

Bearing Good Fruit

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In the previous article, I talked about the fact that you need to actually plant seeds in order to bear fruit. This is obvious to most people in the agricultural world, but not necessarily in the spiritual realm.

You see, all of the patterns built into creation have a practical application in our lives, but in this drive thru "McChristianity" culture that pervades much of the western world, the fundamentals often get overlooked.

Prosperity teachers go straight to the harvest and neglect the planting. I drive by Joel Osteen's church in Houston every time I go back and forth to New York, and it is a constant reminder of this deception.

Sometimes I hear him speak on the radio and I can only handle a minute or two, because while his words sound appealing, he is leading people away from the Torah. It is always "God wants this for you" and "God wants that" for your life. A few years ago, I heard him declare it was the Jubilee and He constantly promises all sorts of blessings without ever talking about obedience. It's all blessings and no curses.

He is not the only one, and it is critical to understand the Scriptural patterns. Otherwise, you miss the complete plan of Elohim.

After the people of Elohim crossed the Jordan and were circumcised by Joshua (Yahushua), they observed Passover and were then led to Shechem where the Covenant of Sinai was renewed.

I hope you can see the same pattern when we repent and are immersed in the Name of Yahushua. We allow Him to circumcise our hearts, and we rely on the covering of His blood shed as the Passover Lamb to save us. He renewed the Covenant through His broken body and His shed blood.

That renewal was prophesied by Jeremiah and it specifically promised: *“I will put My Torah in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.”* Jeremiah 31:33

So, the Torah being inside of us is the focus of this renewed Covenant. The Torah was also an integral part of the crossing over process that led to the renewal at Shechem.

Let's read about that in Deuteronomy 27.

“¹ Now Moses, with the elders of Yisrael, commanded the people, saying: ‘Keep all the commandments which I command you today. ² And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the Land which YHWH your Elohim is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones (abanim), and whitewash them with lime. ³ You shall write on them all the words of the Torah, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which YHWH your Elohim is giving you, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey,’ just as YHWH the Elohim of your fathers promised you. ⁴ Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. ⁵ And there you shall build an altar to YHWH your Elohim, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron tool on them. ⁶ You shall build with whole

stones the altar of YHWH your Elohim, and offer burnt offerings on it to YHWH your Elohim. ⁷ You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before YHWH your Elohim. ⁸ And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of the Torah.” Deuteronomy 27:1-8

Did you know that they actually discovered the location of Joshua’s Altar on Mount Ebal?



I always enjoy bringing people to this site, because it makes these passages in the Scriptures, that often get overlooked, come alive.

Shechem means “between the shoulders” and it is named that because it is “between the shoulders” of Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim.

This renewal event is critical for the people of Elohim to understand, because it outlined the conditions of their relationship with YHWH and their time in the Land.

Essentially, obey and be blessed or disobey and fall under the curses.

I challenge you to read through Deuteronomy 27 and 28 and see where you think the United States is: Under blessings or curses? Go ahead and test any other country for that matter.

How about the modern State of Israel that is vaccinating its entire population with an experimental gene therapy. Does that look like a country under the blessings of Elohim?

This is a fundamental concept that flows directly from the Garden, and nothing has changed. The death and resurrection of Yahushua did not alter these bedrock principles of blessings and curses, it only offered a solution to the curses.

So now, we can be delivered from the curses, even those that we were born into. Now we can be washed clean by His blood (whitewashed), and bear fruit through obedience to the Torah that is written in and on us through the circumcision of the heart.

It is the same Torah, the same Covenant, the same blessings and the same curses, only a different and better renewal through Yahushua the Messiah.

So, we are saved by grace, which results from the atonement provided through the blood of Yahushua. That is a free gift offered to us by our Messiah. We can not earn that washing. We must be “whitewashed” through His blood.

Once we have been washed clean, like those whitewashed stones, it's time to walk the walk. We allow the words to be planted inside of us so we can bear much fruit by living lives of obedience.

I find that the subject of bearing fruit can sometimes fall within the realm of the abstract, and I thought the subject warranted further examination.

Last week, we looked at man and his purpose in the Garden.

After the creation of mankind we read the following: *"Then Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"*
Genesis 1:28

Man was supposed to be fruitful and was placed in the Garden of Eden to tend the Garden that YHWH had planted. Man did not do the difficult preparation work. He did not create the Garden or plant the trees in the Garden. Rather, he was permitted to work it and receive his sustenance from certain specified the fruit of the trees.

