

Creeds of the Kehillah ~ Part 14

The Apostles' Creed ~ Part 13

This post will continue our closer look at the third article of faith contained in the **Apostles' Creed** to learn more about what we affirm that we believe.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins
the Resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.

You cannot make life better just by increasing its quantity. What matters most is quality. It is perhaps regrettable that our English version of the **Creed** speaks of "*the life everlasting*" - as if life just goes on and on for an indefinitely long time. A better translation would be "*eternal life*." The **Creed** uses an expression frequently found in the **Brit Hadashah**, especially in the **Gospel of John**. For **Yochanan**, "*eternal life*" is about quality, not quantity. It is a quality of life that believers experience already when they attach themselves to **Yeshua**. *Whoever trusts in the Son has eternal life. But whoever disobeys the Son will not see that life but remains subject to God's wrath.* (John 3:36). *Yes, indeed! I tell you that whoever hears what I am saying and trusts the One who sent Me has eternal life - that is, he will not come up for judgment but has already crossed over from death to life!* (John 5:24).

Yochanan does not define this unique quality of life, except by saying that it is identical with **Yeshua** Himself. The **Son of God** is the one who is truly and fully alive. All other living things are alive through Him (John 1:3-4). **Eternal life** can even be used as a title for **Yeshua**. He is called *the eternal life that was with the Father* (1 John 1:2). When we get close enough to this personal life source, we begin to share His quality of life. We, too, become truly and fully alive. *And eternal life is this: to know you, the one true God, and him whom you sent, Yeshua the Messiah.* (John 17:3).

When we confess that we believe in **eternal life**, we are not talking about the duration of life but a relationship. In the person of **Yeshua**, we find ourselves drawn into a quality of life that is so rich that it can only be described as eternal. **Yeshua** says, *I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly* (John 10:10).

When we experience life in its fullness, death is rendered obsolete. **Yeshua** says *I am the Resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die* (John 11:25-26). **Yeshua** is so truly and fully alive that even death is really another way of being alive to Him. When we find our way to the living source of life, to **Yeshua** Himself, we discover that death is not death anymore. Even in death, our relationship with **Yeshua** is not broken. Death becomes another place where we can go to find Him.

Yeshua often begins his sayings with the striking preface in the Gospels: *Amen, amen, ¹ I tell you*. He alone has the authority to pronounce the amen. He says the amen not in agreement to anyone else's word but as an expression of His authority. His word is truth, not because it meets any external criteria of truthfulness but because He is Himself the standard against which all other truth claims are measured. It is He who looks into the depths of **God** and tells us what He sees. His word is **Yes and Amen**. The book of **Revelation** goes so

¹ Frequently translated as **Truly, Truly** in English.

far as to name Him *the Amen, the faithful and true witness* (Rev 3:14). In Him, the amen to **God** has become personified.

And so, at the end of the **Creed**, we join our voices to His - what else can we do? - but allow ourselves to be caught up in **Yeshua's** response to **God**. "I believe ... Amen!" And all to the glory of **God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.** ²

In my next post, we begin to unpack the **Nicene Creed**.

² The Apostles' Creed: A Guide to the Ancient Catechism.