

THE ULTIMATE QUESTION!

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The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob befriended our Fathers. They knew Him. Moses, David and Elijah could all count on Him when they were desperate. Their God was alive to them and a real help to them in their times of need.

Perhaps you're not blazing a trail into the great unknown like Father Abraham, or leading a few million people through the Red Sea like Moses, but if you're like me, you've wondered if God is real. Or perhaps you've stopped wondering and have just accepted the cultural identification of being a Jew, rather than the biblical?

To find out for yourself if the God of Israel is real you must seek His Face or Presence. This is no small task for once you set out to find Him, you realize that you're beset on all sides with many thoughts that subtly change your original intention. You find yourself thinking about what you are going to eat next or what you've got to do later or some other mundane thing. But, if you set your heart on finding Him, these distractions will eventually be overcome and much to your joy and amazement, you'll sense His Presence. He is real and desires for you to know Him intimately, as a woman knows her husband.

Our Scriptures declare that God is holy and that He commands us who are Jews to be holy also. Leviticus 19:2 states: 'You shall be holy, for I, the LORD your God am holy.'

That's a pretty tall order, but that's what it means to be a Jew. Literally, a Jew is one who praises and worships the God of Judah, the way King David did. Scripturally, it means living a lifestyle of total surrender and continual devotion to the Holy One of Israel. This is His Standard for being Jewish.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 gives us the essence of biblical belief when it proclaims:

'Hear Oh Israel!, the LORD is our God!, the LORD is One!, and you must love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might!'

Lev. 19:18 gives us the practical application of this when it says to, 'Love your neighbor as yourself!, I am the LORD!' Anything less falls short of God's Standard and He calls it sin. In the days of Moses, the LORD provided for this problem by instituting the sacrificial system. What we see there is a pattern of relationship that Israel was able to maintain with God despite people sinning. A sacrifice was brought and the sinner would be forgiven. Lev. 17:11 explains why:

'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have assigned it to you for making expiation for your lives upon the Altar; it is the blood, as life, that effects expiation.'¹

The life of the animal was taken in place of the man who sinned. This was the way that God set up for us to take care of sins back then. We know that just going through the mechanics of offering the animal was only the outer requirement. The inner motivation for bringing the innocent animal was a heart that desired to be right with God.

Today, with the Temple and the sacrifices gone, God still requires purity of heart, obedience, and right action. Now, if you're like me, you're going to have trouble being holy every moment of your life. And in all honesty, this is an impossible standard for a human being. This is where the LORD comes in to help.

¹ All Scripture from Torah and the Prophets is taken from *The New Translation of the Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic Text*, published by the Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia 1962, 1978.

You'll remember that the great men and prophets of Israel knew God in a powerful way as the Spirit of the Holy One fell upon them. They were intimately aware of His Presence and passionately desired nothing but Him. This is because real Life and God cannot be separated. To experience God is to experience real Life—for God is Life.

David, after his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, tries to cover it up. But God sends the Prophet Nathan to first reveal to David that his sins were seen by the Almighty. David acknowledges his sins and even though there were no sacrifices to atone for either of David's sins, in other words, David should have been stoned to death, Nathan declares that the LORD had forgiven David!

In trying to realize how great God's mercy was to him, we have recorded in Psalm 51, David struggling to internalize God's forgiveness. Especially revealing is verse 13 where David pleads, 'Do not cast me out of Your Presence *or take Your Holy Spirit away* from me.' You may not be a King David but God promises to you, His precious Holy Spirit and a new way of life in Ezekiel 36:26-27:

'And I will give you a new heart and put a new Spirit into you: I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh; and I will put My Spirit into you. Thus I will cause you to follow My Laws and faithfully observe My Rules.'

It was our hard hearts that led us astray to follow after the idols of the nations around us in the days of the unrighteous kings of Israel and Judah. And it's this same hardness of heart that leads us astray today to serve the gods of our own making. Idols of silver and gold, pleasure and self.

You and I have been chosen, not to do our own thing, however culturally acceptable that might be, but to surrender our life to the Holy One, who desires to give us real Life. That He might truly be our God and that we might be His people.

Many people, like yourself, desire an intimate relationship with the God of Israel. Our Fathers who said, 'Yes!' to God at Mt. Sinai wanted it. But you'll remember that before Moses had come down from the mountain, their hearts led them astray. Many times God would forgive them, because of the intercession of Moses, but in each time of testing, they would cry out for the security of the slavery of Egypt ('let's stone Moses, elect another, and go back to Egypt'), instead of really trusting in the LORD.