While He was entrusted to watch over and maintain the Creation of Elohim, there were rules and limitations to his tenancy.

The focus of all of Creation is fruitfulness and multiplication within the framework of the instructions of Elohim, and man has an integral and special role to play in the process. Man was made in the image of Elohim, which means that he is supposed to represent and be the literal expression of Elohim within Creation.

Of course, we all know that the man and the woman failed and were ejected from the Garden. Instead of watching and tending the Garden in Eden, man was relegated to working the ground and planting. He now needed to do some heavy lifting in order to feed himself.

“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:19

You see, while man was in the Garden, he was actually in the Kingdom and his needs were provided for as long as he obeyed. That demonstrated the blessings of obedience.

When he decided to disobey his responsibility was taken away. He was removed from the Kingdom, and fell under a curse because of disobedience.

His focus then shifted to feeding himself, which would involve a lot of hard work.

This is one of the first things that I point out to all of my groups in Israel as we consider the Appointed Times. We go to a place where we can see and experience some of the work involved in harvesting the Land.

It is important to understand the enormous transition and paradigm shift that took place from living in the Garden planted by Elohim, filled with fruit bearing trees that He provided for food, to a life of constantly toiling, sowing and reaping.

Thankfully, the yearly cycle of the Appointed Times beginning at the grain harvest and ending with the fruit harvest shows us the path back to Eden. The Appointed Times focused on the harvests reveal how the curse will be lifted and reversed.

After the fall, man’s condition continued to deteriorate and most of mankind ended up rebelling against YHWH. We read that during the days of Noah.

“¹² . . . Elohim looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³ And Elohim said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.’”
Genesis 6:12-13

After the flood we read the following promise and command: *“^{8:22} While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease. ^{9:1} So Elohim blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’”* Genesis 8:22-9:1

Mankind was, once again, instructed to be fruitful. This was a planetary reset and interestingly we read: *“ . . . Noah began to be a man of the soil and he planted a vineyard.”* Genesis 9:20

Noah was a gardener, like Adam, and the first thing that he planted was a vineyard. This emphasis on the vineyard was purposeful and prophetic, as we shall soon see.

After Noah partook of the fruit of the vine we read about an incident involving Ham and likely Canaan - “his younger son.” (See Genesis 9:24)

That set the stage for the descendants of Canaan to prepare the Covenant Land for the descendants of Shem. Noah proclaimed *“Blessed be YHWH, the Elohim of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant.”* Genesis 9:26

That is exactly what happened when the descendants of Shem, through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, became the Covenant Assembly of Yisrael.

Just as Adam did not do any of the work establishing the Garden, so Yisrael did not do any of the work preparing the land of Canaan, which was the Covenant Land. The preparatory work was done by the descendants of Canaan – the Canaanites.

“I have given you a Land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.” Joshua 24:13 (See also Deuteronomy 6:10-12)

The Canaanites had been responsible for preparing the Land for the Yisraelites. The prophecy spoken through Noah was fulfilled. When YHWH brought Yisrael into the Land, He was demonstrating that they would be the conduit for a return to the Garden.

They were headed in the right direction, although they still needed to work for their daily bread in the Land. They still needed to toil and sweat for their yearly grain.

When they were in the wilderness, they were given daily bread, but they enjoyed none of the fruits. When they entered the Land they enjoyed the fruits of the trees and the vines, but needed to pray and work for their daily bread.

The Covenant Land did not have a mighty river like the Nile or the Euphrates. This was intentional.

“¹⁰ For the Land which you go to possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot, as a vegetable garden; ¹¹ but the Land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, ¹² a land for which YHWH your Elohim cares; the eyes of YHWH your Elohim are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.” Deuteronomy 11:10-12

The water was not ever-present. It needed to be released from the heavens at the proper times. The pagans worshipped their river gods as their source of life. The Yisraelites needed to learn to remain steadfast, and put their faith and trust in YHWH to provide rain in due season.

This is the lesson that we are all supposed to learn. Do you know when to expect the early rains and the latter rains? The early rains are the light rains that begin after Sukkot. They prepare the dry and parched soil for the next harvest. They are called “yoreh.”

The latter rains are the heavier rains that fall during the second planting that we talked about last week. These heavier rains are called “malkosh” and they are vital for a bountiful harvest.

