

<b>Ki Tetse</b>	<b>When You Go Out</b>	<b>Building a Safe Community</b>
<b>Torah:</b>	Deuteronomy 21:10-25:9	
<b>Haftarah:</b>	Isaiah 54:1-10 (case of the missing Arm	Isaiah 52:13-53:12)
<b>Brit Chadashah:</b>	I Corinthians 5:1-5	

Today, I have two titles for my meditation and the second one discusses the case of the missing arm. Someone I know has been talked out of their faith by a rabbinic Jewish group which claims that there are over 30 Tanach (Old Testament) misquotes in the New Testament. This is not true. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE, A Greek ruler commissioned a new Greek translation of the Tanach (Septuagint because 70 rabbis worked on it) and it was the one in use among Jews until the 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE, when the Masoretic Hebrew translation was completed – and when Greek ceased being a language most Jews spoke.

It was also used by the writers of the New Testament because key passages of the Tanach clearly pointed to Yeshua as the Messiah of promise. So, when the New Testament is quoting from the Tanach (Old Testament) it uses the wording of the older Septuagint and is not misquoting anything. With the rise of modern rabbinic/Talmudic Judaism, the rabbis changed much of the wording of texts which clearly pointed to our Messiah. Some Jews even wrongly claim that the Septuagint is a Christian translation of the Old Testament. It is not.

So it is not at all surprising that today's prophetic portion excludes Is. 52:13- 53:12, because it points so clearly to the life and ministry of our Messiah. In selecting prophetic portions to use in the annual reading list, they have also tended to avoid any passages which either point to closely to Yeshua or are used in the New Testament to demonstrate the biblical validity of His ministry. Our New Testament is faithful to the Old Testament (Tanach) in every respect. The Arm is not missing, they are just trying to remove this Messianic Portion from the annual reading cycle. I will let you read it and study it at home.

The New Testament portion talks about the foul sexual immorality which was plaguing the Corinthian congregation. In Israel such behaviour would have warranted the death penalty. In the New Testament exclusion was practised and needs to be practised even today.

A lot of today's portion focuses on the rights of women when it came to marriage. There is also a surprising passage which calls for rebellious children to be stoned, even after repeated attempts to discipline them. They are obviously adult children because drunkenness is mentioned. It also stipulates that when you hang a man on a tree, his body cannot remain there over night, without bringing a curse on the land. Our Messiah absorbed all of our curses and our sins killed him just before sunset. His body did not hang over night.

Also the passage requires us to be good, helpful neighbours. It is not just an option, it is a requirement. There are some stipulations about not mixing seeds, animals and fabrics. Cross dressing is also forbidden, along with both female and male prostitution.

Several exclusions from entering the tent of meeting are also given. A man who has been castrated and had his private member split is not to enter the sanctuary. It is my understanding that this disfigurement was done for religious reasons. They were not necessarily excluded from the camp, but they were definitely excluded from the sanctuary.

A child born of an illicit union was also excluded from the tent of meeting for up to ten generations. Someone could make offerings on their behalf. Again they were excluded from the sanctuary, but not the camp. No Ammonite or Moabite could enter the sanctuary for ten generations, because of their attempt to curse Israel through Balaam. There was no exclusion mentioned for Ruth because she was a convert to Judaism.

Edomites and Egyptians could enter the sanctuary in their third generation, but these exclusions did not apply to converts who left those nations to join Israel.

Two strange bits of male hygiene are mentioned. If a man had a nocturnal emission, he had to wash himself and could be readmitted to the camp the next evening. Also, when they were campaigning, Jewish soldiers had to dig a hole for their excrements and cover it over, when they had finished. The camp had to be free of defilement so YHVH could walk in their midst.

They were to let a runaway slave take up residence in their midst and again, they were forbidden to have any male or female prostitutes in the camp. They could not bring any money that had been earned as a prostitute as an offering to YHVH. The term dog in this context refers to homosexual prostitution, which was also abominable and no revenue from either male or female prostitution could be offered to YHVH in the sanctuary.

People were allowed to wander into their neighbours vineyard and pick grapes to eat, but they could not bring a basket and start to harvest for themselves. The same applied to grain fields.

