

Lay Hold of Yeshua and His Redemption ~ Part 2

Messianic Jews 6:1-8 Letter to the Messianic Jews

In my last post, we examined **Messianic Jews 5:11-14 ~ Lay Hold of Yeshua and His Redemption ~ Part 1**. In this post, we continue to learn in **Messianic Jews 6:1-8 ~ Lay Hold of Yeshua and His Redemption ~ Part 2** about a warning advanced.

A Warning Advanced

"Therefore, leaving behind the initial lessons about the Messiah, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of turning from works that lead to death, trusting God, ² and instruction about washings, s'mikhah, the resurrection of the dead and eternal punishment. ³ And, God willing, this is what we will do. ⁴ For when people have once been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, become sharers in the Ruach HaKodesh, ⁵ and tasted the goodness of God's Word and the powers of the 'olam haba ~ ⁶ and then have fallen away ~ it is impossible to renew them so that they turn from their sin, as long as for themselves they keep executing the Son of God on the stake all over again and keep holding him up to public contempt. ⁷ For the land that soaks up frequent rains and then brings forth a crop useful to its owners receives a blessing from God; ⁸ but if it keeps producing thorns and thistles, it fails the test and is close to being cursed; in the end, it will be burned." ~ Hebrews 6:1-8 (CJB)

The writer to the **Messianic Jews** sets forth the necessity of progress in the **Messianic** life. No teacher would ever get anywhere if they had to lay the foundations all over again every time they began to teach. The writer to the **Messianic Jews** says that the readers must *go on to maturity*.

The initial lessons about the Messiah can be presented as three pairs of doctrines constituting the *foundation* on which to build **Messianic** life. Being born again consists in *turning from works that lead to death* (repentance from sin) and *trusting God*. Both aspects are necessary: claiming to trust God without leaving one's sins behind is hypocrisy, because God is holy. Attempting to turn from sin without trusting God either fails, leads to pride in self-accomplishment, or both.

Two pairs of topics comprise the *instruction* a baby Believer needs after coming to faith. The first pair deals with this world, the second with the world to come ~ Biblical faith is neither altogether this-worldly nor altogether otherworldly.

Baptism is the normal **Brit Hadashah** word **not** for the immersion which accompanies coming to faith (Acts 2:37, 8:38, 16:32) but for *washings* or purifications, of which the initial immersion is but one. The **Messianic Jewish** readers would have been familiar with this subject, since the **Tanakh** speaks of such purifications at many places; also Yochanan 13:3-17 and below at 10:22. **S'mikhah**, the laying on of hands (see Matthew 21:23), refers here to ordination of an individual for a particular task of ministry by the elders of a congregation, as with **Sha'ul** at Acts 13:1 and Timothy at 1 Timothy 4:14. *Instruction about washings* leads to the whole question of how to live a holy life in a sinful world, while *s'mikhah* introduces the subject of working for the Kingdom of God.

Without *resurrection of the dead* it becomes unclear how God is just (see the book of Job) and a Believer's life becomes pointless (1 Corinthians 15:18). The hope of eternal reward and the fear of *eternal punishment* are powerful motivators for Believers to live holy lives and to work for the Kingdom of God.

Unlike **Sha'ul** at 1 Corinthians 3:1, our author believes the readers do not need more *milk* (5:11-14); but assumes they understand these six basic doctrines outlined in verses 1-3 and are prepared to *go on to maturity*.

Barclay labels verses 4-8 as "*one of the most terrible passages in scripture.*"¹ Since I dealt with the issue of **Eternal Security** extensively in 2016, I'm not going to address it here except to recap the main issue raised by this passage.

These verses have been commandeered into service of the most amazing variety of theological positions. Arminians (named after their supposed founder, Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609)) take them as proof that it is possible for someone who has once been a Believer to fall away from faith irretrievably. Calvinists (after John Calvin (1509-1564)) interpret them in such a way as to make that a practical impossibility. The dispute between them has fueled many fires, but often forgotten is the author's purpose, which is **not** to deal abstractly with the "*eternal security of the Believer,*" but specifically with the readers' concern that unless the Levitical sacrifices required by the **Torah** are offered their sins remain unforgiven. Whether they had in fact reintroduced sacrifices on their own cannot be determined from the evidence of this book. But it is obvious that they were fixated on the sacrificial system; and it becomes the author's task to show them that **Yeshua's** atoning death and elevation to the office of **cohen gadol** has brought about by **a transformation of Torah** (7:12) which alters the sacrificial system and priesthood.

Here is a review of the author's argument in these verses. He speaks of **people** who **have**

1. **once been enlightened**, so that they know who **Yeshua** is and what He has done;
2. **tasted the heavenly gift** of God's forgiveness;
3. **become sharers in the Ruach HaKodesh**, the **Ruach HaKodesh** whom God gives only through **His Son Yeshua**;
4. **tasted the goodness** (compare Psalm 34:8) **of God's Word and**;
5. tasted **the powers of the 'olam haba**.

In my next post, we'll take a quick break from our journey through **Messianic Jews** to observe **God's Appointed Time** of **Pesach and Hag HaMatzah** (Passover and Unleavened Bread).

¹ Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT) by William Barclay.