You might say that if you had been there and had seen the Glory of the Cloud and the Pillar of Fire and the Manna and all the other miracles, you would have had the same faith as Joshua. Would you? What do you really do when circumstances press you up against the wall and it seems that God is nowhere to be found?

We have not had a sacrificial system since the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. and Ezekiel's prophecy dates back to around 570 B.C.E., more than 2,500 years ago. So what is a Jew to do? I thought you'd never ask! The LORD says to Moses in Dt. 18:18-19:

'I will raise up a prophet for them from among their own people, like yourself: I will put My Words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him; and if anybody fails to heed the Words he speaks in My Name, I Myself will call him to account.'

To be equal to Moses ('like yourself') is an incredibly unique honor. Moses is the great deliverer of God's people, the mediator-priest par excellence and the only prophet to have ever spoken face to face with the LORD. Num. 12:8 relates, 'with him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles and he beholds the Glory of the LORD.' Isaiah says this prophet of Dt. 18,

'exposed himself to death and was numbered among the sinners, whereas he bore the guilt of the many and made intercession for sinners' (Is. 53:12).

This prophet gave up his life for the sins of Israel. This is what the Mosaic sacrifices pointed to.

What both Moses and Isaiah speak of is King Messiah, who like Moses, would also deliver His people from a slavery similar to that of Egypt. The slavery is our inability to worship the God of Israel in holiness, according to His Standard, the Torah. No matter how good we think we are, God's holiness overwhelms us. This is where we all stand guilty before Him, no matter how hard we have tried or how sincere we've been or how many mitzvot (good deeds) we've done. We need to bring a sin sacrifice to God in order to be made acceptable to Him (Lev. 17:11).

The LORD intervenes on our behalf with King Messiah. Micah 5:1 tells us the place of his birth and his incredible nature:

‘And you, Oh Bethlehem of Ephrath, least among the clans of Judah, from you one shall come forth to rule Israel for Me—one whose origin is from old, and from ancient times.’

This ruler was alive from ancient times (literally, from the days of eternity). The ancient Jewish Sages saw that there was to be something very unique about him. Is. 7:14 says:

‘Assuredly, My LORD will give you a sign of His own accord! Look, the young woman is with child and about to give birth to a son. Let her name him Immanuel.’

The Hebrew word for sign is the same word used of the miracles that Moses performed before Pharaoh. The meaning of young woman is equal to a virgin! It's no miracle for a young woman to give birth to a son, young women give birth to sons all the time. This prophecy relates to how the Messiah would be conceived. As Isaac birth was both promised and miraculous, so too the Messiah. And look at the meaning of Immanuel, ‘with us is God’! Isaiah speaks of his unique nature again:

‘For a child has been born to us, a son has been given us. And authority has settled on his shoulders. He has been named, “the Mighty God is planning grace, the Eternal Father, a peaceable ruler.”’ (Is. 9:5)

That's quite a name for a child, titles of God. Our Rabbis have stated that King Messiah would not only be human but also divine! And from the way in which he is conceived (of a virgin) he would truly be *The Son of God*. Our Scriptures point to this even though our senses cannot comprehend it. But can we comprehend the way that God created the universe? Failure to understand a mystery has no direct bearing upon its existence. God is not limited to only what we think He can do.

There was a man who claimed to be King Messiah. He gave up His Life as a sacrifice for our sins. He was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago and His Hebrew Name is Yeshua. It means, ‘the LORD saves, now!’

He was rejected by most of our religious leaders in His day, but can you tell me of a prophet in Israel who wasn't? Look at how many times we read in Torah of our Fathers wanting to kill Moses and go back to Egypt. Isaiah speaks well of His rejection and His Sacrifice for our sins:

‘Who can believe what we have heard?! Upon whom has the Arm of the LORD been revealed? For he has grown, by his favor, like a tree-crown, like a tree-trunk out of arid ground. he had no form or beauty that we should look at him, no charm, that we should find him pleasing. He was despised, shunned by men, a man of suffering, familiar with disease. As one who hid his face from us, He was despised, we held him of no account. Yet, it was our sickness that he was bearing, our suffering that he endured. We accounted him plagued, smitten and afflicted by God; *but he was wounded because of our sins, crushed because of our iniquities.*’

‘He bore the chastisement that made us whole, and by his bruises we were healed. We all

went astray like sheep, each going his own way; *and the LORD visited upon him the guilt of all of us*. He was maltreated, yet was submissive, he did not open his mouth; like a sheep being led to slaughter, like a ewe lamb, dumb before those who shear her, he was taken away, Who could describe his abode?’

‘For he was cut off from the Land of the living through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment. And his grave was set among the wicked and with the rich in his death—though he had done no injustice and had spoken no falsehood. But the LORD chose to crush him by disease that, if he made himself an offering for guilt, he might see offspring and have long life, and that through him the LORD’s purpose might prosper.’

‘Out of his anguish, he shall see it; He shall enjoy it to the full through his devotion. *My Righteous Servant makes the many righteous, it is their punishment that he bears*. Assuredly, I will give him the many as his portion, he shall receive the multitude as his spoil, for he exposed himself to death and was numbered among the sinners, whereas *he bore the guilt of the many* and made intercession for sinners.’ (Is. 53:1-12)

Yeshua wasn’t powerless to save Himself from death but chose instead to die as that Sacrifice that cleanses us from the inability to worship the LORD with all our heart. Our stony hearts would now be capable of being transformed by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-9 really speak about what Yeshua means to us:

‘Ho, all who are thirsty, come for water, even if you have no money; Come, buy food and eat: Buy food without money, Wine and milk without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, your earnings for what does not satisfy? Give heed to Me, and you shall eat choice food and enjoy the richest viands. Incline your ear and come to Me: harken, and you shall be revived. And I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the enduring loyalty promised to David.’

‘Seek the LORD while He can be found, call to Him while He is near. Let the wicked man give up his ways, the sinful man his plans; Let him turn back to the LORD, and He will pardon him; to Our God, for He freely forgives. For My Plans are not your plans, nor are My Ways your ways, declares the LORD. But as the Heavens are high above the earth, so are My Ways high above your ways and My Plans above your plans.’

The symbol of water is used in Scripture to represent the Ruach HaKodesh (the Spirit of the Holy One). The reason for this is that water has the ability to give and to sustain life on this planet. In a book written by a Jew who walked with Yeshua, John quotes Yeshua saying:

If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me! Let the man come and drink who believes in Me! (Jn. 7:37)

Another Jew who walked with Messiah records the Sabbath rest being found in Yeshua. He said,

‘Come to Me, all you who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder My Yoke and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29)

This *rest* that King Messiah holds out to us is nothing less than an intimate relationship with the God of Israel. He frees us from those burdens and sins that would seek to keep us distant from our God. Holiness on our own is impossible. Believing that Yeshua is our Messiah opens the way for the Spirit of the Holy One to dwell within us. Another Jew writes of our Messiah and His miraculous conception in the womb of a virgin:

‘In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin’s name was Miryam. He went in and said to her, “Rejoice!, so highly favored!, Yahveh is with you!”²

She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, “Miryam, do not be afraid; you have found God’s favor. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Yeshua. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. Yahveh God will give Him the Throne of His Father David; He will rule over the House of Jacob forever and His reign will have no end.” Miryam said to the angel, “but how can this come about since I am a virgin?” “The Spirit of the Holy One will come upon you,” the angel answered, “and the Power of the Most High will cover you with His Shadow. And so the Child will be Holy and will be called The Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, *for nothing is impossible to God.*” “I am the handmaid of Yahveh,” said Miryam, “let what you have said be done to me.” And the angel left her.’ (Luke 1:26-37)

Yeshua healed many Jews from diseases, restored sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf and even raised some Jews from the dead. He did all these miracles to get our attention. Was He the long awaited Messiah or not? Did God send Yeshua as He claimed or was He possessed by a devil, as some of the religious leaders of His Day accused Him of? Yeshua tells us,

‘It is the Spirit that gives Life, the flesh has nothing to offer. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are Life.’ (Jn. 6:63)

Again in John 16:16, 33, we find our Messiah offering Shalom with God after He spoke of His death and His being raised to life again by the Power of God, to declare to all that Yeshua is the Messiah of Israel:

‘In a short time you will no longer see Me, and then a short time later you will see Me again. I tell you all this so that you may find Shalom in Me. In the world you will have trouble but be brave...I have conquered the world.’

This Shalom (peace with Papa God) comes to us because Yeshua died for us as the Sacrifice that makes us pure before God. It’s God’s Way of doing things, not ours. God has seen to our greatest need in standing before Him on the Day of Judgment and being declared, ‘Righteous!’

It’s not by our deeds but by what He has done for us! You will see this Truth if you seek the Lord with all your heart (Jer. 29:13).

Yeshua rose from the dead by the Power of Almighty God to confirm all the promises of Isaiah and Ezekiel. In the establishment of the nation of Israel, God concretely moved to deliver us from the bondage to Pharaoh with the slaying of the first born of Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea. In delivering both the Jew and the Gentle (is He not the God of all the world?), God has shown us His Messiah alive from the dead and has given us insight into just how our bondage to sin was broken.

The Messiah took our punishment and now we give glory and honor and praise to God the Father who did not withhold His Son from being the Sacrifice that cleanses us from all our sin and transforms our hearts into His holy nature.

In The Book of Acts, a Jew named Simon, who also walked with Yeshua, addresses his brothers with

² Yahveh is the Name of the God of Israel (Ex. 3:15) and it’s used about 7,000 times in the Tanach.

knowledge of Yeshua as the Messiah. First though, what happened to him and his Jewish friends on Shavuot, after Yeshua was resurrected:

‘When Shavuot day come round, they had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from Heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Spirit of the Holy One!’ (Acts 2:1-4)

God chose to give His Spirit to us on the same day that He descended upon Mt. Sinai in the form of Fire, and spoke the Ten Commandments to all of Israel! (Exodus 19:16f.) After much discourse with the many Jews in Jerusalem for Shavuot that year, Simon ends with this:

‘For this reason (the raising of Yeshua from the dead by Yahveh) the whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Yeshua both Lord and Messiah. Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Simon and the Apostles, “What must we do brothers?!”

“You must turn to God,” Simon answered, “and every one of you must be immersed into the Name of Yeshua the Messiah for the forgiveness of sins, *and you will receive the gift of the Spirit of the Holy One*. The promise that was made is for you and your children, and for all those who are far away, for all those whom Yahveh our God will call to Himself.”

‘He spoke to them for a long time using many arguments, and he urged them, “Save yourselves from this perverse generation!” They were convinced by his arguments and they accepted what he said and were immersed. That very day about 3,000 Jewish men were added to their number.’ (Acts 2:36-41)

Interestingly enough, the 3,000 Jewish men that were immersed into the Name of Yeshua (not counting the women and the children) stands in direct contrast to the number of Hebrew men killed when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai with the Tablets of Stone (Exodus 32:28). Moses saw that Israel had made for itself a god of gold which it called Yahveh. After enlisting the Levites into his service, Moses had them go through the camp killing 3,000 men.

In our day, many Jewish people have seen that Yeshua is Our Messiah. In North and South America, Europe and Africa, hundreds of thousands of Jews have professed their belief in Yeshua. They have experienced the Spirit of the Holy One cleansing them, giving them new Life and an intimate relationship with their Father in Heaven. There are also many Israelis who are giving their lives to Yeshua, the King of Israel.

I am speaking the Truth and not lying when I say that I have given my life to the God of Israel and His King Messiah Yeshua. I have been forgiven of my sins, filled with the Spirit of the Holy One and worship Him with all my heart. My heart of stone has been replaced with a heart of compassion and I have an intimate knowledge of the Holy One. He desires to free you from your burden of sin and give you Life too.

The God of Israel has given us the way to be holy through the accepting of what He has done for us. He has sent His Son Yeshua to be the Sacrifice that cleanses us from all our perverse heart and prepares us to receive His Spirit, that we might truly devote our lives to Him.

The terrible death that King Messiah experienced reveals to us how far God will go to express His Love for you. In Yeshua’s death, God gave up, like Abraham, the most precious thing He had; His Son. This shows us that He will never withhold any good thing from us. You must experience Yeshua for yourself. I

know that my Redeemer lives and is an ever present help to me in my times of need. I desire to share with you this Life I have been given. Get in touch with me and we'll talk.

May Yahveh, God of Israel, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth and all that is in them, make this question burn in your heart till you seek His Face to find out this ancient Truth for yourself.

May Yahveh uncover His Presence to you and establish within you, His Shalom. I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you this day...I have put before you Life and death, blessing and curse. Choose Life! (Deut. 30:19)

The Ultimate Question—Is Yeshua your Messiah?

The Ultimate Answer—Only Yeshua gives us Living Waters!