



Matthew Lesson 16

September 8, 2020

Scriptures from TLV

“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

12:33-13:23

We left off last time with chapter 12, verse 32 speaking about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Yeshua continues in these next verses with the same subject. Although He said that a person could speak a word against the Son of Man and be forgiven, blasphemy against the *Ruach HaKodesh* would never be forgiven. It is the deliberate rejection of Yeshua as Messiah and His salvation, the greatest sin possible which by its nature causes a person to never again have the opportunity of salvation. Because the offer of salvation enters a man's heart, rejecting Him is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit because by rejecting Yeshua, they are blaspheming ADONAI's nature and questioning His grace.

*33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers! How can you who are evil say anything good? For from the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good man from his good treasury brings forth good, and the evil man from his evil treasury brings forth evil”* (Matthew 12:33-35).

The fruit of a rotten tree is bad tasting and good for nothing. Yeshua seemed to be saying that it must either be good or rotten, but not somewhere in between. Was He saying something similar in content to what He said about the lukewarm believer in Revelation? He would spew that person out of His mouth. There is no middle-ground here. A blasphemer cannot bring forth good fruit. “A brood of vipers” is the same as a “rotten tree.” Yeshua identified their nature; poisonous! They could not be expected to say anything good. What's in a person's heart is what comes out of his mouth. An overflowing heart of this type of person is one full of wicked words and sinful actions. Conversely, the overflowing heart of a good person has holy words and righteous deeds, overflowing with love for G-d and man.

*36 But I tell you that on the Day of Judgment, men will give account for every careless word they speak. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned”* (Matthew 12:36-37). Here, I believe that Yeshua is not speaking about those who have trusted and followed Him. He continues to speak about those who have rejected ADONAI's offer of salvation through the Holy Spirit. These people will stand before Yeshua and have to acknowledge every evil word they spoke without faith. No matter how minor, a sin of this type is just as severe as major sins. These persons are judged by their words because they reveal what's in their hearts.

*38 Then some of the Torah scholars and Pharisees answered Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” 39 But Yeshua replied to them, “An evil and adulterous generation clamors for a sign, yet no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. 40 For just as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.* (Matthew 12:38-40).

Asking for a sign was not just an innocent question. We have that same group of scribes and Pharisees who were following Yeshua around hoping to trip Him in some way. By asking for a sign, they were actually questioning His ability to give one. Yeshua didn't fall for their trap to do something miraculous right then, but instead gave them a sign they would have to wait for, one that would be fulfilled after His death. But, even though they wanted to trip Yeshua, they also wanted to see something spectacular which would make them believe, something they could see with their eyes, something which didn't require faith.

The sign of the Prophet Jonah was that he was supposedly dead in the belly of a great fish for three days and three nights and then came out alive. The Greek word used is *kétos* (kaytos) and it means a huge fish. In the book of Jonah, this animal is also referred to as a fish, *dagah* in Hebrew. Whale gets stuck in our minds, and it could have been a whale. After all, a whale is a fish. "An evil and adulterous generation" asks for a sign. These people were spiritually adulterous. They claimed allegiance to ADONAI, but were adulterous, that is, spiritually unfaithful.

The sign which Yeshua spoke of was Jonah being in the belly of the fish three days and nights, a sign foreshadowing His being in the belly of the earth, the grave, for three days and three nights. Was it actually three days and three nights or parts of three days and nights? Does it make any difference whether it was three days and three nights or one and one-half days? With regard to what Yeshua accomplished for us through it, it does not. His sacrifice and rising from the dead provided spiritual life for those who believe. But, if it was not three days and three nights, it disagrees with the timing specified in *Torah* and with the events of Passover and the Feast of *Matzah*. It also disagrees with Daniel's prophecy about Yeshua's death. He said: 27 "*Then he will make a firm covenant with many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put an end to sacrifice and offering*" (Daniel 9:27). Is the "he" here the Antichrist or Yeshua? It is Yeshua. Yeshua came at the beginning of the week and was proclaimed as Son of David, Messiah, and He taught truth all through week. But, in the middle of the week, on a Wednesday, He ended the spiritual effectiveness of the Temple sacrifices by offering His own body and by becoming the only sacrifice effective for sin. Sacrifices continued, but they were just empty actions. Three days and three nights is just what it says. After just that period of time, Yeshua rose late on the *Shabbat*, the weekly Sabbath, Saturday. His rising was revealed after sundown that day, on Sunday, the first day of the week. The Antichrist is not a man who will come, but an evil spirit which inhabits those who deny that Yeshua came in the flesh. We spoke of this in last session: 3 *..but every spirit that does not acknowledge Yeshua is not from God. This is the spirit of the anti-messiah, which you have heard is coming and now is already in the world*" (1John 4:2-3).