Once a woman was divorced from a man, she could not go back to her estranged husband even after the death of her second spouse. Newly weds were not to be fined when they were exempt from military service. It was punishable by death to steal or sell brethren. As well, many fair business practises are mentioned.

Neither a father or a son could be put to death because of the sin of the other. Also oppressing strangers, widows and orphans was strictly forbidden. These less fortunate had gleaning rights during harvest times. After the harvest, our people were told not to mussel the ox who was grinding the grain. Later Paul uses this reference to declare that spiritual leaders should be able to live on the tithes and offerings of the people.

A ceremony is also given when the closest relative of a deceased man refused to perform his levirate obligation. Also when two men were fighting, the wives were forbidden to help by engaging in crotch grabbing. Those who did, had their offending hand cut off.

Our people have always been required to use just weights and fair business practises. Jewish people have always believed in being fair and not engaging in corrupt business practises. For centuries, European businessmen and rulers knew that they could trust Jewish bankers and only turned on them to avoid repaying their debts.

The passage ends with some unfinished spiritual business. The Amalekites had no reason to attack Israel and they were cruel bushwhackers, who attacked suddenly and then dispersed into the hills. Once Israel had settled into the land and was strong enough, they were to finish off this savage people. It was really an eternal struggle between YHVH and the evil gods of the Amalekites. The false god of this world and his demonic henchmen are behind all the evil and violence which prowls through this darkening world.

## **Sermon: The Dangers of Taking a Symbol Literally**

The sixth chapter of the Gospel of John is wrongly used by Catholic and Orthodox Christians as the basis for their belief in transubstantiation. This strange, false doctrine supposes that during communion, the priest is able to transform the bread and the wine into the physical body and blood of Yeshua. Anglicans and Lutherans believe in consubstantiation, another false doctrine which teaches that Messiah is spiritually present in the bread and the wine of communion. Ordained priests are said to somehow possess the ability to enact this transformation.

Catholics also believe that when the bread and wine is transformed, they are repeating the sacrifice of the cross and when the priest snaps the communion wafer into several pieces, they are breaking the body of Messiah for the forgiveness of sin.

As we prepare for the High Holy Days and Sukkoth, I want to help you to clearly and firmly distinguish between symbolic, literary language and literal language. The Fall Feast are rich in symbolism and this language can be a powerful means of communicating biblical truths. However, a symbol or a symbolic ritual must never be taken as literal or you misunderstand what the symbol is referring to. The physical body and blood of our Messiah resides in His resurrected body in Heaven and is not somehow brought back to earth to repeat what the Bible teaches was a one time, non repeatable act of redemption.

I want to speak to you this morning in three or four sections of this passage. First I want to review with you what is actually being said in John chapter six. Then I want to help you clearly understand that the L-RD's Table is actually a link to the Passover Seder and connects us to the symbolism of the Lamb of G-d who died for the sins of the all the nations and generations of mankind. Then I want to discuss with you the nature of salvation. Is it through the repetition of rituals and sacraments, which is called sacerdotalism, or through coming to personal faith in the Messiah and learning to walk according to His Word?

Finally I want to discuss what it means to discern the body of the Messiah in communion and how the L-RD's Table can help us find forgiveness and break the power of sin in our lives.

Around Passover during Yeshua's early ministry in the Galilee, a large crowd of around five thousand followed Him because they saw the miracles He was performing. It would not have been possible to secure enough food to feed this multitude. Peter's brother Andrew, found a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two fish.

Yeshua had the crowd sit down in the grass and He blessed the bread and the fish. The entire crowd likely ate more than they had ever eaten in their lives previously and while there was no fish left, His disciples gathered 12 baskets of pieces of bread which were left over. The people were so stunned that this mighty miracle was performed, that they wanted seize Yeshua and make Him their King (and maybe get a permanent source of the bread?).

Yeshua retreated up the mountain until darkness fell and sent to apostles to the other side of the lake in a row boat. After they had nearly rowed across the lake, Yeshua came to them walking on the waters. When the crowd He had left behind on the other side saw that Yeshua and His disciples had crossed the lake, they came after Him.

They asked Him how He got there and then the fun begins. He reprimands them because they did not come because of the miracles, but because of the huge meal they had been given. They obviously wanted another feast, but were told they needed to work for everlasting life and not for temporary bread. He said that the work of the Father was that they should believe in the who had been marked with the seal of G-d.

They knew Yeshua was talking about Himself and asked for a miracle so that they would believe. They were just trying to get another meal out of the Messiah. He spoke of the true bread of Heaven, which Moses did not give to the people and that He was the Bread of life who gives His life for the world. He says that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness should do the will of G-d, which was to see the Son and believe in Him, to get everlasting life, and be resurrected on the last day.

They struggle with the idea that Yeshua had come from Heaven, because they knew Him and His family. He says that no one could come to Him, unless the Father was calling them. He repeats His affirmation that He is the Bread of Life and that whomever believes in Him will have everlasting life. He uses the symbol of eating His flesh and drinking His blood as the means to access everlasting life. He says whoever eats Him will live by Him because His flesh is truly food and His blood is truly a drink.

Through out the whole discussion, He is using eating bread and drinking blood as a symbol of coming to the Messiah and believing in Him. It is the coming and the believing which grant everlasting life and not actual physical bread and wine. He said all of this in a synagogue in Capernaum, so the exchange occurred on the Sabbath.

Those who wanted another miraculous feast were horrified that He was asking them to eat His flesh and drink His blood. He was actually reprimanding them for trying to get a carnal gain, instead of coming to faith in the Son of G-d. Yeshua goes on to say that it is the Spirit which brings life, not the flesh and Peter says that His words were Spirit and life. By this, they should have understood that He was not talking about His actual, physical flesh and blood.

When they saw that they were not going to get another feast, many of His supposed disciples stopped walking with Him and the hungry crowd likely also dispersed. When He asked the apostles if they were also going away, Peter makes a final affirmation about the symbolic nature of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Yeshua has the words of everlasting life.

When He said these words, He did not give anyone His flesh or blood, He was proclaiming Himself to be the Bread of life and He used the symbol of eating His flesh and drinking His blood to refer to the need to hear His Word and believe in Him as the Messiah of promise. We are not practising a form of spiritual cannibalism when we observe the L-rd's Table.

We are reenacting a part of the Seder ritual as we proclaim, symbolically, that our Messiah is the celestial Lamb of G-d who is going to deliver us out of the Egypt of this world. Messiah did not tear off pieces of His flesh when He blessed the matzah bread and gave it to the apostles. He did not cut Himself and bleed into a cup that He handed around to the apostles. He did not magically enter the bread and the wine, He just took part of the Seder and gave it an enhanced symbolic meaning. Communion does not cancel or replace the Seder, it becomes a new symbolic ritual where we celebrate the sacrifice of the Lamb of G-d for the sins of the world. Both Gentiles and Jews are invited to take part in the ceremony as equals.

The L-rd's Table can be celebrated at any time during the year (I Cor. 11:26), whereas the Passover Seder is only celebrated once a year. At Passover, we symbolically remember the events of the Exodus, without having this deliverance repeated. At the L-RD's Table, we symbolically remember the events of His death and resurrection, without having Him repeat His suffering and death, every time we partake of the L-RD's table.

As Messianic Jews and Gentiles, we have a double blessing. We can both remember the Exodus of our people out of Egyptian slavery and also the deliverance of people from the slavery of the Egypt of this world. After the Seder, Jewish people went into the temple to make a special set of offerings, some of which they ate. When we celebrate the L-RD's Table, we are remembering His sacrifice and not eating Him again and again or repeatedly drinking His blood every time we celebrate communion.

At Passover, we remember the one time deliverance of our people from Egypt and when we participate in the L-RD's Table, we are remembering the one time deliverance of all the nations and generations of mankind out of the Egypt of this world. Most of the Seder meal represents various aspects of our deliverance and our cleansing, but Communion only takes the hidden matzah (afikomen) and the third cup (of deliverance) and applies it into a new context. It does not take away from any aspect of the Seder, but gives us a place to remember the great price our Messiah paid for our redemption.

Communion is not one of the special ceremonies which brings us everlasting life. It is simply a memorial of the greatest salvation this world has ever known. People who believe in salvation through special rituals, fall into an error called sacerdotalism, or salvation through the sacraments. There are seven sacraments in the Catholic church and they believe that these are the means whereby the grace of G-d is communicated with His people. No ceremony ever had the power to bring salvation to anybody who was performing it.

Symbolic behaviour can teach us about the various aspects of our salvation, but they are never means by which salvation is given to believers. Salvation comes from personally believing in what the Only Son of G-d did on the cross, when He died, resurrected and ascended back into heaven. It comes when you ask the living G-d to take up residence in your heart through the Spirit of His Son. Nothing more, nothing less.

We must never feel that any of the symbols of Salvation are the means by which we access the salvation of G-d. Baptism does not actually wash you clean from your sins. It is an exterior, physical reminder of an inner spiritual change. We baptize people when they have reached the age of consent and want to personally adopt the faith which they have been raised in. We immerse people as a symbol of the faith which they are proclaiming.

There are various kinds of Tevilah in Judaism. As Messianic Jews and Gentiles, we are practising the Tevilah of conversion, where a believer becomes a full participant in proclaiming their faith and fully joining our community.

Symbols and rituals remain key illustrations of various aspects of the spiritual truths which our faith is made up of. They are word pictures and ceremonial reminders of the great salvation which has come into our lives. Salvation is an act of faith, not the repetition of a ceremony.

Communion also serves as a safety value reality check, which teaches us to keep short accounts with G-d and not allow sin to build up in our hearts and lives. The world we live in is a darkening, wicked place and our enemy is a master of spiritual deception. Our flesh is also just a bunch of drives, all jostling for various forms of carnal satisfaction and even though our spirits can be very willing, our flesh is often very weak and rarely has our best interests at heart.

We need to remember that making a mistake is not the same as sinning, unless we refuse to take responsibility for our actions and make sinfulness the motivating drive of our hearts. Coming to faith gives us a new motivation and the indwelling Messiah wants to take our lives in an entirely new direction. Is your life moving in this new direction?

When Paul repeats the simple Communion formula, he is referring back to the symbolism of the flesh and blood of our Messiah who died for us. He wants us to examine our hearts and lives, so that we are neither stalled nor distracted from our primary responsibility to walk in faith with the Messiah according to His Word.

He wants us to pursue spiritual wholeness, even though, in this life, our flesh will always be a wild horse trying to drag us away from the direction we should be travelling in. In fact, He was broken so that we could be made whole and bruised so that we could be healed. We understand that He has ascended unto the Father, and that He is no longer breakable and wants us to be aware of what He has done for us. This is what it means that we are to discern the body as we symbolically eat and drink the communion elements.

We are not to feel that somehow His flesh and blood are actually in the bread and the wine. We are to be aware of the great price He paid to win our salvation. We are also to access and apply the growing spiritual strength He wants to fill our lives with.

He does not want us to seek Him only when we want something or when we are hungry or in distress. Some believers are only able to walk with the Messiah according to His Word when good things are happening in their lives. Some believers are too easily tempted because they are not rooted in His Word and in prayer. Others are too easily distracted by the garish, loud world we are only travelling through. Do not become distracted.

The L-rd's Table allows us the opportunity of doing a regular spiritual reality check so we are neither hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, nor discouraged by the relentless attacks of the enemy. We will resume observing the L-rd's Table once all pandemic restrictions are over.

The L-rd's Table is something we need to do together so that our community can remain a source of strength and comfort for us and so that we can be strong and comforting to other members of our community. Scriptures teach us that we belong to the body of the Messiah and are part of the generational community which is composed of people from every tongue and nation. If we do not have a healthy committed community expression of our faith, then we are in danger of being snared and taken like a sheep who has wandered away from the flock. Don't let the enemy, the world and the flesh gang up on you. Stay in fellowship!

Communion is a symbolic reminder of what the Messiah accomplished for us. The bread does not become His physical body and the wine does not become His physical blood. We need to be careful not to take any of the symbols of Scripture literally. Shabbat Shalom.