

Scripture cannot be understood without Mesorah (traditions)

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Yahushua – The real name of Jesus of Nazareth

Part 1

To say traditions allows us to understand scripture may seem very awkward for modern Christians to admit because they are given buzzwords like “born again”, “sola scripture” which have their basis more in tradition than scripture. Scripture does not use the term “born Again” a modern derived word but it uses the term “circumcising the heart” which can be found in Deut 10:16, and 30:6 in the law of G-d amongst other texts.

What is Mesorah (traditions)? These are the rulings and acts that were understood and formed in the various periods by the Tannaim and Ammoraim or the sages of Judaism. The modern word teacher or Rabbi could be used to describe people who understood these things but they required a lifetime of learning. Their teachings are contained in the Mishnah and subsequently commented by the Gemara. The Mishnah was written around 200- 300 CE by Judah Ha Nasi. These are also referred to as the Oral Law or the Oral Torah.

Christendom is generally in large parts kept in ignorance by their Pastors and Bishops of these things who try to write off anything termed oral law or oral Torah as some kind of heresy but the reality is that Christendom practices many traditions without blinking an eyelid, while blaming the Jews for practicing the oral law.

While Israel was in exile in Babylon only 25% of the population returned to Israel. The traditions go back to Ezra the scribe. We also find that another large world religion such as Islam also carries many traditions in the form of the Hadiths, which are the sayings and the deeds of the Muslim prophet Muhammad and his companions. To be honest as an ex Muslim and with Levite parentage from Iran you could not interpret the Qur’an correctly without the Hadiths going into details of what’s what. The same way one who is a serious student of scripture could not interpret the scripture unless he delved into the rabbinic literature. Without the traditions some text just cannot be understood.

The Mishnah was divided into six sections which were on daily prayer, agriculture, the Sabbaths, religious rituals, married life, civil and criminal law, the Temple of Jerusalem and ritual rites.

It would be dishonest to say one can understand the faith of the disciples of Yahushua without the rabbinic traditions as many Christians are finding out by studying the Hebrew roots. One such example is the Jerusalem school of synoptic research. Yahushua was a Rabbi in the setting of traditional Judaism and very much at home amongst the various

teachers of the law in the Temple setting. He did not reject Judaism contrary to popular belief.

Let me show you how Pastor's with little knowledge of Islam or Judaism make many statements that are contrary to even the very New Testament they call scripture.

The church has been practicing what is termed communion on Sunday's for almost 1900 years but you do not find this in the New Testament. What is termed "communion" was not a new commandment at all but derived from the Jewish tradition by the Roman Catholic Church passed onto the Anglican churches all over the world. The communion was actually a form of Jewish liturgy called **Kiddush**, which was and is practiced on Friday commencing the Sabbath at sunset on what the orthodox Jewish people and the believers of Messiah in Israel call Qabalat Shabbat. This means to welcome the weekly Sabbath as the queen of heaven. First century disciples of Yahushua practiced this religiously and it was brought out of Jewish oral traditions by the men of the great assembly, men such as Ezra the priest and other following in his life during the 6th century BC to 4th century BCE.

Could we really put up hands on our hearts and say that we can interpret the law better than Ezra? I think many make this mistake though without understanding!

Note Kiddush was not commanded in the Torah the law of G-d and neither is there any commandment in the Renewed Covenant known as the NT. The text in Luke 22:17 and First Corinthians 5:7 is not about communion but Passover so please do not confuse this with that text or as many in Christendom follow this blindly thinking it is a new commandment when it isn't. The truth is that this was taken from Judaism and the anti-Jewish church fathers decided to operate their own brand new tradition because they loathed the Jews and their Judaism. If you want to know more then I encourage you to read the text of Marcion of Sinope, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin martyr and John Chrysostom some among many Jewish haters. Ignatius is alleged to be a student of John the disciple of Yahushua/Jesus of Nazareth but he actually did not follow any of the teachings of his teacher if John was his teacher which I contend that he was not.

