

HUNGRY?

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As they approached, you could feel the tension. They didn't like Him and they wanted to bring Him down a notch or two in the eyes of the people. Expose Him for the fraud they knew Him to be. After all, they were the righteous, religious authorities and if anyone could determine who the Messiah of Israel was, it was them. And this impostor wasn't the Messiah.

'By what authority do you do this?'¹ they demanded. He was teaching the people in the Temple. They knew that He hadn't studied in their schools so He must be doing this on His own. Authority was a pretty big thing back then, and He hadn't gone through their program to get ordained as a rabbi, so they wanted to trip Him up. Many of the Jewish people were listening to Him and they didn't like that either.

He, being a good Jew, answered their question with a question! He would tell them what they wanted to know, as long as they answered His question. He asked them about Yohanan the Immerser (John the Baptist). He was immersing Jewish people in the Jordan, telling them that the King of Israel was coming, and that they had better get their act together. He asked them, 'Was his commission from Heaven or from men?' Was it legitimate or did John just do it on his own?

Well, that question really caught them off guard. They huddled together to discuss it. 'If we say from Heaven, then He will ask us why we didn't affirm John by being immersed ourselves. And if we say that it was from men, then the people will stone us, for they all believe Yohanan to be a prophet.' So, they turned to face the Messiah and told Him that they didn't really know. These sages who were supposed to know what God was up to, refused to answer His question. He replied, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.' Boy, that must have irked them.

In the 24 years that I've known the Messiah of Israel, I've read over and over of how He was never stumped by their religious questions, and they asked Him a bundle of good ones.² Now He turns the tables on them. He asks them a question, and if there's one thing a Jew can't refuse, it's a question. He said, 'A man had two sons and went to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard' and the son said that he wouldn't, but later changed his mind and went. The man went to his second son and said the same thing whereupon the son said that he would go and work, but he never did.' The Messiah asked them, 'Who really did the will of their father?' And the sages rightly replied that the first son did, even though initially, he looked like he wasn't going to.³

Yeshua the Messiah then casts a stinging rebuke at the religious leaders by saying that the prostitutes and tax collectors (two groups of Jewish people that were looked upon by everyone as not having much of a chance for Heaven), that these were entering the Kingdom of Heaven before them! They must have felt pretty raw, being exposed for the hypocrites that they were, for they presented themselves to the people as

¹ Matthew 21:23f.

² Matthew 19:3-9: For what cause can a man divorce his wife? Matthew 22:15-22: Was it Lawful to pay taxes to Caesar? Matthew 22:23-33: If a woman had seven husbands in her lifetime, when she got to Heaven, whose wife would she be?

³ Matthew 21:31.

devoted to God, but their hearts were like stone. They didn't care a wit about God, only themselves. They were satisfied with themselves. They didn't need God.

Yeshua went on to explain that even though the prostitutes and the tax collectors had been sinning, they turned or returned to God, by their immersion from Yohanan, in preparation for entry into the Coming Kingdom. Their hearts were hungry for God and they, sinners that they were, had recognized God's Hand in Yohanan. These religious leaders on the other hand, despised God's Messiah who was in their very presence.

What Did He Teach the People?

I wonder what Yeshua had been teaching the Jewish people in the Temple that day, before He was accosted by the religious establishment. A fair guess would be that He would have been speaking about the Kingdom of God; what it was like and who would be able to enter into it. In an earlier account, Yeshua says this about the Kingdom:

'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteous, for they shall be filled.'⁴

The prostitutes and the tax collectors believed Yohanan's message about the Coming King and His Kingdom because they had a hunger for God, even though it had obviously been buried. But when they heard what John was doing, a divine spark was ignited in them and they wanted more. By hearing and obeying what God had for them, by having themselves immersed by Yohanan, they placed themselves in a position to enter into that Kingdom where God feeds us of Himself. That's right. Have you never read in Scripture what King David says about God being our food?

'Oh!, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man that trusts in Him.'⁵ and

'How sweet are Your Words unto my taste! Yes!, sweeter than honey to my mouth!'⁶

By believing Yohanan's message, by trusting in him, they were trusting in God, for God had sent Yohanan to prepare the Way for the Messiah, who is God in flesh.⁷ You see, when I read the Scriptures, the very words that are written are given to me by the Ruah HaKodesh, the Spirit of the Holy One of Israel, and they become food for my soul. It is not just a written word, printed on paper, but the Ruah makes it to come alive within me, and I feel and know the Life of my Savior, Yeshua the Messiah. For I too was once a sinner, far removed from God and His Kingdom, but one day I read about Yeshua and believed,

⁴ Matthew 5:6.

⁵ Psalm 34:8.

⁶ Psalm 119:103.

⁷ Malachi 3:1: "'Behold! I will send my messenger and He shall prepare the way before Me and the Lord whom you seek *shall suddenly come to His Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant* whom you delight in. Behold! He shall come,' says Yahveh, the Commander of the Armies of the Heavens.'" The first messenger is John the Baptist who prepared the way for the Messiah by proclaiming that the Messiah was coming. the Lord is Yeshua, even in our account, He is *in the Temple teaching the people*. In Malachi, Yeshua is referred to as 'Me...the Lord...the Messenger of the Covenant.' The Messenger of the Covenant, erroneously called the *Angel* of the Lord in most English translations (Gen. 16:7, 9-11; 21:17; 22:15; 24:7, 40; 31:11; 48:16; Ex. 3:2; 14:19; 23:23; Num. 20:16, where the Messenger is said to have brought Israel out of Egypt, an event usually attributed to God Himself; Num. 22:22-27, 31-32, 34-35; Judges 2:1, 4; 5:23; 6:11-12, 20-22, 13:3, 6, 9, 13, 15-21; Ps. 34:7, Is. 37:36; 63:9, etc.) is none other than the Messiah King Yeshua who was with Yahveh before the Creation of the Universe.

and giving my life to Him, He came to me and I sensed His Presence of Shalom. I have tasted the Messiah and I know that He is sweet beyond your wildest imaginations! I know what King David was talking about. And I hunger and thirst for more of Him. You can know the Messiah too, and come to have your soul filled with His Presence, which is Eternal Life, now. For His Kingdom is both present and yet to come.

The Jewish Waitress

My wife and I recently ate in a restaurant where our waitress was a Jewish woman. We spoke to her of Yeshua being the Messiah, and that only He could give her the love that her soul longed for. She told us that she believed in God but wasn't religious. She didn't want to follow Rabbinical rules that were meaningless. She said that she prayed to God when she needed Him, and that she did good deeds, and that that was her belief in God, and that everybody had their own religion and that was alright. It didn't really matter *what* you believed about God, just as long as you 'believed.'

I told her that belief in God was not enough. *What* we believe is the important thing in God's Eyes. I started with Father Abraham and said that because he believed specifically what God said to him, it was counted unto him for righteousness.⁸ What did he believe? That he would have a son and that his descendants would be as many as the stars of the heavens. That's not some nebulous 'belief' in or about God, but a very specific, pinpoint belief. Abraham didn't have to believe *that*.

I spoke to her about the Sons of Israel in the Wilderness. They 'believed' in God!, or so they would have us to believe. But when it came to that specific point that God Himself wanted them to believe in, they obstinately refused.⁹ Because of their refusal to truly believe in God for what He wanted them to believe in, trusting that He would give them the Land of Canaan, all those over the age of 20, fit to go into the army, who left Egypt, died in the Wilderness (except for Joshua and Caleb). Obviously, their 'belief' was not enough. The Sons of Israel actually held God in such contempt, they imagined that He was going to take them into the Land to destroy them! Such was their true belief and why they all perished in the Wilderness. They didn't care to really *know* God.

God's Specific Word to You

The Messiah of Israel, Yeshua, was sent by God our Father to be the centerpiece of belief in Yahveh. It is a very specific, pinpoint belief. All the blessings of Abraham and the promises of God to Israel are 'in Messiah Yeshua.'¹⁰ Listen to what Yeshua says to you today:

'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up so that whoever *believes in Him* will have Eternal Life. For God so loved the world,

⁸ Genesis 15:1-6.

