

The Ethics and Ethnicity of the Twelve Tribes

I was looking at the word *ethic*, as in a “work ethic” or a “community ethic,” or you can see an ethic in the first century community or church. An ethic is an obligation to obey.¹ It gives those who practice that ethic a distinguishing characteristic, a sentiment, and a moral nature, like the moral nature of the Body. Ethic is a guiding belief that gives you the direction to go in.

Groups in the world have their collective knowledge of good and evil (or lack thereof) represented in their *ethics*. As far as we, the holy people are concerned, everyone is conforming to the Holy Spirit. That is our ethic. Everyone is conforming to what the Head is saying to the bodily members. There is no independent action here. We are all in that one ethic of the Body of Messiah, conforming to the Head (Eph 4:15-16).

An ethic has to do with a complete group, a unit or composition of people, those who lead a unifying lifestyle. We have a lifestyle conforming to the ethic of the Word of God. That is where He commands the blessing of eternal life. There is no eternal life outside of that ethic. The Holy Spirit is a unifying Spirit.

When there was no king, then everyone did what was right in his or her own eyes (Jdg 21:25). So our Father had to appoint a king, because people were not abiding by His laws (1 Sam 8:7-9). They were not doing what He wanted them to do, which was to live according to what He had put in their hearts and minds. Our Father didn't want a king over Israel. He told them what would happen when they got a king. Only our Master Yahshua is the good King.

1 Jn 3:16 is the ethic of the Body of Messiah.

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

¹ *Ethic*: 1) a system of principles governing morality and acceptable conduct; 2) the principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group.

That ethic is an obligation. It is an obligation to conform to a particular pattern. Without the Holy Spirit it will just be ritual and mundane existence. Many communities have tried to develop intentionally, which never lasts. You always have to put the rules up on the wall: “Don’t do this and don’t do that.”

We learn by knowing what the Word says and we can conform to the Holy Spirit who dwells in each one of us. Our Father says something to us and we listen. This is how we are led. It is the same as when our children hear their abba or imma say, “Do this,” and they do it.

The sentiment of the Body of Messiah is a distinguishing characteristic. The ethnicity of particular races or peoples sets them apart from others. They retain them until they change their nature, their identity, their essence. Eventually the distinguishing characteristics of the First Church were completely gone; there was nothing left of the First Church in what became Christianity. You can see how it was destroyed because Messiah can’t be divided. As long as Messiah is in the Body, it can’t be divided, but once love goes, then everything else goes, because God is love. Then the Holy Spirit can’t be communicated to anyone else coming in.

The Ethic of the Body of Messiah is an Observable Phenomenon

When we are baptized the love of God is poured out in our hearts. That is our distinguishing characteristic – love. Our sentiment is spiritual, social, mental, emotional, and actual physical unity of living together. It has to be all-inclusive, for the world can’t observe anything mystical. It has to pertain to all aspects of the human personality.

The Body has to be something observable by the world in every location. There can’t be any separation or denomination in any locality. All the elders are together. That is the ethic of the Body of Messiah, they are all held together. If people aren’t living by the ethic he established, as Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 3, then have nothing to do with them. They will destroy you.

Live by the ethic that has been taught you that brings you to unity and oneness. There is an ethic of the new lifestyle, as Acts 2:44 says: *“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common.”*

If you were to look at the word *together* you would see that there is no separation in the word.² They came into a new lifestyle. They didn’t go back to their old lifestyle, family, job, once they were baptized. If their family didn’t follow them into the Body of Messiah, then they would leave them to form a new family – according to the gospel they heard. They heard the many other words. They were forming a new ethic, a new ethnicity, a brand new culture, and a recognizable entity, distinguishable from all others on the face of the earth.

Today, Christians are not distinguishable from the world. There is no distinguishing characteristic of the ethnicity of Christianity. The people who live by their conscience are far greater in many ways than Christians. True belief results in a lifestyle that people live. We are creating a new paper called, “It Takes a Community, Part 2” to be a light to their darkness, especially to Christians. We hate the darkness that overtakes Christians. We love Christians but hate the darkness they are in, thinking down through the centuries that killing heretics and the people who didn’t agree with them was doing God a favor.

The Many Other Words

The disciples in Acts 2 knew what to do after hearing the many other words in Acts 2:40, where Peter continued on and on, showing them the whole, comprehensive understanding of the gospel. That was so because the apostles were obedient to His words, *“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”* (Mt 28:20)

² *Together* means 1) in conjunction with; combined, 2) in contact with each other, 3) assembled in one place, 4) in each other’s company, 5) with cooperation and interchange, and 6) with a common plan.

