

MATTHEW LESSON 6 FEBRUARY 13, 2021

Wisdom and Understanding

((A note and carry over from the lesson about Daniel teaching the wise men that I thought you might find interesting. You will remember that wisdom, by itself is great, but it needs a partner. The partner is understand. Understanding helps you know what to do with the wisdom you are given. Let's see why Daniel was such a good teacher to these wise men.....))

Daniel 1:17&20 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams...In every matter of **wisdom** and **understanding** about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his entire kingdom.....

Matthew 3:1-3 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, **Repent**: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is He that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.

1. Why was Jochanan calling people to repent?

When G-d gave the Commandments to the people at Mt. Sinai, He was giving them His standard for behavior. Now there was a way to measure behavior, and people became accountable for their actions, but were still free to choose what to do. Even though every individual decides to obey or disobey, each decision a person makes, not only affects the individual, but affects the entire community. And there is, another factor is at play here. The overarching prophetic term for repentance is **shuv**, "return." To what or to whom is someone suppose to return? Really, a person can only return to G-d who has laid out the way of life and blessing by giving us Torah, and in giving the Torah, and He laid out consequences for disobedience which are never good!

Proverbs 12:28 In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.

Deuteronomy 30:1 See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity;

The Hebrew word for sin is "chet." Chet means "to go astray."

In terms of a picture, Torah is like an arrow hitting the bull's eye, but sin is the arrows just going helter skelter and missing the target altogether. John is saying, stop the sin or the helter skelter living and "shuv" - return to the righteous paths G-d has laid out for us!

1. What are the results of an individual not repenting?
2. How does an individual's actions affect the entire community?

A recent headline said:

THE RETURN: A Call for the Nation to Repent, Pray for Revival and Return to God

*****What changes would have to be made for this headline to take actually take place?*****

*****John also said, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*****

3. To what is the "kingdom of heaven" referring? Can you define "kingdom on heaven?"

During the Second Temple period when Yeshua was on earth, there was great emphasis on making the name of G-d holy, and it is believed that the Pharisees came up with the phrase "kingdom of heaven" taking the place of saying "the kingdom of G-d." These are totally interchangeable phrases where "heaven" replaces the sacred name of G-d. This was done to avoid misusing the Holy Name. Today we say "Thank heaven," and what are we really saying?



The prophets did not use the word, "the kingdom of heaven," but they described it in many ways giving us clues as to what would happen in the days of His kingdom on earth, saying things like: there is a glorious time coming in the latter days, that swords would be beaten into plows and sword would not be lifted up any longer, a time when every man would sit under his own fig tree and no one would make him afraid, a time when there would be a ruler with wisdom and understanding who would judge righteously for the poor and the meek of the earth. In this truly new world order we will see the wolf and the lamb feed together, and in this kingdom there will be such peace that a child would be able to put his hand in the den of poisonous snakes without harm. At this time Jerusalem will be the focus of power, and people will flock to the temple of G-d to learn His paths and laws; and the Jewish people will be gathered from all over the world to be home once again!

Matthew 7:21 So then, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?

4. Without saying, "follow Torah," what does it mean "to do the will of My Father in heaven" in practical terms?

5. How do putting these words of Yeshua into this context change your understanding of what He said?

So is His kingdom here yet? Here and now the kingdom is in our hearts, because He is in our hearts, and we are to take His kingdom out into the world and repair what is broken in the world. In the physical, it is in the future, but now it is in our hearts and we are to take it to the world.

His kingdom is really all about a wedding and returning to the splendor of the garden!

Remember Mt. Sinai when the G-d of heaven and earth shows up and there is lightning and thunder and the sound of the shofar, and the mountain literally trembled? G-d was coming for a wedding; He wanted to marry His people and make them a great and holy nation - separated to Him as a wife is separated to her husband.

Exodus 20:19,20 Speak to us yourself and we will listen, they said to Moses. But do not let God speak to us, or we will die. Do not be afraid," Moses replied. "For God has come to test you, so that the fear of Him may be before you, to keep you from sinning. And the people stood at a distance as Moses approached the thick darkness where God was....

6. What are clues that there are problems in this relationship?

7. How might you have approached this relationship with G-d differently? What attitudes toward G-d do we display today for the world to see?

