



TEACHINGS OF YESHUA

Learning what the teachings of the Jewish Jesus meant in his culture and time period.

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The Lost Part of Yeshua's Message

by Jim Myers

From that time Yeshua began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' (Matthew 4:17)

And he called the twelve to himself, and began to send them out two by two . . . and they went out and preached that people should repent. (Mark 6:7, 12)

Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, charge him as being blameable; and if he repents, forgive him. (Luke 17:3)

The part of Yeshua's message that people know is about **TZEDAQAH** (*righteousness*) and *forgiveness of sins*. The part that has been lost is **MISPHAT** (*justice*) and *repentance*. Take another look at the verses above and consider the importance of *repentance*.

- (1) Yeshua's message for people to *Repent* because the *Kingdom of Heaven* is here.
- (2) Yeshua sent the apostles out to preach about *Repentance*.
- (3) Yeshua taught that *Repentance* is a prerequisite for the forgiveness of sins.

How often did Yeshua tell his followers to repent?

And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him. (Luke 17:4)

Repentance is required every time someone sins *it is not a one-time ritual that covers all sins*. Think about a situation like the one below for a minute.

- (1) Jack steals money from Al. Jack repents and Al forgives him.
- (2) Jack steals your money. Jack tells you that he has already repented once; he was forgiven and doesn't need your forgiveness.
- (3) Jack keeps stealing money and telling the people he steals from that he was forgiven before he stole the money.

Would Yeshua call that **MISHPAT** (*justice*)? In order to answer this question, Christians must understand what the following words meant to Yeshua -- **TESHUVAH** (*repentance*), **MISHPAT** (*justice*) and **TZEDAQAH** (*righteousness*).

- (1) **TESHUVAH** (*repentance*) -- The root word, **SHUV**, simply means “turn around” -- if someone is going the wrong way they must turn around and go the right way. **TESHUVAH** is prerequisite for divine forgiveness; God does not pardon man unconditionally ó God waits for the man to do **TESHUVAH** first. The act of turning around requires the sinner to do the following steps:

experience genuine remorse for the wrong committed

stop doing the wrong

repair the damage that has been done

seek forgiveness from the person wronged

*do **TZEDAQAH** and stay on the right path*

This reveals a very important power God has given to all humans -- by the effort of turning the sinner has the power to redirect his or her destiny.¹

- (2) **MISHPAT** (*justice*) ó a primary attribute of God.

The commandments are essentially for the purpose of the establishment of justice in the world.

Humans do justice by acting in accordance with God’s commandments and by imitating the divine quality of justice.

History begins and ends with justice.²

Justice is not contrasted with love; it is correlated with love.³

- (3) **TZEDAQAH** (*righteousness*) -- The fulfillment of all legal and moral obligations by doing what is right in all relationships.

concrete acts not abstract notions

*a constant pursuit of **MISHPAT** (justice)*

performance of positive deeds not merely abstention from evil actions

a learned trait resulting from the sustained performance of obligations (not an inherent human characteristic)

*results in social stability and **SHALOM** (totality, completeness & wholeness)*

*failure to perform **TZEDAQAH** leads indirectly to the upsetting of social stability and ultimately to the deliberate undermining of the social structure.⁴*

Two very important scrolls for Yeshua were *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel*. You will find the foundational principles of his teachings in them. Ezekiel contains a very famous prophesy about the roles of **TESHUVAH**, **MISHPAT** and **TZEDAQAH**. Let's go back in time to the 6th century BCE and learn from **Ezekiel** (chapter 18):

The word of Yahweh came to me again, saying, "What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'?" (vv. 1-2)

The proverb poses this question -- *Is it **MISPHAT** (just) for one generation to be punished for the sins of its predecessors?* The question was thought to be raised in connection to a statement made about the sins of Manasseh that caused Israel's downfall (2 Kings 21:10-12), although the disaster happened about half-a-century later.

- (1) *Some interpreted this to mean that the consequences of Manasseh's sins were passed down to future generations.*
- (2) *Others believed that Manasseh was the originator of sins which were learned and continued by later generations, but they suffered the consequences of their own sins.*⁵

Ezekiel now reveals the answer (pay close attention to the underlined words):

"As I live," says the Lord Yahweh, "you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine; the soul who sins shall die." (vv. 3-4)

ōSoulsö means ölivesö and since the Creator and Owner of all individuals, they must each stand in the same relationship to Him. Even father and son, who are physically related to one another, are separate entities in the sight of Yahweh.

"The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." (V. 20a)

This gives the clearest expression of the responsibility of the individual for his or her actions. It marks a stark distinction between the teachings of the Torah about the responsibilities of the Israelite people as a nation and those in the Prophets about the responsibilities of individual Israelites. It is a major transition that shifts the focus from the actions of the leaders of the nation to how the actions of individuals affect a nation. It also marks an important change in the relationship of Yahweh to individuals and individual relationships between Israelites. What Ezekiel says next was unexpected:

If a wicked man turns (TESHUVAH) from all his sins which he has done, keeps all My statutes, does justice (MISHPAT) and righteousness (TZEDAQAH) -- surely he shall live! He shall not die. (v. 21)

Pay attention to what Yahweh says next:

All of his transgressions that he has done shall not be remembered against him with his righteousness (TZEDAQAH) which he has done; he shall live! (v. 22)

Notice that Yahweh does not make the transgressions disappear. He promises to *ōnot rememberō* them, while remembering the **TZEDAQAH** he has done. Now Yahweh asks two very important questions about how the people view him:

“Do I take delight in the death of the wicked? . . . Is it not that he should turn from his ways and live?” (v. 23)

This point Yahweh makes is very clear *ō He delights in individuals doing TESHUVAH not the wicked dying.*

It is important to understand the world Ezekiel and his audience lived in to fully grasp the importance of what his words meant to the audience. In the *Laws of Moses*, there are two ways of dealing with sins and they both require the Temple. Sacrifices for *unintentional sins* were made at the Temple. Forgiveness of other sins was part of the annual *Yom Kippur* rituals at the Temple. Ezekiel and his fellow Israelites and Judeans had a major problem *ō the Temple had been destroyed and there was no place to even present sacrifices.*

It was believed by many that corrupt practices by priests were responsible for the Temple being destroyed and why he and his audience were living as captives in a foreign nation. What Yahweh said above gave them a new way to deal with their sins. What he says next may have shocked them:

When a TZADIQ (righteous person) turns away from his TZEDAQAH (righteousness) and does iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the TZEDAQAH (righteousness) which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the treason of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed. Because of them, he shall die. (v. 24)

Isn't this the only way Yahweh can be just by the standard he gave above -- *“the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himselfō*

- (1) Would he be just if he ignores the actions of a sinner who does **TESHUVAH** and turns?
- (2) Would he be just if he ignores the actions of **TZADIQ** who is committing sins and does not do **TESHUVAH**?

Ezekiel lists actions that the *righteous*:

He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of Israel.

He does not defile his neighbor's wife or have sexual relations with a woman during her period.

He does not oppress anyone, but returns what he takes in pledge for a loan.

He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked.

He does not lend to them at interest or take a profit from them.

He withholds his hand from doing wrong and judges fairly between two parties.

He follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws.

That man is righteous (TZADIQ); he will surely live, declares the Lord Yahweh.⁶

He also lists the actions of the *wicked*:

He eats at the mountain shrines.

He defiles his neighbor's wife.

He oppresses the poor and needy.

He commits robbery.

He does not return what he took in pledge.

He looks to the idols.

He does detestable things.

He lends at interest and takes a profit.

Will such a man live? He will not! Because he has done all these detestable things, he is to be put to death; his blood will be on his own head.⁷

The point Ezekiel makes is that Yahweh always bestows his blessings upon man, but man has a responsibility in being prepared to receive them. As rain cannot fertilize the soil unless it has been cultivated, man can only benefit from Yahweh's blessings when he retains the moral capacity for receiving them.⁸ Now Ezekiel reveals something new that Yahweh wants individuals to do -- *make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.*

"Therefore, each man by his ways, I will judge you, O house of Israel," states the Lord Yahweh. "Turn and be made to turn from all your transgressions and you shall not be for a stumbling block of iniquity. Cast away from you all your transgressions by which you have transgressed, and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why will you die, O house of Israel? For I do not have pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord Yahweh. "Therefore turn and live! (vv. 30-32)

The people that did these things, according to Yeshua, were members of the *öKingdom **OF** Heaven.ö* Be sure to note that he didn't say *öKingdom **IN** Heaven.ö* For Yeshua and his fellow Jews, *öHeavenö* is a euphemism they used instead of *öYahweh.ö* Yeshua was proclaiming that the *öKingdom of Yahwehö* had arrived. His message of *öRepentö* echoed something his audience remembers from Ezekiel -- *Therefore do TESHUVAH and live!* Nowhere is this clearer than in Yeshua's teachings about the final judgment.⁹

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate

them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And he will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Notice that this is the judgment of all the **nations**. The Son of Man goes through the nations like a shepherd walking among his sheep, separating them from the goats.

And 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.'

These people did what Ezekiel described as the actions the righteous did for others. He separated the people who did **MISHPAT** (*what is just*), **TZEDAQAH** (*right*) and **TESHUVAH** (*repentance*) from the others.

*Then the **righteous** will answer him, saying, 'Lord, 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?'*

This reminds the audience that all people are created in the image of the Creator and to do something to a fellow human is to do it to the Creator's image.