Note new evidence has emerged that He actually did follow through and kept the Sabbaths and not Sunday as a day of worship so I make the correction here. It was not St Ignatius but rather Thebuthis.

John never taught about separating from the Jews, he never spoke about setting up separate places of worship or to enact Sunday as a law to establish worship. He had never heard the term Christian, which many believe Ignatius coined because John never wrote it down in the gospel of John, Revelation or any of his epistles. One then wonders where did Ignatius get these ideas from? However new findings indicate that Saint Ignatius was indeed an upright Torah teacher but the faith was corrupted much earlier by others Marcion being one.

Ignatius was the person who used the word Catholic for the universal church according to some, however it may refer to the universal faith of the patriarchs and prophets and not necessarily how the word came to be known as Catholic much later. One would be hard pushed to prove Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all Catholics just as Muslims say they were Muslims and we know neither is the case.

John the son of Zebedee never used these terms for Catholics? Ignatius did all the things which apparently John did not according to his texts because they have been mistranslated. I believe the words of saint Ignatius have been altered by Sunday agenda Christians to give rise to fanciful ideas of Sunday worship which was not the case. Let us examine what an earlier historian of the Nazarenes wrote:

“Up to that period (98 CE) the Assembly had remained like a virgin pure and uncorrupted: for, if there were any persons who were disposed to tamper with the wholesome rule of the proclaiming of salvation, they still lurked in some dark place of concealment or other. But, when the sacred band of Emissaries had in various ways closed their lives, and that generation of men to whom it had been vouchsafed to listen to the inspired Wisdom with their own ears had passed away, then did the confederacy of godless error take its rise through the treachery of false teachers, who, seeing that none of the emissaries any longer survived, at length attempted with bare and uplifted head to oppose the proclaiming of the truth by proclaiming "knowledge falsely so called."

(Hegesippus the Nazarene; c. 185 CE; quoted by Eusebius in Eccl.Hist. 3:32)”

Here is what another writer tells us

<http://www.cogwriter.com/ignatius.htm>

Ignatius' Letter to the Magnesians

The other major claim in favor of early Sunday worship is from Ignatius' Letter to the Magnesians.

Here is what the Greek states:

Εἰ οὖν οἱ ἐν παλαιοῖς πράγμασιν ἀναστραφέντες εἰς καινότητα ἐλπίδος ἦλθον, μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζώντες, ἐν ἡ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν ἀνέτειλεν δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, <ὄν> τινες ἀρνοῦνται, δι' οὐ μυστηρίου ἐλάβομεν τὸ πιστεύειν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὑπομένομεν, ἵνα εὐρεθῶμεν μαθηταὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ μόνου διδασκάλου ἡμῶν·

Here is a fairly typical 19th Century translation of verse 9.1, by Dr. J.B. Lightfoot:

If then those who had walked in ancient practices attained unto newness of hope, no longer observing sabbaths but fashioning their lives after the Lord's day, on

which our life also arose through Him and through His death which some men deny -- a mystery whereby we attained unto belief, and for this cause we endure patiently, that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ our only teacher [13].

But is that correct?

It should be noted that the word for day is not in the Greek text.

Interestingly, like Lake and Hall/Napier, Dr. Lightfoot also failed to translate Κατα, which is in the text [14] as "according to". Yet, Lightfoot did translate Κατα as "according to" in three other places in this letter (verses 3.1, 10.1, 13.2 [15]). He also failed to do so in his translation of the Didache, where he began verse 14.1 with "And on" [16]--an apparently intentional and improper translation as discussed above (Lightfoot translated as "according to" five other times in the Didache [17]).

It is sad that these translators, all born in the 19th century, all decided to selectively change the meaning of a word. Furthermore, noted scholar Guy Fritz concluded that the text in Ignatius is too ambiguous to be used to support Sunday worship:

"in the study of the 'Lord's day' in the early church...in the cannot be properly introduced as evidence indicating its [Sunday] observance" [18].

The 19th century theologian John Kitto understood that neither the context nor the Greek required adding the word day. Thus he translated a highly relevant part of it correctly as follows:

...living according to our Lord's life...[19].

John Kitto also made the following comments about the passage from Ignatius:

Now many commentators assume (on what ground does not appear), that alter κυριακήν [Lord's] the word ἡμέραν [day] is to be understood... The defect of the sentence is the want of a substantive to which ἀνρού can refer. This defect, so far from being remedied, is rendered still more glaring by the introduction of ἡμέραν...the passage does not refer at all to the Lord's day...it cannot be regarded as affording any positive evidence to the early use of the term 'Lord's day' (for which it is often cited), since the word ἡμέραν [day] is purely conjectural [20].

Yet, almost all anti-Sabbath websites I have visited have ignored the scholars that understand the truth about Ignatius' writings as they cite the mistranslations as "proof" of early Sunday observance—even though the actual Greek text does no such thing. While in Greece, I was able to verify that the word in koine Greek translated as "Lord's Day" in both the Didache and the Letter to the Magnesians, κυριακήν, could not be translated as "Lord's Day" as the Greek word for day is not present in the texts nor required by the contexts for either.

In Ignatius' Letter to the Magnesians, like in the Didache, κυριακήν would be better translated as "Lord's way" or combined with the Greek word that follows it, ζωντες [21], "Lord's way of life" or "Lord's living". This is also consistent with what Paul wrote:

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4, NKJV throughout unless otherwise noted).

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

It was the custom of Jesus (e.g. Luke 4:16) and Paul to regularly keep the Sabbath (Acts 17:2). The Sabbath was part of the Lord's way of life, and Paul imitated Christ that way. Understanding Jesus' life is critical to understanding Ignatius.

Furthermore, to better understand Ignatius' letter, we should look at more of the context and not just verse 9.1. out-of-context as some Sunday advocates have.

A more literal (though not grammatical) translation of the relevant portion from Ignatius' letter appears to be,

8.1 Be not seduced by strange doctrines nor by antiquated fables, which are profitless.

8.2 For if even unto this day we live according to the manner of Judaic concepts, we admit that we have not received grace: for the godly prophets lived after Christ Jesus. For this cause also they were persecuted, being inspired by His grace to the end that they which are disobedient might be fully persuaded that there is one God who manifested Himself through Jesus Christ His Son, who is His Word that proceeded from silence, who in all things was well-pleasing unto Him that sent Him.

9.1 If then those who had walked in ancient practices attained unto newness of hope, no longer keeping sabbaths contrariwise according to the Lord's way of life, on which our life also arose through Him and through His death which some men deny – a mystery whereby we attained unto belief, and for this cause we endure patiently, that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ our only teacher –

9.2 if this be so, how shall we be able to live apart from Him? Seeing that even the prophets, being His disciples, were expecting Him as their teacher through the Spirit. And for this cause He whom they rightly awaited, when He came, raised them from the dead.

In his *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, Ignatius wrote about false Christians:

But I guard you beforehand from those beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but, if it be possible, not even meet with; only you must pray to God for them, if by any means they may be brought to repentance, which, however, will be very difficult. Yet Jesus Christ, who is our true life, has the power of [effecting] this. But if these things were done by our Lord only in appearance, then am I also only in appearance bound. And why have I also surrendered myself to death, to fire, to the sword, to the wild beasts? But, [in fact,] he who is near to the sword is near to God; he that is among the wild beasts is in company with God; provided only he be so in the name of Jesus Christ. I undergo all these things that I may suffer together with Him, He who became a perfect man inwardly strengthening me. Some ignorantly deny Him, or rather have been denied by Him, being the advocates of death rather than of the truth. These persons neither have the prophets persuaded, nor the law of Moses, nor the Gospel even to this day, nor the sufferings we have individually endured. For they think also the same thing regarding us. [29].

Since he writes that some of the false Christians do not have "the law of Moses" it is reasonable to conclude that Ignatius believed that he did have the "law of Moses", in regards to the ten commandments, including the Sabbath commandment.

However there are still unanswered questions regarding St Ignatius a certain letter in which he says the following:

In his Letter to the Romans, Ignatius observed that true Christians kept the commandments:

I also salute in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father: to those who are united, both according to the flesh and spirit, to every one of His commandments [27].

But if any one preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him. For it is better to hearken to Christian doctrine from a man who has been circumcised, than to Judaism from one uncircumcised. But if either of such persons do not speak concerning Jesus Christ, they are in my judgment but as monuments and sepulchres of the dead, upon which are written only the names of men. Flee therefore the wicked devices and snares of the prince of this world, lest at any

time being conquered by his artifices, ye grow weak in your love [28].

What did St Ignatius mean by preaching the Jewish law because even Rabbi Paulos preached it and so did the Messiah. I think these issues need to be researched and reinvestigated so for some the jury is still out on Ignatius.

I do believe we are researching and uncovering material as we go along and slowly overtime things will become more clearer as they should have been. So for now we give the benefit of doubt to Ignatius without holding any judgement against him however we still reject that the early believers worshipped Sunday as a gross error of modern Christianity perpetuated by anti-Semitic church fathers later. However I will go so far as to say that rejecting Jewish law is akin to rejecting God and until further evidence emerges we will tread very carefully as we do not see an issue with Jewish law as most make out to be. It is not evil and when one just makes a bland statement of Jewish law being evil one must understand which groups Jewish law are we talking about? Are we talking about the School of Hillel, which was accepted by Yahushua and His disciples even Rabbi Paulos? Are we talking about the School of Shammai, many of the precepts of this school were not widely accepted and many Pharisees were martyred in the first century who rejected Shammai and Rabbi Paulos almost had to pay for by his death. They the Shammites pushed through many enactments that were rejected by the School of Hillel. Until we get a better bearing on this matter we remain cautiously optimistic that Ignatius was not a Sunday observer and a Sabbath keeper.

“And after James the Just had suffered martyrdom, as the Lord had also on the same account, Symeon, the son of the Lord's uncle, Clopas, was appointed the next bishop. All proposed him as second bishop because he was a cousin of the Lord.”

“Therefore, they called the Church a virgin, for it was not yet corrupted by vain discourses. But Thebuthis, because he was not made bishop, began to corrupt it. He also was sprung from the seven sects among the people, like Simon, from whom came the Simonians, and Cleobius, from whom came the Cleobians, and Dositheus, from whom came the Dositheans, and Gorthæus, from whom came the Goratheni, and Masbotheus, from whom came the Masbothæans. From them sprang the Menandrianists, and Marcionists, and Carpocratians, and Valentinians, and Basilidians, and Saturnilians. Each introduced privately and separately his own peculiar opinion. From them came false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, who divided the unity of the Church by corrupt doctrines uttered against God and against his Christ.”

Hegesippus the Nazarene; c. 185 CE

So we can see that another tradition that was established by not Saint Ignatius as we previously thought which we have now corrected that it started with some other culprits and rubber-stamped by Constantine in the fourth century the law of worship on Sunday

is today adhered to by Christendom yet we do not find Yahushua our Master ever setting foot into an assembly on Sunday in the first century. We do not see any of His first century disciples doing the assembly dance on Sunday either. Assembly for the first century disciples was always on the Sabbath either on Friday night strong tradition to its adherence or Saturday day time and never on Sunday. Now this is not to say that people who worship on Sunday are evil but just enough to point out that all Christians or at least a majority practice many traditions without questioning them Sunday being one.

Shalom Shalom

Rabbi Simon Altaf

Part 2 to be continued...

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