8. In what ways can we detect distance in our relationship with G-d?

*****9. Where was G-d? What does this teach about darkness?*****

Jeremiah 31:31-33 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, **though I was their husband**, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And Matthew proceeds with.....

Matthew 3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

((All of us want to be ready for the coming of the Lord, and to do that, it takes preparation on our part to make his paths straight. What does this mean to us on a practical level ?))

Two very famous commentators say that "make His paths straight" means that the road should be cleared.

Then the question arises in what way do you clear the road for the Messiah?

****What is blocking the road?**



Make straight the **way** of the Lord -

"Way" is the Hebrew word: **Derek** and it can be a metaphor describing the actions and behavior of a person. (The word "Way" or "Derek") describes people's behavior or can refer to the way people live their lives as in....

Psalm 1:1,2 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

10. How does Psalm 1 describe a blessed man? What does it mean to "delight" yourself in the law of the Lord?

Is this man walking in the "way" so that his life will clear the road for Messiah to come?

Isaiah 35:8 And there will be a highway called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not travel it--only those who walk in the Way--and fools will not stray onto it.

11. Who are the ones who walk on the Way of Holiness? What is the "way?"

Proverbs 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life,

12. What do we learn about the "Way" from Proverbs 6:23?

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.

We are putting together all the ways of a person's life that either make the way of the Lord straight - another way of saying welcome His coming or prevent him from coming. Did you know that our lives matter when it comes to how quickly the Lord comes?

2 Peter 3:11,12a Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? **You ought to conduct yourselves in holiness and godliness as you anticipate and hasten the coming of the day of God,**
****So what is it that clutters the road with roadblocks that prevents his coming?*****

Jeremiah the prophet spoke clearly of what to do to clear the clutter and gave us specific examples of a righteous life saying:

Jeremiah 21:8b Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death..... Execute judgment and righteousness and deliver the spoil out of the hand of the oppressor and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.....

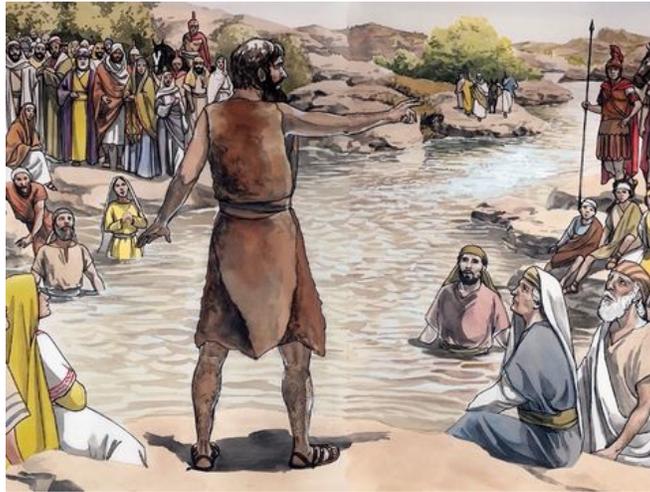
13. What is Jeremiah specifically telling us to do? If doing these things clears the clutter, then what causes the clutter?

Isaiah 40:3,4 A voice of one calling: Prepare the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make a straight highway for our God in the desert. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low; the uneven ground will become smooth, and the rugged land a plain....

13. Are we noticing where this highway is that we are to make straight?

((And here, in Matthew, we see Yochanan the Immerser calling out the words that Isaiah predicted so long ago! He is calling people to repentance - to turn toward God and behave in ways that are holy and righteous to proclaim that we want to Lord to come. And what happens next??))

BAPTISM/MIKVEH



Matthew 3:5-6 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

The Hebrew word for baptism is "mikveh" and it means gathering of waters. The root of mikveh is kavah meaning **to gather together**, to wait for, or to expect or to strengthen. When you bring three cords together and bind them as one rope, you are strengthening them. Whenever things come together for a cause they are stronger together than apart.

The word mikveh is also connected to hope - the Hebrew word "tikvah,," meaning to look forward to a good and beneficial future! The word mikveh is first used in Genesis 1:9.

Genesis 1:9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be **gathered together** (mikvah) unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

Matthew 3:5-6 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

14. What jumps out at you about the above two verses?

Matthew told us that Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan were baptized of him. What brought this about, this desire to repent and be baptized?

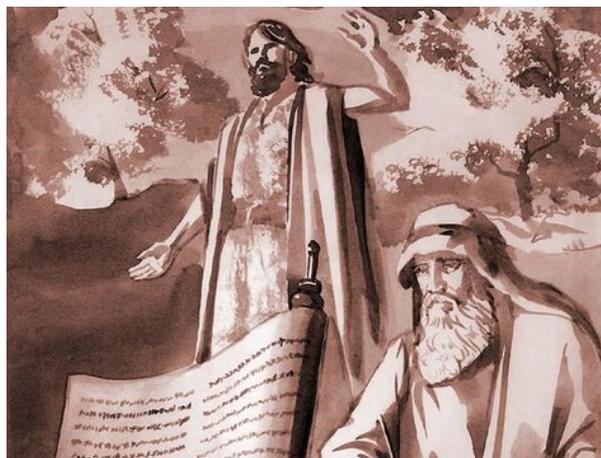
The Jewish Encyclopedia says, "overall "explosion" of purity that took place within Judaism in the first century C.E. ("purity broke out among the Jews"; Tosef. [Shab. 1:14](#)), stemming from changing religious sensibilities on the one hand and perhaps serving on the other as a form of passive Jewish resistance against encroaching features of Roman culture in the critical decade or so preceding the Great Revolt."

*****Can you see the Spirit hovering over the people's hearts just at this time, preparing them for mikveh and for repentance?*****

Just as He gathered the waters together in Genesis 1:9, He is gathering His people together now preparing them to hear the message of Yeshua and to live it.

Baptism represents both the tomb and the womb. One dies to the old life and is born as a new born baby to new life. It represents our binding ourselves together with G-d for His purposes. On the third day He is raised from the dead, as baptism represents death to the old life and brings everlasting life with Him, as baptism represents new life.

Romans 6:3-5 Know ye not that, as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that as Christ was raised up from the dead... we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.



Matthew 3:13-15 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me? But Jesus answered and said to him, Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

15. Why would Yochanan be hesitant to baptize Yeshua?

1. He is doing what John is telling all the people to do. He is obeying G-d even though He is sinless. He knows that we will be baptized into His death and His resurrected life. He is an example for us to obey all of G-d's words.

An example of a type of baptism is in the wilderness

Exodus 19:11 The Lord also said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

Exodus 19:14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments. Be prepared for the third day," he said to the people.

This was a type of baptism, a cleansing to prepare for the presence of G-d to enter.

They were getting ready for the third day!

14. What other critical things have happened on the third day? What is this a picture of?

Hosea 6:2 After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His presence.

Psalms 90:4 One thousand years in your sight are but a single day that passes by, just like a night watch.

2 Peter 3:8 Beloved, do not let this one thing escape your notice: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

15. According to Hosea what is going to happen on the third day?

16. Has this day occurred yet?

Another reason Yeshua was baptized was that He was at the beginning of His ministry on earth.

It is important to note here that people were also going to be priests. Priests had to be baptized before they began their service.

2. One of the offices of Yeshua was the office of the High Priest. He was about to begin this office.

Baptism had to be done to prepare the priest for public ministry. Yeshua is now entering His public ministry.

Exodus 40:12-15 Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and wash them with water. You shall put the holy garments on Aaron and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister as a priest to Me.

Yeshua is getting ready to minister to people and to His Father.

John 5:19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can **do nothing** by himself; he can **do** only what he sees his **Father doing**, because whatever the **Father does** the Son also **does**."

THESE ARE YESHUA'S OWN WORD ABOUT HIS BAPTISM:

Matthew 3:15 But Jesus answered and said to him, **Permit it to be so now, for this it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**

The bottom line is that He is fulfilling all righteousness by being baptized.

17. What does the baptism tell us about Yeshua?

18. Can you think of other reasons that Yeshua was baptized?

DO WE LIVE TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS?

HOW WOULD OUR LIVES CHANGE IF OUR MAIN GOAL WAS TO DO THE WILL OF OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN?