has the best chance of success. However, this is not always feasible or possible.

Between the bark and the wood is a layer called the *cambium*. The cambium is one cell thick. It is this part of the scion and the stock which must be perfectly lined up in order for the graft to take and for it to produce fruit.

It is the scion which must be perfectly in line with the stock in order to survive. Otherwise it will die. Likewise, for us to be properly grafted into the tree of Israel and be supported by the root Mashiach, we must be in perfect alignment with His will. Otherwise, we will die.

When the graft is initially done the graft must be protected from the elements of the weather. If it is not properly protected, then the graft will fail. Likewise, when a person is grafted into the tree of Israel he must be protected by the older members of His body. In this way it helps ensure that the graft will be a good and healthy graft.

Now it is interesting to note that some grafts will take partially. That is, they will have the appearance of being a good graft. They will appear to thrive and produce good leafy growth. However, the connection will not be good enough to produce fruit on that branch. The graft may have growth for several years, in fact. However, when a heavy wind storm comes along if the graft is not a good healthy graft, then it will break right at the graft and the branch will be lost in the storm.

Matithyah (Matthew) 13:21

“yet he does not have root in himself, but endures for a while; and when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, he immediately stumbles.”

Notice that as Yeshua teaches us on this occasion He tells us that this particular person does not have root in himself. This certainly applies to one who has been grafted in and whose graft was not perfectly in line with His will, but only partially in line.

Brothers and sisters, it behooves us to make sure that everything that we are doing is according to His will. If we are doing something that is not in line with His will, then we need to discard it,

for it is a great hindrance to our spiritual well-being and hinders the bearing of good fruit in our lives.

It is also important to note that when doing grafting a very sharp instrument is used to cut both the stock and the scion. What this shows us is that we need to make a clean cut with our past and turn away from it without reservation.

Luqa (Luke) 9:62

But Yeshua said to him, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of Elohim."

One cannot change his past. We need to learn the lessons from the past and then let the past go. It will only imprison one if allowed to do so. However, there is freedom in Mashiach Yeshua if we will just walk with Him.

There is one final thing concerning grafting that we need to discuss briefly. The characteristics of the scion are never lost, but remain always with that branch. It will bear the type of fruit it would have always borne, but it will be healthy fruit now for it has a better source of life giving nutrients. The scion branch will not change the stock either, for it is the stock which gives the scion its life.

Yochanan (John) 15:4

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can you, except you abide in Me."

May each one of us abide in Mashiach Yeshua so that we would bear good and healthy fruit for Him.

ABBA YHWH, we ask that we would be in perfect alignment with You and Your will, that the fruit we bear is good and pleasing in Your sight; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach.

Amein and Amein.

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