⁹ Numbers 14:11: "Yahveh said to Moses, 'How long will this people despise Me?! And how long will they not believe in Me despite all the signs (miracles) which I have performed in their midst?'"

¹⁰ Romans 15:8: 'For I say that Messiah has become a Servant to the Circumcision on behalf of the Truth of God to confirm the promises given to the Fathers.' In 2nd Corinthians 1:20 it says, 'For as many as are the promises of God, in Him (the Messiah) they are 'Yes!' Therefore, also through Him is our Amen to the Glory of God through us.'

that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever *believes in Him* shall not perish, but have Eternal Life.

For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who *believes in Him* is not condemned; he who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment; that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.’¹¹

The only Way for you to have Eternal Life and to have your soul fed by God is to specifically believe what the God of Israel has done for you. There is no getting around it. He has sent His Son, the Messiah Yeshua, to take your sins upon Himself, that you might be cleansed. You must believe that Yeshua is your Messiah. Our waitress said that she wanted to remain Jewish and I told her that Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah. A Jew doesn’t stop being Jewish when they come to believe in the Messiah of Israel. I know that many people have said otherwise, but they are wrong. Dead wrong.

You Choose

Just as Father Abraham believed an impossible specific word to him, so too we must believe something that doesn’t make sense to us: why Messiah had to be crucified. Only by Yeshua’s Blood can we have our sin and guilt washed away. Only in His Name can we be born from Heaven above, by God’s Spirit. Yeshua is the *only* Way. This is what the God of Israel has done for you and He wants you to specifically believe this. It’s not a set of rules that will earn us Heaven, but a *relationship* with God through His Son, the Messiah Yeshua. This is the specific, pinpointed belief that will mean either Heaven or Hell for you. You have a choice: to be like Father Abraham or the Sons of Israel in the Wilderness.

Now I realize all the Jewish reasons ‘not to believe in Jesus.’ I’ve heard them a thousand times and not one of them is valid. Not one of them has any merit. That’s right, not one. ‘I’ll become a Gentile.’ False. ‘I may have to give up my friends, parents, children, etc.’ True. But I’d rather have God, than all the world. Once you come to know Messiah Yeshua, you will too. And He will give you others to take their place.¹² Besides, then you’ll know what Father Abraham felt like when he was told to leave his father’s house, his relatives and his country and go to a strange land, a land that would become his own.¹³ You are Seed from Abraham, aren’t you? Gets interesting doesn’t it?

Many Jews say that Jesus is a false messiah because He didn’t fulfill the prophecy of having the ‘lion lie down with the lamb.’ This means that He didn’t set up David’s Kingdom where Israel reigns supreme on Earth. This prophecy will come to pass when Yeshua returns.¹⁴ Are you going to deny Him because He

¹¹ John 3:14-19.

¹² Mark 10:28-30: “Peter began to say to Him, ‘Behold, we have left everything and followed You.’ Yeshua said, ‘Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms for My sake and for the sake of the Good News, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions, and in the age to come Eternal Life.’”

¹³ Gen. 12:1: “Now Yahveh said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father’s house to the land which I will show you...’”

¹⁴ Acts 3:18-23: “But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Messiah would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Therefore repent and return so that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing may come from the Presence of the Lord and that He may send Yeshua the Messiah

chooses to set up His Kingdom His Way? Does God have to ask your approval before He considers a matter? Or is it possible that you might have to come into alignment with His Ways? Yeshua came first as the Suffering Servant who would take our sins upon Himself. That's why He had to die as a Sacrifice for us. But He has been raised from the dead by God our Father so that all would know that He is God's Messiah. He is alive today; glorified. His Kingdom is both present and future. Messiah reigns in our hearts now, by His Spirit and by His Word. Soon, He will reign over Israel and all the nations. But first He has to change us from being like those sages and that waitress: self righteous and satisfied with the god of our own making. You can enter into His Kingdom by specifically believing that Yeshua is your Messiah. Or you can choose to be like those sages and reject Him. It's your choice.

appointed for you, whom Heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. Moses said, 'The Lord Yahveh will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. To Him you must give heed to everything He says to you and it will be that every soul that does not heed to that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'"