Understanding these cycles are critical for the future. Consider the prophecy through Joel:

“²³ Be glad then, you children of Tzyon, and rejoice in YHWH your Elohim; For He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you - The former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. ²⁴ The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.” Joel 2:23-24

The future restoration of Yisrael will fall in line with the harvests. We should all be looking at the signs and the seasons so that we are prepared and ready.

It is also important to recognize that the Covenant Land is special. The eyes of YHWH are always on it, and He cares for it. He is not finished with it, and all those who serve Him should be very interested in the Land.

Some day in the future, a Covenant People will be returned and planted in the Land to bear fruit with King Yahushua.

That is why an important part of the mission of Shema Yisrael is to connect people with the special Land of YHWH Elohim.

The Covenant Land is the place where YHWH chooses to place His Name. If it is special to Him, then it should be special to those who love Him. This is one of those issues that tests the heart of a person.

Make no mistake, there is a clear distinction between the Land, and the people who live in the Land.

The Prophet Isaiah actually provided a song regarding the Land being the location of the vineyard of YHWH.

“¹ Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. ² He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine (soreq). He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; So, He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. ³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. ⁴ What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? ⁵ And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; and break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶ I will lay it waste; It shall not be pruned or dug, but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it. ⁷ For the vineyard of YHWH of hosts is the House of Yisrael, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.” Isaiah 5:1-7

This prophecy, in the form of a song, reveals that the vineyard (kerem) of YHWH is the House of Yisrael, and the men of Judah are His plants (neta).

Yisrael was planted in the Covenant Land in order to produce fruit. Instead of “good grapes” (anavim), the vineyard was producing “wild grapes” (b’ashim).

The Hebrew word “b’ashim” refers to something that stinks, and it is linked to the stink of the Nile due to the dead fish and the stink in Egypt due to the dead frogs during the plagues.

The prophet Jeremiah provided a similar account as we read in Isaiah: *“Yet I had planted you a noble vine (soreq), a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate branches of a foreign vine?”* Jeremiah 2:21

Here we see that Yisrael was once a choice and noble vine that produced fruit, but that vine became foreign and produced degenerate fruit. In the Hebrew the word “degenerate” (sur) means: “turn aside.”

So Yisrael was producing fruit, just not the right fruit. They had turned away from YHWH and followed other gods. Their conduct was foreign and abominable, and their fruit became a stench. As a result, Yisrael was uprooted and removed from the Land.

This requirement to bear good fruit has never changed, and it is the easiest way to determine the true identity of Yisrael. While many may claim to be Yisrael, because they are Jewish, their fruits tell the real story. We don’t need any DNA tests, we simply need to examine and inspect the fruit.

The same holds true for many Christians who think they are “the Bride of Christ,” but their fruits are a stench because they mingle their faith with pagan traditions such as Christmas and Easter.

According to Yahushua the Messiah, there are many who are going to be surprised and shocked when they stand before Him. There will be many who think that they know the Messiah, and think that they bore good fruit, but Yahushua is going to cut them off along with others who think they are part of the Kingdom because their heritage. (see Matthew 7:21-23 and 8:10-12)

Therefore, it is critical that we pay attention to this issue. The question is not simply whether you are bearing fruit, but whether your fruit is classified as good.

That, in large part, depends upon the seed that you planted long before the harvest. That is why in the last message I mentioned the Gezer Calendar, or better yet - the Gezer schedule.

The ancients, along with modern farmers, need to plan ahead if they expect to yield a bountiful harvest. We must do the same.

In order to do this, we must be aware of the time and the seasons. That is why I constantly remind people of the calendar. We must know when to plant so we are ready for the rains.

Did you know that many farmers use the cycle of the moon to determine the best time to plant? They then rely on the cycle of the sun for those seeds to grow.

The sun and the moon are intimately associated with the agricultural cycle, and that is why YHWH uses them for “*signs and Appointed Times (moadim), and for days and years.*” Genesis 1:14

Not only do we need to be on the correct calendar. We need to be planting in the right vineyard, the vineyard identified with Yisrael – not the vineyard of some foreign religion. We also need to be planting the proper seed, so that we can bear good fruit, instead of bad fruit.

In the next message I will explore that distinction, and look at what YHWH considers to be good fruit.

Shalom

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Shema Yisrael (Hear O Yisrael) are the words that Yahushua spoke when asked what was the First Command.

*“The first of all the Commandments is: ‘Hear, O Yisrael,
YHWH our Elohim, YHWH is one.”*

Mark 12:29

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Matthew 11:15