So, when you preach the gospel you have to tell them the whole, comprehensive gospel. They have to know what they are being saved out of and saved for. They have to know that they are going to become part of the observable unity of the physical Body on the earth. They have to know their very purpose and calling is to do our Father's will on earth – and not just to go to heaven someday after a lifetime of doing their own will.

There is a spiritual, social, mental, emotional, and physical aspect to a real body. The world needs to observe the physical unity of the Body of Messiah. Christians will never admit that, because they know people will never live in unity because they are so mean and selfish. They thereby deny the power of God (2 Tim 3:5).

The many other words were what the apostles were commanded to proclaim in Mt 28:18-20. In Acts 2:40 he went on to the many other words, and those who received them were baptized. From that time forward their lives were devoted to those teachings, sitting at the apostle's feet. They were devoted to their teaching and their fellowship, to the Breaking of Bread, and to the prayers — the minchah.

All Who Believed Were Together

All who believed were together. Those who didn't believe couldn't do it. The three thousand were together and had all things in common and there were no needy among them, because of love. The ones who had anything shared them with those who had need. All who were owners of land sold them and laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet where it was distributed. Ananias and Sapphira kept a little back in case things didn't work out. But all who believed had all things in common. All who believed were on one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32). All who believed had all things in common. If you didn't believe, you wouldn't hold all things in common and you wouldn't be together. It is like people still say to us, "I don't know how you do it. I like my space."

All who believed had all things together and that is the ethnicity of His people.³ The word *together* in the Scriptures means the gathering of others together in Messiah, with one soul, one mind, and one heart, in the same place, or in places, localities, as Paul said:

“I desire therefore that the men pray every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” (1 Tim 2:8)

Our Father couldn't even hear their prayers if there was any dissension. Paul called all the elders of Ephesus when he was in a nearby township, and they were all in unity. Could you do that today? No, you couldn't. The churches and the elders are all different. They have different ways and do different things.

What does it mean that they were one heart and one soul in Acts 4:32? The oneness is all aspects of the person, taking in the spirit, soul, and body of the person, with others, into a daily, social relationship in the same place. 1 Jn 3:16 – We know we have passed out of death and into life if we love others “as I have loved you” (Jn 13:34). Laying down your life means that everything you do is for your brother to build up the Body. He laid down His life to gain us. We lay down our lives to gain what He died to gain. He didn't die to gain Christianity. He died to gain a people who died to gain what He died to gain. We have to be the result of the suffering of His soul in death (Isa 53:10-11).

We have to have the ethics of the Edah, which is the witness. As our Master said, “I will build my Edah” (Mt 16:18). In the New English Version you might see the word “Community.” There is no such thing as a community in the world, if you go by what it actually is. A community is only a community, what it actually means, if it has the Holy Spirit, for otherwise it can't have the “common life” of true community. So, we know that new life personally. Whoever has the Son has the life (1 Jn 5:12). Only those who are

³ Ethnicity is an ethnic quality or affiliation resulting from racial or cultural ties.

thirsty can have that common life. If you are not thirsty, you won't want to drink. Those who hear of the water of life but won't drink have their own agenda, which they don't want to give up. They are the cowards and unbelieving who go to the second death (Rev 21:8).

We know that eternal life is the free gift of our Father, which we don't have to work for. But who does He give it to? He gives it to those who will love Him more than anything, to those who will obey His commandments. They didn't make distribution before they were baptized, but after, for they knew it was part of the gospel. We are saved by grace, through the persuasion of the Holy Spirit, which is faith, in order to do the works prepared for us in advance (Eph 2:10). If we are not doing those works, then we are not saved. Our Father has given us gifts and the grace to employ those gifts. Our works were prepared in order to build up the Body of Messiah (Eph 2:10). They are done within the ethnicity of the Body of Messiah, which is made up of all the particular localities where His Spirit dwells in a people.

That requires a new environment, a brand new culture. A people who desire to do our Father's will, separated from the world spiritually, but not physically (because we need to be a light to it), creates that culture. The church can be no other way than the way it was when it was called the Way. It is not that way anymore. It is totally gone awry.

