

## *Y Team Skills*

# Doing Acts of Righteousness Part 1

*“Salvation” the Big Elephant in the Room*

Beliefs about *salvation* are the biggest barriers to open discussions about the differences between different Christian groups and about *Yeshua*, the **Jesus of History**. This is completely understandable when so much is at stake in the minds of *believers* – *literally going to Heaven or Hell!*

The findings below, published in *World Christian Trends AD 30 – AD 2200* by David B. Barrett & Todd M. Johnson (© 2001 by David B. Barrett; William Carey Library, Pasadena, CA; p. 33), surprise many Christians:

In 1970 global Christianity had 18,630 denominations/paradenominations.

In 2000 global Christianity had 33,820 denominations/paradenominations.

Estimates in 2017 indicate there are now probably 40,000 or more. Paradenominations are groups with religious agendas that specialize in specific areas, i.e., families, abortion, etc. What this means is that when someone asks questions about Christian belief, creeds, doctrines, etc., they may get hundreds of answers that do not agree.

One of the skills we work on developing on The *Yö Team* helps resolve situations like this. We want to know what things like *salvation* meant to *the Yö* – **Yeshua**. Once we know his answer, we can compare it to all the other answers.

It will become clear in our discussions that *Yeshua* was a *learned teacher of the Jewish Scriptures and traditions*. The famous Jewish scholar Martin Buber once said, *“If a man has the gift of listening, he can hear the voice of Jesus himself speaking in the later accounts of the Gospels.”* Another famous Jewish scholar that has profoundly influenced by life and studies is David Flusser. Pay close attention to what he said about the words of *Yeshua*:

*“These are at once simple and profound, naïve and full of paradox, tempestuous and yet calm. Can anyone plumb their ultimate depths?”*

The point I want to make is that when we read *Yeshua's* words, even what appear to be short simple statements, they are loaded with layers of other relevant meanings. His answer to the question about salvation is a good example. This is *Yeshua's* answer (from an English translation):

*“The righteous shall enter into eternal life.”*

The English language didn't exist when he spoke the actual words. He taught in Hebrew, and probably Aramaic. He never taught in English. However, for our purposes today, I will stick to the English translation. So, who will be saved (enter eternal life)? *Yeshua's* answer is *“the righteous.”* What does that mean? It means *“the people who do acts of righteousness.”*

Almost every time *Yeshua* spoke, his words were linked to passages in the Jewish Scriptures. We have to go to those passages to unlock the deeper meanings of *Yeshua's* words. The key word in his answer about salvation is *“righteous.”* This is where we have to switch to his language to find those passages.

That's one of the benefits of being a member of The Yö Team. Your coaching staff ó *Dr. Ike Tennison, Rabbi Jeffrey Leynor and Jim Myers* ó have lots of experience working with Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin and a few other languages.

When Yeshua said the Hebrew word for *righteous* (transliterated öTZADIQö), his Jewish audience most likely thought of the first *righteous man* in the Jewish Scriptures ó *Noah*. The verse is recorded in Genesis 6:9. English translators often make it very difficult for öEnglish onlyö readers match the words of Yeshua to his Scriptures (the New Testament didn't exist back then). Below are a couple of those translations. I underlined their translation of the Hebrew word **TZADIQ**:

King James Version -- *Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations.*

American Standard Version ó *Noah was a righteous man and perfect in his generations.*

Bible in Basic English ó *Noah was an upright man and without sin in his generation.*

Remember, a righteous person does acts of righteousness. So, what acts of righteousness did Noah do?

*The first Noah did was obeyed God's commandment to build the ark. Why did God need an ark? He was going to cause a great flood to occur and he wanted to save some creatures from drowning, including Noah and his family. The bottom line is that Noah did acts that saved people from a danger they were facing.*

Now let's take a look at what Yeshua taught and see what ösaving actionsö the righteous did in Matthew 25:

- (1) *saved hungry people by giving them food*
- (2) *saved thirsty people by giving them drink*
- (3) *saved strangers by giving them a place to stay*
- (4) *saved people in need of clothing by giving them clothes*
- (5) *saved people who were sick by visiting them*
- (7) *saved people in prison by going to them*

The *righteous* did *righteous acts like Noah* that *saved people's lives*. By doing those acts they saved their own lives too. This time God had declared the Great Day of Judgment was coming. Instead of God telling people to build an ark that would save them ó *he said "do acts of righteousness!"*

Now let's tackle the elephants in the room. How does what Yeshua taught about öentering into eternal lifeö compare to what you have been taught about ögoing to Heavenö? If the two do not match ó *we just exposed an elephant!*

As Buber and Flusser indicated, the explanation above is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the insights and links to other Scriptures in Yeshua's words. We will be returning this elephant many times in future discussions. YT