And the King will answer and say, 'Amen! Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.'

Now the King turns to the group on the left.

Then he will say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels -- for I was hungry and you gave me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take me in, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

These are the people who did acts like those attributed to the wicked by Ezekiel.

Then they also will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, saying, 'Amen! I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'

They did not view their fellow humans as images of the Creator. What Yeshua says next, once again echoes Ezekiel's words -- *Therefore turn and live!*

*And the wicked will go away into everlasting punishment,
but the righteous will go into life eternal.*

Yeshua's portrayal of the King as a shepherd, and the people as sheep and goats, recalled something else Ezekiel said -- *Behold, I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats* (Ezekiel 34:17). See how Ezekiel described wicked shepherds:

- *You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool.*
- *You kill the fat ones.*
- *You do not feed the flock.*
- *The weak you have not strengthened.*
- *The sick you have not healed.*
- *The broken you have not bound up.*
- *You have not brought back the ones you drove away.*
- *You have not sought those that are lost.*
- *You rule the flock with force and cruelty.*
- *You do not protect the sheep. (Ezekiel 34:1-10)*

Now see how Ezekiel describes shepherds that do MISHPAT (just):

- *They search for the sheep and seek them out.*
- *They are among the scattered sheep*
- *They deliver them from all the places where they were scattered.*
- *They feed them in good pasture.*
- *They bind up the broken.*
- *They strengthen the sick.*
- *They protect the flock from predators. (Ezekiel 34:11-16)*

The purpose and mission of Yeshua's teachings and movement was to establish **MISHPAT** (*justice*) on the earth, not to give people -- *especially people who are doing wicked acts* -- free tickets to Heaven. **MISHPAT** is the part of Yeshua's message that has been lost. If Christians understood the lost part of Yeshua's message and engaged in doing MISHPAT with the fervor many use to evangelize the rest of the world, they would not only fulfill mission of Yeshua's Movement *ó they would also fulfill the primary responsibility of being an American Citizen:*

*We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, **establish Justice**, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. (Preamble)*

Notice the position of **Justice** in the preamble *it comes first because without Justice the things that follow will not exist*. What did **Justice** mean to the Founder of the nation?

*The nation is to be a level playing field, where courts are established with uniformity that judge all citizens fairly according to laws, not according to personal relationships, status, or wealth. It requires fairness of the distribution of benefits and burdens among persons or groups in society; and fairness of how information is gathered and how decisions are made.*¹⁰

What would happen if 70% of the Citizens of America turned their attention to the whole message of Yeshua instead of the conflicting theologies that have been dividing them for centuries? Instead of being **Christians for the Right Beliefs**, wouldn't **Christians for the Real Yeshua** make America and the world -- a much better and safer place? **BHC**

May Memorials

In Loving Memory

**SIDNEY
PERRY
DOSH, JR.**

Born: October 18, 1938
Died: May 17, 2006

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

In Their Remembrance

May their memories inspire us to seek those qualities of mind and heart which they shared when we walked life's journey together. May we help to bring closer to fulfillment their highest ideals and noblest strivings.

May their memories deepen our loyalty to those things which we valued and shared -- faith, love, peace and devotion. As long as we live, they too will live; for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.

(Inspired from prayers found in *Yitzhor Reflections - The New Mahzor* - The Prayer Book Press)

In Loving Memory

**SIDNEY
BERRY
WARD, SR.**

October 3, 1891
May 27, 1976

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

Remembering those who came before us is a very important part of the Biblical Heritage Center's mission. It is our privilege to honor them by **the BHC Memorial Garden** and *Memorials* which are printed in this newsletter. The **Memorial Garden** is on the website at <http://www.biblicalheritage.org>. Please visit it the next time you are on the Internet and stop back by often. If you would like to add your loved one to this section, send the information to us. There is no charge, but donations are accepted. Remember those who have meant so much to you with a BHC Memorial.

¹ *Encyclopedia Judaica* © Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd. Israel; vol. 14, col.73.

² *Encyclopedia Judaica* © Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd. Israel; vol. 10, col. 476.

³ *Encyclopedia Judaica* © Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd. Israel; vol. 10, col. 477.

⁴ *Encyclopedia Judaica* © Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd. Israel; vol. 14, col. 180.

⁵ *Ezekiel: Hebrew Text & English Translation with Introduction and Commentary*; p. 108.

⁶ Ezekiel 18:5-9.

⁷ Ezekiel 18:10-13.

⁸ *Ezekiel: Hebrew Text & English Translation with Introduction and Commentary*; p. 113 ff. 25.

⁹ Matthew 25:31-46

¹⁰ <http://new.civiced.org/resources/curriculum/911-and-the-constitution/terms-to-know>