The Ethics of Nations in Contrast to the Holy Nation

There are ethics of nations, which you can see in Mt 6:31-32. They work individually for their own food and clothing. We are not condemning the people of the world who do that, for it is their ethic, how they exist. The Holy, the set-apart people, have another ethic, which is to seek first for His kingdom and His righteousness (Mt 6:33). We are not seeking for food and clothing, but our Father provides it. We are not seeking for our own particular food and clothing, our four and no more, just our family.

We seek for the Kingdom, for pure things that will benefit the whole. We purchase our food and clothing all together, collectively, working together as a whole.

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.” (Acts 4:32)

Our ethnicity is in a different dimension than the individualism of the nations. That is what sets us apart. Christianity can in no way say they seek first His Kingdom. Perhaps they can say it, but they can't confess it, because there is no reality there. Our ethic distinguishes us from other cultures, as Paul describes us in Acts 26:6-7 as the Twelve Tribes who serve God night and day. James wrote to twelve tribes in the second century in their twelve localities (Jms 1:1). Ephesians talks about a people separated from the world.

We are separated from the nations by 1 Pet 2:9-10. What we are doing in obeying the good news is for the sake of the world. Our Father must have a light in the world to expose the darkness so that they can come and live in the light, as Lk 1:79 and many other places speak about. Phil 2:14-15 speaks of the separateness of the Body of Messiah, not of individual lights in the workplace. It is the light of the community in a locality that distinguishes them from the world. It speaks of the whole and not individuals in Phil 2:14-16. All who believe will be together, holding all things in common. That is the ethic.

As long as there are other believers in your locality, you will be together. If there were only one believer, he would have an excuse to be alone; but if he were a real believer, he would make other disciples. They won't just go to church on Sunday or Wednesday night, like going to a Lion's Club Meeting or something. That is a farce and not what our Father intended. All who believe drink of the water of life.

“Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Pet 2:12)

The *you* there is plural, meaning a community with the ethnicity of the holy ones separated from the world, which is how it will be in all the places where the true witness, the true Edah is.

The Ethnology of the World and the Holy

Briefly, and I will elaborate on this later, but Gen 10:5,20,31-32 is the ethnology of the world.⁴ God intended man to be separated in different localities, races, tongues, and cultures that were distinguished from each other. That is what God intended, for people to retain their distinguishing characteristics. The First Church started out distinguished, but now is not, but shows instead the blasphemy of Christ divided (1 Cor 1:10).

People were to stay in their different territories and not mingle with other races. Of course, when people needed to migrate because of drought, or a tyrant in their own land, etc., they would assimilate into the culture they went to. They would fit in totally with the new culture or else the resulting divisions would cause all kinds of problems.

Ethnology is the science that deals with the division of mankind into its races. *Cultural anthropology* is the study of man dealing with different cultures and races (and how they are all getting meshed into one). The ethnicity of the First Church was to be retained, but it wasn't. Now, everything is becoming amalgamated into multiculturalism.

Ethnicity shows who retains the unity and the social customs of the whole group. But in the early church it wasn't retained and went to pot. Then the Pope came in, the crusades, the inquisition, then Martin Luther and John Calvin came, who thought they could murder people because they didn't believe in the Trinity. They held people under and drowned them because they didn't believe in infant baptism. They brought the spirit

⁴ *Ethnology* is, according to the dictionary, the branch of anthropology that deals with the division of humankind into races and with their origins and distribution and distinctive characteristics.

of Martin Luther right into Protestantism, which is the most divided thing in the whole world. They have no unity, no oneness.

Ethnicity shows who retains the customs and social views of his whole group. The holy nation was to do this. People classed according to common linguistic, cultural, tribal background that distinguishes them from other backgrounds. Acts 2:42 distinguishes God's people from other groups.

The church developed from the first century. Paul said the Judean pattern had to be established (1 Ths 2:14), "Every church I established was like the first church created by the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem." The Holy Spirit is not bestowed upon anyone not baptized into that environment, that culture. It is like the song we sang this morning (Psalm 133), and anywhere else He does not command the blessing of eternal life. "Whoever serves Me where I am," He said, "My Father will honor Him." This is in every place where the Twelve Tribes are.

We, who are the light, have to be a new culture, a new nation, in twelve different localities on the earth. In the restoration of all things Israel will be restored in twelve localities on the face of the earth. Each has a gate to come in through, like a sheepfold. You have to come in to the sheepfold. "My sheep know My voice," He said. They see the other sheep dwelling together in unity and they respond to the shepherd's voice. That is why they are called sheep, isn't it?