



Biblical Heritage Center's
Real Yeshua Handbook
Viewing His Words Through the Eyes of His Ancient Culture

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Yeshua on the Afterlife

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The defining belief of and "promise" of modern Christian religions -- is the afterlife -- Christians will spend eternity in Heaven with God living lives without problems and physical needs. This is often reinforced in almost every sermon and at funerals.

What are the requirements to live eternally? Over the past thousand years two options have dominated Christianity:

(1) *Membership in the church (collective salvation in which only the church will be saved).*

(2) *Believing the right things (individual salvation).*

The first option originated in the Roman Catholic Church in the 5th century CE and Martin Luther created the second in the 16th century -- after being excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church and thus outside of "collective salvation." He created a doctrine that did not require a church.

As a pastor of a Protestant church (Luther's version of salvation) I preached that message for many years and clearly understand the power of beliefs about the afterlife. The fact of death makes the afterlife a very popular subject, especially at funerals.

But, as a serious student of the Christian Bible, from early in my ministry I was aware of what I considered a real problem. I discussed it with my fellow ministers and church leaders, but it was never discussed with church members. This is the problem --

Jesus did not teach either of the above as requirements for eternal life!

I realized this before I even knew his name was really Yeshua! Yeshua did teach about how to enter into eternal life. The words of that teaching are one of his most popular messages but what he says afterlife is ignored.

A person does not need to know anything about Hebrew or Greek, the Jewish culture of the first century or even need a preacher, priest, rabbi or scholar to understand the requirement for entering the afterlife. This is the most black and white lesson of Yeshua's teachings.

Are you ready to read what Yeshua taught about entering the afterlife? According to Yeshua, this is the single requirement for entering eternal life *to be righteous!*

“The righteous shall go away into eternal life.ö

This is how Yeshua explained who *the righteous* are:

*Then the King will say to **those on his right** hand: “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.”*

*Then **the righteous** will answer him, saying: “Master, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?”*

And the King will answer and say to them: “Amen! When you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me!”

The righteous were aware of the conditions of the lives of those they encountered in their daily course of life. *That requires a mindset of caring about people and valuing human life.*

Make sure you understand this ó *he was not talking about programs to help poor and needy people.* Yeshua made it very clear that he was talking about *individuals* and *nations*. The righteous treated others the way they would have wanted others to treat them. If they had been hungry they would have wanted to be fed or thirsty they would have wanted someone to give them a drink, etc. Think about this for a moment. How did the righteous know someone was hungry? Yeshua didn't say, *öthe starving.ö* He said, *öthe hungry.ö*

In Yeshua's language, *ödoing acts that those aboveö* was called *ödoing tzedaqah (righteousness).ö* The *righteous* were *öpeople that did acts of tzedaqah (righteousness).ö* Yeshua also explained *ödoing tzedaqah (righteousness)ö* another way too ó *öloving your neighbor as yourself.ö*

It is very important to understand that in Yeshua's culture the opposite of love is not *hate* ó *the opposite of love is indifference.*

In this lesson of Yeshua (Matthew 25:31-46), another group of people were mentioned ó *those who did not love the öleast of their brothers (neighbors).ö*

- *They were indifferent to the hungry and gave no food.*
- *They were indifferent to the thirsty and gave no drink.*
- *They were indifferent to the stranger and did not take in.*
- *They were indifferent to the naked and did not clothe.*
- *They were indifferent to the sick and did not visit.*
- *They were indifferent to those in prison and did not visit.*

A person can be a member of a church or believe the right doctrines ó *and be indifferent to the least of their brothers or sisters and still go to Heaven* -- according to the church teachings I am aware of!

A person that “did acts of righteousness” and did not belong to a church or a person that even believed the wrong doctrines could enter into eternal life. But an indifferent person would not enter life eternal, according to Yeshua.

*That pretty well sums up Yeshua’s entire message and movement. Now to understand the other lessons Yeshua, you need to have an awareness of Yeshua’s language and culture. That’s why we are creating the Real Yeshua Handbook. Be sure to bookmark it and visit it often because we will be continually updating it. Also, create scheduled times to study it with someone else or a small group. In Yeshua’s world, his disciples were involved in a team activity. The primary goal was to develop a team of people who were skilled in doing *acts of tzedaqah* (righteousness).*

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Note to pastors and Bible teachers: It took me years to realize a mistake I was making. I began by focusing on explaining what’s wrong with Christianity and churches. Obviously that can make some people very uncomfortable, especially if they feel like their *hope* has been lost. That is an important part of what beliefs about the afterlife do. They give people hope, especially when a loved one has died. If you teach people Yeshua’s messages about righteousness and peace first, they will acquire a *new hope* -- *and not put them in limbo.*

As you teach them what Yeshua actually taught, they will begin to ask questions about where their old beliefs came from and why Yeshua’s message was lost. But they will be asking those questions as people who understand *the power of Yeshua’s gospel*, a power that comes from *the personal experiences of doing acts of tzedaqah* (righteousness). *You don’t have to explain that to people who are experiencing it!*