

Lay Hold of Yeshua and His Redemption ~ Part 1

Messianic Jews 5:11-14

Letter to the Messianic Jews

In my last post, we examined **Messianic Jews 5:1-10 ~ Yeshua Is God's Appointed High Cohen**. In this post, we begin to learn to **Lay Hold of Yeshua and His Redemption** in **Messianic Jews 5:11-14**. In this post, we focus on the immature reprov'd.

The Immature Reprov'd

"¹¹ We have much to say about this subject, but it is hard to explain, because you have become sluggish in understanding. ¹² For although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the very first principles of God's Word all over again! You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who has to drink milk is still a baby, without experience in applying the Word about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by continuous exercise to distinguish good from evil." ~ Hebrews 5:11-14 (CJB)

Like me, you may be saying "OUCH!" to yourself. This passage could certainly qualify as one of those "hard-sayings of the Bible." Although I have been teaching from the Word of God for almost forty years, I still learn something new every day. Here the writer to the **Messianic Jews** deals with the difficulties which confront him in attempting to get across an adequate conception of **Messianic Judaism** to his hearers.

The phrase, **to all who obey Him** in verse 9, now becomes the occasion for the third appeal, in which obedience to God is equated with spiritual maturity and with doing God's work ~ actively putting our energy for the Kingdom, as opposed to receiving doctrine passively. Listening to fundamental doctrine is **milk**, and **anyone who has to drink milk is still a baby**; compare **Sha'ul's** use of the same metaphor at 1 Corinthians 3:1-2.

What distinguishes the **mature** is that they have **experience in applying the Word**, that is, in obeying God, in behaving ethically, in putting out as opposed to taking in. After some time doing this, their **faculties have been trained by continuous exercise to distinguish good from evil**.

Those whose faculties are still undiscerning cannot make use of the **solid food** which the author is about to dispense. Namely, the information concerning how **Yeshua's** high-priesthood goes beyond the Levitical cohenhood and His death goes beyond the Temple and Tabernacle sacrificial system.

So there are three stages:

- babyhood, in which one receives fundamental doctrine;
- moral maturity, in which one applies these essential doctrines to do good works; and,
- spiritual maturity in which one is ready to accept more advanced doctrine (**solid food**).

At Yochanan 4:31-34 **Yeshua**, who is, of course, both morally and spiritually mature, speaks of his **food** as doing God's will.

People who continually need to hear **the initial lessons about the Messiah** (Messianic Jews 6:1) remain, spiritual babies, feeding on **milk, not solid food**. New Believers ought to seek milk (1 Kefa 2:2). And this milk is enough to orient people toward becoming morally mature and doing God's work. However, when Believers become **sluggish in understanding**, due to their failure to grow up and do work ~ when they **"ignore such a great deliverance"** (2:3), display lack of trust (3:12) and disobey (4:11) ~ it becomes **hard to explain** things which mature workers need to know.

Have you become sluggish? Do the work that the Lord has assigned to you in the Kingdom.

As David Stern explains: ¹

*It should not be thought that **solid food** is more important than **milk**, that the doctrines of cohenhood and sacrifice are more important than those of repentance, trust, purification, ordination, resurrection, and judgment (6:1-2). Rather, each has its place in the life of Believers, according to their degree of maturity.*

The Word about righteousness could well be the doctrine that people are declared righteous by God on the ground of their trust (Romans 3:20-21, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2:8-10). This doctrine is dangerous in the hands of spiritual babies, who may use it to excuse their sins (Romans 3:7-8) and their lack of diligence in doing Kingdom work; it is only for the morally mature, those ***whose faculties have been trained by continuous use to distinguish good from evil.***

In my next post, we'll focus on a warning advanced in **Messianic Jews 6:1-8** as we continue to **Lay Hold of Yeshua and His Redemption ~ Part 2.**

¹ Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern.