

## Matthew Lesson 19

Who are the Pharisees and Saducees? They were both powerful and influential leaders and teachers of the Jewish people.

They were strict when it came to religious observance or halakah. Halakah is the Hebrew term for "walking out" the law or living the way they understood Torah to teach. They emphasized the "oral tradition" which they believed was handed down from G-d to Moses to give understanding of how to walk out the written Torah when there were not exact instructions..

They strove to extend Torah practices to life outside the temple and within the synagogues to encourage greater piety in the common people. They believed in an afterlife. They accepted all of the Tanakh as the Word of God. They were out in the synagogues throughout the land of Israel.

The Saducees on the other hand were "born" into their positions and had to be from the priestly tribe. They were the priests who oversaw the temple. They believed only in the Torah and saw the Tanakh as mere commentary on the first five books. They did not believe in the afterlife, as they understood the Torah as not addressing this topic.

On this day, there was a group of both Pharisees and Saducees who had come to question Yeshua and to put Him on the spot.

**Matthew 16:1** Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.

Here is Yeshua's answer:

Matthew 16:2-4 He answered and said to them, *When it is evening you say, It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; and in the morning, It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening. Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah."* And He left them and departed.

Then He gives them a sign they are all familiar with. The book of Jonah is read and contemplated every Yom Kippur. **Jonah is a sign of resurrection.**

**Jonah 2:9** I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars *closed* behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God.



The story of Jonah still echoes the resurrection of Yeshua year by year on Yom Kippur, even today.

**Matthew 16:5-12** Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, **Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.** And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread.

But Jesus, being aware of *it*, said to them, **O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? <sup>9</sup> Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.** Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Obviously the disciples are confused, and Yeshua teaches them that the false teachings of the Saducees and the Pharisees who were denying the truth are like chametz. They were very familiar with chametz as every year at Passover it was cleaned from their homes. The power of chametz to puff up and to grow was now being related to what happens when you let things that are not true into a culture. Those things will spread.

**And chametz is related to sin! Untrue ideas lead to sin!**

**\*\* How can this principle relate to false news and what we see happening all over the world?**

**Matthew 16:18** **And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**

Is Yeshua saying that He is building his ecclesia - His assembly - on Peter? Peter's name mean small stone or pebble. He is alluding to or playing off of Peter's name as a pebble. It would seem that Yeshua is referring to what Peter stated -

**"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!"**

Upon this truth that was proclaimed by Peter Yeshua would build His ecclesia - His community of believers.

"WHEN HE HOLY ONE WANTED TO CREATE THE WORLD HE PASSED OVER THE GENERATIONS OF ENOCH AND THE FLOOD, BUT WHEN HE SAW AVRAHAM WHO WAS TO ARISE, HE SAID, BEHOLD, I HAVE FOUND A BRICK ON WHICH I CAN BUILD AND ESTABLISH THE WORLD. THEREFORE HE CALLED AVRAHAM A ROCK, AS IT IS SAID (ISAIA51:1) Look to the rock from which you were hewn. (Yalkut on Bemidbar/Numbers 23:9

Then it says that the gates of hades would not prevail against it (His ecclesia).

Sheol - is the Hebrew word for grave.

Sheol was translated into Greek as Hades.

Other places where "sheol" is used in the Hebrew are

**Isaiah 38:10** In the middle of my life, am I to enter the gates of Sheol? Am I to be deprived of the rest of my years?

Hezekiah is crying out to G-d to spare his life and not allow him to die and go the place of the dead. "Gates of sheol" can also be a metaphor of the place between death and life. Yeshua proclaims the good news that death will not hold His assembly.

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**Isaiah 25:8** He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

**II Corinthians 5:1** For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

**2 Corinthians 5:8** Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

**I Corinthians 15:54-55** When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come to pass: Death has been swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?"

And immediately after this the Lord speaks and says,

**Matthew 16:21-23** 21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You! But He turned and said to Peter, **Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.**

The name "Satan" means: an obstacle or opposition.

When Peter voices his opinion that Yeshua cannot be killed and raised, this would fit Satan's agenda to oppose this action, for Yeshua's death and resurrection bring victory over death forever for His ecclesia!

In that way, Peter was opposing or being an obstacle with his words.

**\*\*How important are our words?**

Then He proceeds to tell his disciples:

**Matthew 16:24-28** Then Jesus said to His disciples, **If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.**

**\*\*How would you explain the above verses to a non-believer? What does it mean to lose your life for His sake?**

**\*\*To what is Yeshua comparing life? Do you think He is comparing it to eternity?**

**\*\*Why is He saying that our works matter?**

**Matthew 16:28 -17:** **Truly, I say to you there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.**

Now six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Let's begin to tie this together.

First, notice Moses and Elijah are talking with Yeshua, yet they have not been among the living for a long time.

But now they have bodies that can be seen, they are communicating....

**\*\*What is this telling us?**

**\*\*How does this show that the gates of she'ol will not prevail against His ecclesia? Would you say that both Moses and Elijah spent their lives serving the Lord? And He is talking about His kingdom coming.**

**\*\*Why would Moses and Elijah be there in this scene?**

**Malachi 4:4-5.** Remember the Torah of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.

There had to be two witnesses for something to be confirmed.

In this instance, Yeshua brings Moses the one associated with the Torah or the Law, and Elijah as the representation of the prophets.

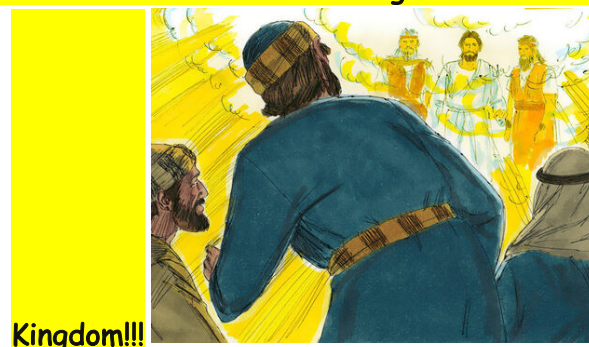
Yeshua had used the testimony of the two offices before:

**Luke 24:27** Beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures".

Remember that Moses dies and Elijah was taken - he did not die. these two represent the living and the dead who give testimony.

**Romans 14:9** For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

**All these pairs of witnesses are there confirming that Yeshua will come again in His**



Then Peter speaks up:

**Matthew 17:4-7** Then Peter answered and said to Jesus , Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!

**\*\*Why did Peter want to build tabernacles or sukkas?**

The feast of tabernacles represents the day when Yeshua will return and live among us! His kingdom will have arrived!!!

Was Peter seeing this time? Did he understand what he was seeing was G-d with us?

Then **Matthew 17:5-7** While he was still speaking, before, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him! And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. About Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, and do not be afraid.

The disciples seemed to get the picture that Yeshua had presented to them on that mountain, but for one thing.

**Matthew 17:10-13** And His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? Jesus answered and said to them, **Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise, the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.** Then the **disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.**

John the Baptizer was a type of Elijah.

They were both great prophets.

Yeshua said Luke 7:27-29 This is the one about whom it is written: 'Behold, I will send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way before You.' **28** [I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John, yet even the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.](#) **29** All the people who heard this, even the tax collectors, acknowledged God's justice. For they had received the baptism of John....

Remember that Yeshua said the Kingdom of God had come. He had brought it.

Before Him came John the Baptizer, proclaiming, "the kingdom of God is at hand."

**Matthew 3:3** For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah saying: The voice of one crying in the wilderness; Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.

Let's look at some of the incredible works that are woven together,

**Works that have begun, and are in the process of being completed.**

The kingdom had come, and at same time, the kingdom is coming.

The work has begun, and the work is in progress.

Elijah prayed for the rain to stop. It stopped for 3 plus years.

No rain -dryness- got the attention of the people.

But the people were not committed to G-d.

Elijah asks, How long will you waiver?

**1 Kings 18:36-37,39** Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again. Then God did what Baal could never do: the fire of the LORD fell from heaven and consumed the burnt offering *and* the wood *and* the stones *and* the dust, "and also licked up the water in the trench". The people of Israel bowed down and declared the Lord as God.

Elijah had done his work. He had proclaimed the G-d of Israel to the false, wicked prophets of Baal. Elijah had a ministry of fire.

G-d rained fire down from heaven.

Elijah's work was done,

And Elijah's work will continue in the days ahead by the very angels of heaven.

In **Revelation 16:8** we hear:

Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was given power to scorch the people with fire. And the people were scorched by intense heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had authority over these plagues; yet they did not repent and give Him glory.

But G-d will not be stopped.

**Revelation 16:18-19** And there were flashes of lightning, and rumblings, and peals of thunder, and a great earthquake the likes of which had not occurred since men were upon the earth—so mighty was the great quake. The great city was split into three parts, and

the cities of the nations collapsed. And God remembered Babylon the great and gave her the cup of the wine of the fury of His wrath.

The wicked prophets of Baal were exposed and the wicked systems of the world will be destroyed.

Elijah called the people to turn their hearts back to the Lord.

John the Baptizer came calling the people to repent - turn back to the Lord.

**John did the work of calling G-d's people to repent and return to G-d just as Elijah had done.**

John Baptized in water; he made straight the way of the Lord.

He pointed the people to the Messiah!

His work was done, and

**Now the cycle continues with us.**

**James 5:16b-18** The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

The fruit that was produced when Elijah prayed was G-d's people returning to Him.

Yeshua said, **Matthew 11:13,14** For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come.

The final harvest is here.

Let's take the true Messiah out and take His Torah out to the world.