

The Red-Letter Words of Yeshua ~ Part 17

A Question About Fasting

¹⁴ *Next, Yochanan's* (this would be John the Baptist's) *talmidim came to Him and asked, "Why is it that we and the P'rushim fast frequently, but your talmidim don't fast at all?"* ¹⁵ *Yeshua said to them, "Can wedding guests mourn while the bridegroom is still with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them; then they will fast.* ¹⁶ *No one patches an old coat with a piece of unshrunk cloth because the patch tears away from the coat and leaves a worse hole.*

Verse sixteen and seventeen speak to the issue of whether faith in **Yeshua the Messiah** can be combined with **Judaism**. Here the **old coat** is Judaism. The **unshrunk cloth** is **Messianic** faith which has not been adapted ("shrunk") to the framework of **Judaism** as currently practiced. Combining unadapted **Messianic** faith with traditional **Judaism** doesn't work - *the patch tears away from the coat*; that is, faith in **Yeshua** apart from **Judaism** - and, later on in the case of **Gentiles**, faith in **Yeshua** apart from the foundational truths about **God** taught in the **Tanakh** - is useless and worthless. Not only that, but it *leaves a worse hole* - attempting to combine unadapted **Messianic** faith with traditional **Judaism** leaves **Judaism** worse off than before. The implication is that one must shrink the new cloth and adapt **Messianic** faith to **Judaism** - for **Yeshua** does not imply anything wrong with patching an old coat! The early **Messianic Jews** did adapt **Messianic** faith to **Judaism**, but the later **Gentile Church** did not. Instead, some forms of **Gentile Christianity** became paganized precisely because the **Tanakh** was forgotten or underemphasized. **Messianic Jews** today are once again trying to bring **Brit Hadashah** faith back to its **Jewish** roots. ¹

⁷ *Nor do people put new wine in old wineskins; if they do, the skins burst, the wine spills, and the wineskins are ruined. No, they pour new wine into freshly prepared wineskins, and in this way, both are preserved.*" ~ Mattityahu 9:14-17 (compare Mark 2:18-22 & Luke 5:33-39)

Whereas in verse sixteen, **Messianic** faith has to be adapted to Judaism, Judaism must be adjusted to **Messianic** faith. If one tries to put **new wine**, **Messianic** faith, into **old wineskins**, traditional Judaism, the faith is lost, and **Judaism** ruined. But if **Judaism** is **freshly prepared** and reconditioned to accommodate trust in **Yeshua HaMashiach**, both the faith and the renewed **Judaism**, **Messianic Judaism**, *are preserved*.

Taken together, verses sixteen and seventeen imply that both **Messianic** faith and **Judaism** should adjust to each other. However, the accommodating must be faithful to **God's Word**; on that; there is no room for compromise. ²

Healing at the Pool of Bethesda

¹ *After this, there was a Judean festival; and Yeshua went up to Yerushalayim.*

The focus here is not on the **Jewishness** of the festival but on the fact that the **Torah** required all **Jewish** men to come to *"the place Adonai your God shall choose"* (Deuteronomy 16:16), which proved to be **Yerushalayim** in **Y'udah** (Judea). Only in this verse is the festival not named. **Chanukkah**, a **Jewish** festival but not a pilgrim festival tied to **Judea**, is mentioned at 10:22 but is not called a Judean festival. ³

² *In Yerushalayim, by the Sheep Gate, is a pool called in Aramaic, Beit-Zata, ³ in which lay a crowd of invalids - blind, lame, crippled waiting for the water to move; ⁴ for at certain times an angel of Adonai went down into the pool and disturbed the water, and whoever stepped into the water*

¹ David Sterns, New Testament Commentary.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

first after it was disturbed was healed of whatever disease he had. ⁵ One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶ Yeshua, seeing this man and knowing that he had been there a long time, said to him, **"Do you want to be healed?"** ⁷ The sick man answered, "I have no one to put me in the pool when the water is disturbed, and while I'm trying to get there, someone goes in ahead of me." ⁸ Yeshua said to him, **"Get up, pick up your mat and walk!"** ⁹ Immediately, the man was healed, and he picked up his mat and walked. Now that day was Shabbat, ¹⁰ so the Judeans said to the man who had been healed, "It's Shabbat! It's against Torah for you to carry your mat!" ¹¹ But he answered them, "The man who healed me - He's the one who told me, **'Pick up your mat and walk.'**" ¹² They asked him, "Who is the man who told you to pick it up and walk?" ¹³ But the man who had been healed didn't know who it was because Yeshua had slipped away into the crowd.

¹⁴ Afterwards, Yeshua found him in the Temple court and said to him, **"See, you are well! Now stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you!"**

Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you. While the disease is not invariably a consequence of sin, as **Yeshua** Himself affirms (9:3), it can be. Also, compare Mattityahu 12:43-45.

¹⁵ The man went off and told the Judeans it was Yeshua who had healed him; ¹⁶ and on account of this, the Judeans began harassing Yeshua because He did these things on Shabbat. ~ Yochanan 5:1-15

Our next post will continue to examine the mounting opposition of the Jewish authorities.