

הַמְּגִלָּה

We are all very familiar and comfortable with the picture of Y'shua of Nazareth as a controversial charismatic rabbi from Galilee. Throughout the Brit Chadashah (the New Testament) Y'shua was recognized as a rabbi by his followers, by strangers in need of his help, and even by those who had positioned themselves as his adversaries. The actual word "rabbi" appears only 9 times in the Brit Chadashah. The title appears seven times in the Gospel of John and twice in the Gospel of Matthew. The title rabbi never appears in the Tanak. From this we may deduce that this title did not come into vogue among the Children of Israel until well after the Babylonian Captivity and possibly as late as the Hellenistic area. The title Rabbi simply means "teacher". The Brit Chadashah provides us with a clear definition and translation of the word into the Greek.

Then Y'shua turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They saith unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being translated, Master,) where dwellest thou? (John 1:38)

The word "master" is the English translation of the Greek word "didaskalos" which means "teacher". We will see this definition of the title Rabbi confirmed in other passages as well.

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Y'shua by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher (didaskalos) come from God: (John 3:1-2)

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master (didaskalos), even Messiah; and ye are all brethren. (Matthew 23:8)

Whenever the Greek word didaskalos is applied as a title such Rabbi or Master, it is accompanied by the Greek definite article "o". The words "o didaskalos" or "The Master" appears 12 times in the gospels' narratives.

As the gospels' narratives unfold we are given a very clear picture of Y'shua the Messiah as a Rabbi. The baptism of Y'shua and his anointing with the Holy Spirit is his ordination into ministry. This anointing reveals the source of Y'shua's power and authority (Matthew 3:13-17). This source remained a question to the blind leaders who opposed him and mystery to those who would not believe in him.

And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? (Matthew 13:54)

And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, by what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? (Matthew 21:23)

And the Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (John 7:15)

Next we witness Y'shua standing on the mount teaching like Moses (Matthew 5-7) as well as performing miracles of healing, deliverance and natural wonders(Matthew 8-9). When he finished teaching Matthew tells us that the people who heard him were astonished at the power and authority that was evident in him.

And it came to pass, when Y'shua had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Matthew 7:28-29)

Again and again throughout the gospels we witness the power and wisdom of Rabbi Y'shua's teachings drawing people unto himself. Like other first century rabbis Y'shua also had a following of disciples or talmidim.

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Y'shua (John 1:37)

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Y'shua by night, and said unto him, Rabbi...(John 3:1-2)

A great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did to them that were diseased (John 6:2)

The scriptures repeatedly report that great crowds gathered to hear Y'shua's teaching and receive his blessing.

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth and taught them, (Matthew 5:1-2)

When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him (Matthew 8:1)

But when Y'shua knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all, (Matthew 12:13)

The same day went Y'shua out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, (Matthew 13:1-2)

And great multitudes came unto him (Matthew 15:30)

And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them. (Matthew 19:2)

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; (Matthew 21:9)

Clearly the Brit Chadashah/New Testament lifts up Y'shua as our Rabbi and Torah teacher. Y'shua himself taught,

But be ye not called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Messiah; and ye are all brethren. (Matthew 23:8)

Repeatedly Rabbi Y'shua invites us to come learn from him, follow him, and take his yoke upon us.

And Y'shua walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. (Matthew 4:18-19).

And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Y'shua saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head. And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Y'shua said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead. (Matthew 8:19-22)

And as Y'shua passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. (Matthew 9:9)

Then said Y'shua unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (Matthew 16:24)

Y'shua said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven: and come and follow me. (Matthew 19:21)

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

In this last reference (Matthew 11:28-30) Y'shua gives us a glimpse of what made his teaching different than that of his contemporaries. Y'shua described his yoke as easy and his burden as light. This is in contrast to the teachings of Pharisees which Y'shua openly criticized. When the Pharisees questioned Y'shua's disciples about their failure to wash their hands before eating as is prescribed by the tradition of the elders, Y'shua responded to their accusation with great clarity.

Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited my me: And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:3-9)

Y'shua warns his follows of the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees that mix or pervert God's Torah with man made laws and doctrines.

Then Y'shua said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees (Matthew 16:6)

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. (Matthew 23: 2-4).

Here we should note that there is some confusion surrounding this passage which is caused by the Greek translation. Comparing the last three biblical references given we may see an apparent contradiction in the teaching of Messiah. It would appear that in the first two references Y'shua is clearly criticizing the Pharisees' teachings and warning his disciples against them. This seems to be contradicted by Y'shua's statement in the last reference cited that we are to do whatever the Pharisees teach. This apparent contradiction in the teachings of Y'shua was in many ways the impetus behind Nehemiah Gordon's book **The Hebrew Y'shua vs. the Greek Jesus**. By comparing the Greek text of Matthew 23:2-4 to the Hebrew text of Shem Tov Ibn Shiprut (a 15th century Spanish Jew) Nehemiah Gordon gives us a translation that demonstrates a clear consistency in the teachings of Messiah.

*The Pharisees and sages sit upon the seat of Moses. Therefore, all that **he** says to you, diligently do, but according to **their** reforms (takanot) and **their** precedents (ma'asim) do not do, because they talk but they do not. (The Hebrew Yeshua vs. the Greek Jesus, Nehemiah Gordon, Pg.48)*

Y'shua as Rabbi was a Torah teacher. His teachings restored the Torah to its original state of purity, simplicity, and its intention. He did this by stripping away the layers of reforms, additions, and traditions of man that had been mixed with it and added to it. It was these "traditions of the elders" that made keeping the Torah (at least as it was being defined by the Pharisees and Sadducees) a burdensome and grievous yoke. This contrast in understanding of the Torah is especially clear in Y'shua's repeated statement "You have heard it said by them of old timeBut I say unto you..." (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44). Here we see that Y'shua did not come to do away with or destroy the Torah but instead he imbues it with clarity, meaning and substance (Matthew 5:17-20).

So it is that we have in many examples seen the gospels' proclamation of Y'shua as the charismatic and controversial Rabbi calling the Children of Israel and others to return to the Torah and live.

But included in this call of Y'shua to come to him and learn and to follow him is another often overlooked image of Messiah. As we have already said most of us are familiar with and quite comfortable with the idea of Y'shua as a rabbi. But what of the image and idea of Y'shua being the disciple? Most of us have never given much consideration to concept at all. But this is also a part of the teaching and image of Messiah recorded for us in the gospels' narratives. To see this image clearly let us first look at practice of first century discipleship.

The Torah was to be the very heart of the children of Israel. Again and again throughout the Torah we receive commands to teach our children the Torah. We should remember that in the first century there were no Family Book Stores, or Zedervan Publishing Houses, Nelsons Bible Publishing, Blue Letter Bible.com or E-Sword.com. The Torah was written on a scroll. These scrolls were very expensive. It took the skins of a whole flock of sheep, barrels of ink and a good solid year or more of a scribe's time to make one scroll. Very few people owned a Torah Scroll. Therefore we should realize that the command to teach our children the Torah would be fulfilled in very practical ways. The Feasts of the Lord (Leviticus 23) all contained certain rituals and readings that contained within them the teachings of the Torah. By keeping the Feasts parents placed the living Torah before the eyes of their children. By keeping the dietary laws (Leviticus 11) and the purity laws each generation learned to make the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable, useful and useless, clean and unclean. What is important to for us to see in this pattern is that Torah was learned by living it and not by reading it. In the Hebrew mind doctrine is not what we teach but what we do. Therefore the Children of Israel learned by doing what they saw their parents, leaders, and teachers do. According to the Torah the primary educator was to be the family, and the primary means of teaching was by living the Torah in the eyes of your children. It should not surprise us then to hear Y'shua say "follow me" or

"learn from me". While he did slip away from the crowds from time to time to give his disciples private verbal teachings, he more often than not simply lived out before them what he wanted them to learn. Given this understanding of the Hebrew teaching method we should assume that if Y'shua wanted to teach his disciples how to be disciples he would live this out before them.

In the first century there were many rabbis and teachers. These teachers and rabbis would often be involved in great debates. As young men and in rare occasions women heard these debates they may be moved to join themselves to one or the other of the teachers. A good disciple would not try to sit under more than one teacher. Y'shua taught,

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. (Matthew 6:24).

Instead a promising student would be recognized by the teacher and invited to become his disciple. Y'shua called Peter, James, John, Andrew, Matthew, Philip and the others to become his disciples. When given this invitation the disciple would often leave his own home and move in to the home of his teacher, in order that he may learn by observing everything that his rabbi does. Again remember modeling was the primary means of teaching. So we hear Y'shua teach,

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (Matthew 10:37)

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26)

We should realize that the disciple is more than just a student. He is a follower. In fact the object of the disciple was to model his life in every aspect after his rabbi. The disciple would learn to walk like his rabbi, dress like his rabbi, pray like his rabbi, eat like his rabbi, sleep like his rabbi, laugh like his rabbi, talk like his rabbi and even argue like his rabbi. This modeling was to be so thorough that eventually there would be no difference between the rabbi and the disciple; to see one was to see the other. To do this would require that the disciple love the rabbi enough to die for him. So we here Y'shua teach,

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me. (Matthew 16:24)

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me (Mark 8:34)

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. (Luke 9:23)

The disciple would have to lay aside his own thoughts, opinions, manners, and life in order to embody the rabbi and his teachings. This is what Y'shua meant by the image of the cross in these texts. A true disciple would never think to inject his own thoughts or opinions into an argument instead but would instead speak only his rabbi's opinions, teachings, and arguments. The true disciple would not argue in his own name or for his own prestige but would speak only in the name of his rabbi and for the sake of his rabbi's glory. The true disciple did not seek to build his own school or make disciples unto him self but sought to convince others to

become disciples of his rabbi. Often this Rabbi/Disciple relationship grew to become more of a Father/Son relationship. We witness this type of relationship between the Apostle Shaul and his disciple Timothy. Shaul writes,

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: (1 Timothy 1:2)

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, (1 Timothy 1:18)

To Timothy my dearly beloved son: (2 Timothy 1:2)

With these understanding in mind we may begin to understand the words of Y'shua when he said,

But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Messiah; and ye are brethren. And call no man father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master even Messiah." (Matthew 23:8-10).

All of this is what Y'shua **said** about discipleship. But as we have already stated, DOING and not SPEAKING was the primary means of teaching your disciples. Therefore let us now look at how Y'shua taught his disciples to be disciples by being a disciple himself. The clearest examples of this modeling by Y'shua are found in the Gospel of John. We should note how Messiah describes his relationship to his Rabbi Father. In fact I would suggest that much of the Father/Son language surrounding Messiah's relationship to YHWH is truly describing this Rabbi Father/Disciple Son relationship. Let us now look at Y'shua's teaching about his relationship to his Rabbi Father. We should give careful consideration to what we have already described as the Rabbi/Disciple relationship and responsibility.

My Father worketh hitherto and I work (John 5:17)

The son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things so ever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. (John 5:19).

I can of my own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. (John 5:30)

For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me (John 5:36)

For I cam down from heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent me. (John 6:38)

I honor my Father...I seek not my own glory (John 8:55)

For I have not spoken of my self, but the Father which sent me, He game me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. (John 12:49-50)

If you had known me, ye should have known my Father also (John 14:7)

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father (John 14:9)

As the Father gave me commandment even so I do. (John 14:31)

In both his life and his words we witness Y'shua as the perfect disciple of the Father. He has truly given his life completely to the fulfilling of the Father's purpose. To this end Messiah has perfectly embodied the Spirit and Teaching of YHWH. So John would testify of Y'shua

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14).

And Shaul likewise wrote of Messiah,

Who is the image of the invisible God, (Colossians 1:15)

And as Y'shua declared of himself,

I and my Father are one. (John 10:30)

And again,

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; (John 14:9)

Thus we see that Y'shua not only called and invited people to become his disciples but he also taught them how to be a disciple by his own words and deeds. By carefully examining Y'shua's relationship with YHWH we learn how we are to become disciples of the Messiah. Thus when Messiah commands us to go out and teach other nations he is not asking us to go lecture people on the fine points of theology and church doctrine, but rather go DO the TORAH. As he has fulfilled the TORAH so we should fulfill the Torah. We are first and foremost to follow him by DOING what he DOES then SPEAK what he SPEAKS. We should be careful to see the connection between Y'shua's teaching at the beginning of his ministry and those at the end.

Think not that I am come to destroy the Torah or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Torah till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-19).

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world. (Matthew 28:18-20)

To fulfill the calling of discipleship is not easy. We must, as Messiah has taught, love him more than anyone else including ourselves. To give up our personal ambitions, dreams, will, thoughts, and opinions, while restricting our selves to only our Rabbi's view on life, morality, prophecy, faith, the scriptures and the world, means that we must love him absolutely. Only when we love our Rabbi to this degree will forsaking ourselves to live for him become a joy and not be a burden. As disciples of Y'shua we are to live his life, teach his teaching, speak only in his name, speak only his words, and promote only his purpose. It is not always easy for us to give up the "Traditions of the Elders" and "Doctrines of Men" that we have received from our fathers.

But to be a disciple of Y'shua HaMashiach means that we walk as he walked. Of recent pop Christian culture has exploited the simple phrase W.W. J.D., What Would Jesus Do. Unfortunately there are few that have discerned or accepted the answer H.W.K.T.T., **He Would Keep The Torah!**