41 *The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And behold, something greater than Jonah is here. 42 The Queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And behold, something greater than Solomon is here*" (Matthew 12:41-42).

ADONAI had compassion on the people of Nineveh, the city which became the modern city of Mosul in Iraq. At the time of Joshua, it was the most populous city of the Assyrian empire. They repented and Yeshua said they will judge, will condemn, those wicked ones in Yeshua's generation. "The Queen of the south," the Queen of Sheba, came to see Solomon's glory. But, in the judgment, she will condemn this wicked generation because something

greater than Solomon, Yeshua, the Son of G-d has been revealed to that generation and they did not receive Him.

43 *“Now when an unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places looking for rest and doesn’t find it. 44 Then it says, ‘I’ll go back home where I came from.’ And when it comes, it finds the house vacant, swept clean, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there. And that man’s last condition becomes worse than the first. So also will it be for this evil generation”* (Matthew 12:43-45). Yeshua doesn’t identify these verses as a parable, but it obviously is and is a continuation of His words about the present wicked generation. The hearts of them are cleansed through Yeshua’s actions. But, afterward, they don’t continue to live according to G-d’s plan and the evil spirit returns bringing with it seven more. Because the person did not continue in the spiritual healing he had received, his heart was an empty place and open to whatever wanted to come in. Only by inviting Yeshua in could these, a characterization of that spiritual generation, keep their homes, their bodies, free from spiritual defilement.

But, it’s also a condition which can affect us individually. If we seek deliverance and have a demon cast out, our goal is then to keep it out. We do this by prayer, fasting, study, right thinking, etc. But, if we return to our old ways, the demon has a right to re-enter and many times brings others. In reality, even a believer, a follower of Yeshua, can have a demon. They do not inhabit the spirit of a follower of Yeshua. They cannot get in there because it is united with the Holy Spirit. But, they can inhabit the body and even the mind of that person. There are so many things that followers of Yeshua do that are excused by saying that they are just bad habits. Gluttony is one example. Allowing our bodies to be damaged by overeating, over drinking or by using tobacco, can be indicative of a demon in that life. The person is saved, but has not yet surrendered those areas of his life to Yeshua. This person cannot be demon possessed, completely controlled by demons, as the demon possessed man from Gadara was. But, all of us true believers and followers of Yeshua can be troubled by demons if we’re not careful. But, they can be cast out. If you suspect that in your life, seek help. There are ministries available to help you.

46 *While Yeshua was still speaking to the crowds, His mother and brothers were standing outside, trying to speak to Him. 47 Someone said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, trying to speak to You.” 48 But to the one telling Him this, Yeshua responded, “Who is My mother? And who are My brothers?” 49 Stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Here are My mother and My brothers. 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother”* (Matthew 12:46-50).

Yeshua was probably still in Capernaum at this time and His mother Miriam and brothers had come over from Nazareth seeking Him. Mark 6:3 identifies His brothers as Jacob, Joseph, Judah and Simon and also says that He has sisters, but doesn’t name them. By asking “who are my mother and my brothers,” Yeshua was not showing disrespect for *Miryam* and His brothers, but was using them to make a point of the spiritual relationship which exists between Him and all of His followers. We don’t know about Joseph and Simon, but we do know that Jacob and Judah came to be their earthly brother’s followers. *Ya’acov* also became the *nazi*, the leader of the congregation in Jerusalem and both he and *Yehudah* wrote letters, books of Scripture. The important point Yeshua was making is that: *whoever does the will of My Father in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.*

1 On that day after Yeshua left the house, He was sitting by the sea. 2 And large crowds gathered around Him; so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood on the shore (Matthew 13:1-2). Yeshua left Kefa's house in Capernaum and walked the short distance to the lake. Because large crowds gathered, He got into a boat. He would use this vantage point as a place from which to teach.

3 And He told them many things in parables, saying, "Behold, a sower went out to spread some seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some seeds fell by the road; and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they didn't have much soil. They sprang up immediately, because the soil wasn't deep. 6 But when the sun came up, they were scorched; and because they had no roots, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew and choked them out. 8 But others fell on good soil and were producing fruit. They yielded a crop—some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears, let him hear" (Matthew 13:3-9).

The disciples were confused: 10 Then the disciples came to Him and said, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11 And He replied to them, "To you has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (Matthew 13:10-11). According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, a parable is a short, religious allegory. The Hebrew term for it is *maschal* meaning comparison. "Parables" were a common form of teaching in Judaism. Yeshua had used analogies in His teaching up to this point, but now begins to employ the parable, an illustration which required more explanation. He used them to keep the truth from those who were not His disciples while explaining it to His disciples. This appeared to be harsh, but the truth was available to anyone who chose to follow Him. They would then be a part of His circle and would hear the complete explanation. It kept out those who did not have a heart-felt interest.

12 "For whoever has, to him more will be given and he will have plenty. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 For this reason I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear nor do they understand" (Matthew 13:12-13). Yeshua's keeping the truth from unbelievers was also a fulfillment of Prophecy. 14 "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing but will never understand; you will keep looking, but will never see.' 15 For the heart of this people has become dull, their ears can barely hear, and they have shut their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts. Then they would turn back, and I would heal them" (Matthew 13:14-15). Yeshua's words are a fulfillment of Isaiah's words: 9 Then He said: "Go! Tell this people: 'Hear without understanding, and see without perceiving.' 10 Make the heart of this people fat, their ears heavy, and their eyes blind. Else they would see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return, and be healed" (Isaiah 6:9-10). This again, were words directed to those who had no interest in spiritual things. But, it was not to those who were sincerely seeking.

16 "But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. 17 Amen, I tell you, many a prophet and tzaddik longed to see what you are seeing and did not see, and to hear what you are hearing and did not hear" (Matthew 13:16-17). Yeshua's disciples were blessed because they not only sought the truth, but were fortunate enough to live during the time in which the Messiah came. They were also blessed because they answered Yeshua's call. I see a parallel in Messianic Judaism today. Not that we are more blessed than other followers of Yeshua. We are equally blessed. But, those called into

Messianic Judaism are blessed to be a part of this last days movement, a movement which ADONAI has restored as a predecessor to Yeshua's return to earth as King Messiah. It's also a matter of timing for us. We are blessed to live during the last days.

18 *"You then, hear the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and doesn't understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the one having been sown along the road"* (Matthew 13:18-19). Yeshua taught in parables that would be easily understood by His audience, which at this time was mostly those referred to as *am ha'aretz*, the people of the land. Israel's economy was agrarian and farms were everywhere, even along the roads. We might picture the seeds that fell on the roads as being eaten by birds, symbolic of *HaSatan*. The seed, the Word of the kingdom, fell on the heart of one who was already being influenced by the evil one. These words from the *Torah* interpreted by Yeshua were not interesting to this person after he heard them. It was a superficial interest at most, as his life was already pre-occupied with the things of the other kingdom, *HaSatan's*.

20 *"The one sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. 21 Yet he has no root himself but lasts only a short while; and when trouble or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he falls away"* (Matthew 13:20-21). How many times have we seen this individual? It happens with those who seem to have an "emotional experience," come forward and give their heart to Jesus. But, because it was just their emotion of the moment, they don't follow through. They may attend services a few times, but eventually just stop. We could call this person an emotional follower of Yeshua. Their spirit has not united with the Holy Spirit and when they are asked to take part in ministry or asked to give financially, their being a part of Yeshua's fellowship ends.

22 *"But the one sown among the thorns, this is the one who hears the word; and the worries of the world and the seduction of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful"* (Matthew 13:22). "The seed among the thorns": These people initially believe they are making a real commitment, but don't count the cost. Their *teshuvah*, their repentance, was shallow. They may have sincerely trusted in Yeshua, but soon turned away because they didn't see it as a journey. It was a snap decision and when their worldly problems increased, the Word no longer made any sense to them. They are unable to break with the world and the love of money. Their commitment was superficial without true repentance.

23 *"Now the one sown on the good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands. He indeed bears fruit, yielding a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty times what was sown"* (Matthew 13:23). Those people represented by seed being sown on the road, on rocky ground and among thorns were not fruitful. Each eventually turned away from Yeshua because of their different situations. But, the good news is that there are many in the world who gladly receive Yeshua's Word into their hearts complete with receiving the *Ruach HaKodesh* into their hearts. These true followers of Yeshua all enter into His discipleship program gladly. The fruit of ministry which they bring forth is all good, regardless of how much. We all want to be at least the thirty-fold person, but how much better if we're the sixty-fold and even the hundred-fold. Yeshua said: 7 *"If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. 8 In this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples"* (John 15:7-8).

Yeshua's overall message in these verses addresses two different groups, those in His Kingdom and those not in His Kingdom. It is available to anyone who sincerely seeks. There are very few who have blasphemed the Holy Spirit. Anyone who can sincerely repent has not

and salvation in Yeshua is available. May we all seek to be those who entered His Kingdom and brought forth one hundred-fold fruit.

*Shalom aleichem!*