



Matthew Lesson 25

February 16, 2020

Scriptures from TLV

“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

18:21-19:30

Continuing with chapter 18, we begin in verse 21: *21 Then Peter came to Him and said, “Master, how often shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” 22 Yeshua said to him, “No, not up to seven times, I tell you, but seventy times seven”* (Matthew 18:21-22 TLV)! This question of *Kefa’s* was not out of the blue. Yeshua had just finished telling them what to do when a brother sins against you. Look back at Lesson 24 if you need to refresh your memory. Peter knew that he must forgive that person. But, his question seemed to be: “What if he does it again? How many times do I have to forgive him?” Possibly he thought he would forgive him a few times, but if he kept sinning against him, that he would no longer need to forgive him. But, Yeshua said: “You must continue to forgive him forever, as many times as he offends you.” Seventy times seven equals four hundred ninety, but Yeshua didn’t mean a finite number. He was telling Peter and He is telling us how important forgiveness is.

To illustrate what He meant, Yeshua told them this parable: *23 “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves”* (Matthew 18:23 TLV). Yeshua is the king and those of us who have trusted Him are His bond-slaves. We have been bought with a price, sold to Him for the price of His blood and we are accountable to Him for our very lives.

24 “When he had begun to settle up, a man was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But since he didn’t have the money to repay, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 Then the slave fell on his knees and begged him, saying, ‘Be patient with me, and I’ll repay you everything.’ 27 And the master of that slave, filled with compassion, released him and forgave him the debt. 28 “Now that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii. And he grabbed him and started choking him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe!’ 29 “So his fellow slave fell down and kept begging him, saying, ‘Be patient with me, <5> and I’ll pay you back.’ 30 Yet he was unwilling. Instead, he went off and threw the man into prison until he paid back all he owed. 31 “So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply distressed. They went to their master and reported in detail all that had happened” (Matthew 18:24-31 TLV).

We are the first slave, the one who owed our King 10,000 talents. That is the price for our lives being bought out of spiritual death and passing to eternal spiritual life. Yeshua paid for our eternal salvation and we owe Him that debt, our very lives. Our fellow slave, another member of Yeshua’s body, a brother or sister in Messiah, offended us by something they said; some little disagreement and we are unwilling to forgive him or her. Yeshua knows what is in our hearts. We can’t keep it hidden from Him.

32 Then summoning the first slave, his master said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 Wasn’t it necessary for you also to show mercy to your fellow slave, just as I showed mercy to you?’ 34 Enraged, the master handed him over to the torturers until he paid back all he owed. 35 “So also My heavenly Father will do to you, unless each of you, from your hearts, forgives his brother” (Matthew 18:32-35 TLV).

This was very basic for Yeshua’s disciples. After all, He had already taught them the basics about this. He very clearly told them after He taught them how to pray: 14 “For if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions” (Matthew 6:14-15 TLV). How many in Yeshua’s body today have a damaged relationship with the Father because of their unforgiveness to others? Only G-d knows. But, it is a fact; if we don’t forgive others, our sins can’t be forgiven. And, that doesn’t mean just little offenses; the big ones too. What does our continued unforgiveness and refusal to forgive mean? That is also something that we don’t know. Will or can it make our salvation unsalvation? Again, we don’t know. To avoid the danger of finding out, the example which we must strive to follow is that of our King, who forgave us our debt. We must forgive our fellow slaves of Messiah whom we have been commanded to love as ourselves. Forgive, so that we do not receive His wrath. <7> 34 Enraged, the master handed him over to the torturers until he paid back all he owed. 35 “So also My heavenly Father will do to you, unless each of you, from your hearts, forgives his brother” (Matthew 18:34-35 TLV).

Moving now into chapter 19: 1 Now when Yeshua had finished these words, He moved on from the Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. 2 Large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there (Matthew 19:1-2 TLV). The region beyond the Jordan was the part of Israel east of the Jordan River which during Yeshua’s day was called Perea and was ruled by Herod Antipas. It was a 10 mile wide strip east of the Jordan River starting below Galilee and running about 50 miles south to the middle of the eastern shore of the Dead Sea.

3 Pharisees came up to Yeshua, testing Him and saying, “Is it permitted for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all” (Matthew 19:3 TLV). These Pharisees must not have been there when Yeshua taught about it earlier because He covered it in His Sermon on the Mount. At that time, he said: <11> 32 “But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery” (Matthew 5:32 TLV). This is an extremely important subject, particularly today because of our “marriage of pleasure” culture. People marry and divorce on a whim today because our culture has strayed so far away from the Biblical principle. A popular radio and television host who died a few weeks ago at age 87 had been married 8 times (LK). But, he was not the only one. Many in the entertainment culture have had multiple marriages. Two celebrities had nine marriages and five had eight. They don’t fear G-d’s judgment because their consciences have been changed. Sha’ul said: 1 “Now the Ruach clearly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, following deceitful spirits and teachings of demons 2 through the hypocrisy of false speakers—whose own conscience has been seared (1Timothy 2:1-2 TLV). Many in our nation are led by desires driven by demonic spirits and the false teachings of those who promote such behavior. There will be a day of reckoning. And, unfortunately, divorce for less than Biblical reason are also commonplace within those who claim to follow Yeshua.

4 “Haven’t you read?” He answered. “He who created them from the beginning ‘made them male and female’ 5 and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate” (Matthew 19:4-6 TLV). Yeshua was quoting Genesis chapter 2: 22 Adonai Elohim built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman. Then He brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, “This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh from my flesh. This one is called woman, for from man was taken this one.” 24 This is why a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife; and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:22-24 TLV). Marriage has never been just for sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure in marriage is not discouraged. You can read Proverbs 5:15 to see this, but marriage’s primary purpose was for procreation, the birthing of children and the building of families. A man and his wife are “one flesh” because they have come together sexually following marriage. *HaSatan* has perverted what ADONAI created so that a large segment of mankind now believes that fornication, sex outside of marriage, is permissible and also that violation of the marriage covenant is no big deal. It’s a covenant between a man and a woman instituted by ADONAI. To them, until “death do us part” are just words.

7 They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to ‘give her a certificate of divorce and put her away?’” 8 Yeshua said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 Now I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery” (Matthew 19:7-9 TLV). If you read Deuteronomy 22, you will find that Moses instructed men not to divorce their wives for false charges (22:19) and also that they were not to divorce their wives if they have taken her virginity (22:28). Men were allowed to divorce their wives, but only for valid reasons and not false charges. Just because ADONAI allowed divorce, polygamy and indentured servitude, it did not mean that He necessarily approved of these things and eventually they were all modified. Yeshua indicated the same thing when He said: “Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives.” The Pharisees were twisting *Torah* when they said: “Why then did Moses command to ‘give her a certificate of divorce and put her away?’” The Pharisees claimed that Moses commanded them to divorce, but Yeshua said he only permitted it.

The subject of divorce is a complex subject. We dealt with it in detail back in Matthew Lesson 8. Are the innocent victims of a divorce adulterers if they remarry? In general, they are not. We just have to understand what Yeshua said from a Hebraic perspective. The teaching from Matthew Lesson 8 is attached as Addendum A at the end of the written copy of this message if you would like to refresh your memory.

10 The disciples said to Him, “If that’s the case for a man and his wife, it’s better not to marry!” 11 But He said to them, “Not everyone can accept this saying—only those to whom it has been given. 12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb; and there are eunuchs who were made that way by men; and there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who can accept this, let him accept it” (Matthew 19:10-12 TLV). According to Yeshua, some men are born without sexual desire and remain unmarried for that reason. It was also not uncommon for men to be castrated in certain cultures. In the book of Esther, we read about eunuchs who served in the king’s harem. Having had their masculinity taken away, they would not be tempted around so much feminine beauty and also would not marry. Regarding eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, Jeremiah was one, the only ancient prophet who did not marry.

He was a eunuch by choice, not by castration and presumably he did not marry because of ADONAI's intense calling on his life. Some individuals may be called by G-d not to marry, but the doctrines of men who forbid marriage to their spiritual leaders in my opinion, is not what Yeshua was speaking about. Scripture as a whole upholds marriage as created by G-d as being normal and desirable. Yeshua just noted the few exceptions to this.

13 Then little children were brought to Yeshua so that He might lay hands upon them and pray. Then the disciples rebuked those who brought them. 14 But Yeshua said, "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these .15 After laying His hands upon them, He went on from there" (Matthew 19:13-15 TLV). Luke said that these were infants, very young children (Luke 18:15). Yeshua's disciples rebuked those who brought them, very likely their parents. Why? Maybe because they thought they were too young to understand what was going on or maybe just because they didn't want them to trouble Yeshua. But, Yeshua had time for them and laid His hands on them. Mark (10:16) is more specific and says that "He blessed them." It is not uncommon in Judaism to bless someone. We married men bless our wives and children every *Shabbat* evening at dinner. What Yeshua did for these children was the same and not any impartation of salvation.

16 Now behold, one came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good shall I do to have eternal life?" 17 "Why do you ask Me about what is good?" Yeshua said to him. "There is only One who is good; but if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." 18 "Which ones?" he said. Yeshua said, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" 20 "All these I've kept," the young man said to Him. "What do I still lack?" 21 Yeshua said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you own, and give to the poor; and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me." 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving, for he had much property (Matthew 19:16-22 TLV). The man recognized Yeshua as a teacher, a rabbi. We don't know why he asked the question, but one possibility was to make himself appear good before Yeshua. He was seemingly smug in that he had kept all these commandments. The teaching and the understanding of the Judaism of the day was that he would have eternal life. Just by being a part of Israel and having kept the commandments, Jews of that day reasoned that the words of the prophets would come true. G-d would redeem them. After all, they were following His directions by offering their own sacrifices in the Temple and by receiving the High Priest's *Yom Kippur* sacrifice for them. But, Yeshua added one more requirement. "Sell what you have and come follow me." He didn't ask this of every Jew, just this one particular one. We can only speculate, but it is likely that Yeshua said this to him because He knew how much this man valued his possessions. In Matthew chapter 6, Yeshua spoke about storing up treasure in heaven. The context had to do with money and the use of it. Giving money for G-d's purposes was treasure in heaven. Here in these verses, Yeshua is even more specific and identifies another way of having treasure in heaven; giving money to the poor.

23 Then Yeshua said to His disciples, "Amen, I tell you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this, they were utterly astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" 26 And looking, Yeshua said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:23-26 TLV). There is no gate in Jerusalem called the "eye of the needle." Yeshua didn't say "the eye of the needle," He said "the eye of a needle." There is a difference. He was just making

a comparison of something very big with something very small. If there had been elephants in Israel, He might have said: "It is easier for an elephant to go through the eye of a needle..." Cyril of Alexander, an early church father of the 5th century claimed that "camel" is a Greek misspelling and that *kamêlos* (camel) was written in place of *kamilos*, meaning "rope" or "cable" Who knows? Whatever the case, Yeshua was making a comparison regarding something very large going through a small opening. Who can be saved? With G-d all things are possible. Every rich man or woman whose heart has been circumcised and is serving ADONAI whole-heartedly can be saved!

27 *Then Peter said to Him, "Look, we've left everything to follow You! So what will we have" (Matthew 19:27 TLV)? Good old Kefal! He wasn't shy. 28 And Yeshua said to them, "Amen, I tell you, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne in the new world, you who have followed Me shall also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28 TLV). When He said "new world," Yeshua was speaking of the *Olam Haba*, the age to come, the time when all His enemies have been put under His feet. Revelation 4 says: <23> 4 "Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders dressed in white clothes with golden crowns on their heads" (Revelation 4:4 TLV). Whether this is the twelve disciples and some other twelve, we don't know. But, it was obviously a reward for leaving all and following Yeshua. They had done what the rich young ruler couldn't bring himself to do!*

29 *"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for My name's sake, will receive a hundred times as much, and will inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29 TLV). This could also apply to those who go on foreign mission fields or those who serve Yeshua fervently, for that matter. Their reward is in the afterlife, not heaven, the life here on the renewed earth with Yeshua reigning as king.*

30 *But many who are first will be last, and the last first" (Matthew 19:30 TLV). This is strange language, seemingly out of the context of what went before. It means that whomever comes to Yeshua last is just as important as those who came first. We honor Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Isaiah, Jeremiah and the twelve disciples. They gave their all. But, the truth is that ADONAI loves each one of us just as much. Yeshua rejoiced over finding one lost lamb, but He loved the 99 safe in the fold just as much. There's an old saying: "G-d has no grandchildren." We're all children, equal before him. Eighty-three old rabbis take no precedence over the twelve year old who has just trusted Yeshua. In His eyes, we are equally special and equally loved. But, it does seem that this last verse, verse 30, would have been better placed as verse one of chapter 20. Chapter 20 begins with the parable of the day laborers, which fully explains this verse.*

Until next time, *shalom aleichem!*

Addendum A (from Matthew Lesson 8)

31 *"It was said, 'Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'*
32 *But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matthew 5:31-32). By saying a certificate of divorce, Yeshua was referring to this command given by Moses: 1 "Suppose a man takes a wife and marries her. Now if she doesn't find favor in his eyes because he has found something indecent in her, he is to write her a certificate of divorce, hand it to her and send her out from his house" (Deuteronomy 24:1). But, it wasn't Moses that commanded it, it was ADONAI. Moses made no laws and commanded no *mitzvot* that*

weren't from Him. Yeshua was not saying that a man giving his wife a get, a certificate of divorce was not lawful. It was lawful. Because many men in that day had misused their power over their wives by unjustly divorcing them, Yeshua was defining what "something indecent in her" was. Something indecent could only be sexual immorality. It was the only ground which allowed a man to marry another without committing adultery. And, Yeshua addressed this to the men because they had the control. Women could not instigate a divorce. This is an important subject and because there is not enough time tonight to fully consider it, I will give you a portion of a much longer lesson which I taught several years ago. I will be happy to send the link to anyone interested.

To get a better understanding of Yeshua's words here, I go again to the writings of David Bivin, one of the authors of *Understanding The Difficult Words of Jesus* and the present head of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research. Yeshua further discussed what He said here in Matthew 5 in Matthew 19:9. Dr. Bivin begins there. 9 "Now I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, **and** marries another, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9). This is his explanation. The Greek word translated as "and" is *kai*. This small word makes a big difference. Both the Greek *kai* and the English "and" have the meaning of "and," but, Yeshua very likely was teaching in Hebrew. The word which He would have used is *vav*. *Vav* has a much wider range of meaning than the Greek *kai* and the English "and." Its meaning also includes the words: then, therefore, since, while, but and so. In Hebrew language study, it is called "the *vav* of purpose." A demonstration of how it works is found in Exodus 7:16. Regarding Pharaoh, ADONAI told Moses: 16 "You are to say to him: Adonai, God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you, saying, 'Let My people go, **so** they may serve Me in the wilderness,' and behold, you have not listened" (Exodus 7:16 TLV). The "*vav* of purpose" in this verse is translated as "so." We can see this in the word *וַיֹּאמֶר*, *v'ya'avduni*; "**so** they may serve me." It also could have been translated "and they may serve me," but that wouldn't seem to make much sense. "So" is the better translation. We could understand Yeshua's words as "Anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality (*vav*- in order to) marry another, commits adultery."

There is something similar in Luke 16: 18 "Everyone who divorces his wife **and** marries another commits adultery" (Luke 16:18a TLV). Considering the *vav* of purpose, what Yeshua most likely would have said is: "Everyone who divorces his wife so that he can marry another is committing adultery." "So" would have been the *vav* of purpose. But, what about the second half of this verse, 18b, which says: 18... "And he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery" (Luke 16:18b). The question is, would Yeshua have condemned the newly married husband to "living in adultery" just because he married a divorced woman? If you take this verse at face value, the way in which we read it in English, the divorced woman must remain single or she will enter into adultery with her next husband and also cause him to sin. In seeking to understand this, David Bivin was joined by Shmuel Safrai, also of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research, to propose another possibility for understanding the second part of this verse. It is called the "Hebraic doublet." The doublet says something one way in one part of a sentence and then says the same thing in a slightly different way in the second part. If He was using the doublet, Yeshua would have said it one way in Luke 16:18a and said the same thing in a different way in Luke 16:18b. We have a good example of this in Psalm 119:15: 15 "I will meditate on Your precepts (*pikkudim*), and regard Your ways (*orach*- [English-path])" (Psalm 119:15 TLV). The psalmist is essentially saying in two different ways that he will keep ADONAI's *Torah*, His precepts and His ways or path. Looking at Luke 16:18 a and b as a doublet, we can understand it this way: "Everyone who divorces his wife to marry another commits adultery and any woman who divorces her

husband to marry another commits adultery.” The whole reason for divorcing is in order to marry another. Yeshua vigorously defended marriage. He was not for divorce. In Matthew 19 He said: 4 *“Haven’t you read?” He answered. “He who created them from the beginning ‘made them male and female’ 5 and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate”* (Matthew 19:4-6 TLV). It is very clear that Yeshua says that marriage is to be permanent: *“Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate.”* And, He made it crystal clear that divorce was only for sexual immorality. If a man divorced just to be able to marry another whom he desired above his current spouse, Yeshua emphasized that if he divorced for that reason he committed adultery. In Yeshua’s day, a woman couldn’t divorce her husband to marry another. But, today she can and today it applies to her as well. *“Every man who divorces his wife (in order to marry another) and marries another commits adultery and every woman who divorces her husband (in order to marry another) and marries another commits adultery.”* According to David Bivin’s understanding, the innocent spouse in such a relationship is not made into an adulterer if he or she remarries. The millions of former spouses today who were divorced for trivial reasons are free to remarry. And, those who have divorced in order to marry another, committed adultery.

With this in mind, let’s look again at Yeshua’s words in Matthew 5: 31 *“It was said, ‘Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery”* (Matthew 5:31-32). Looking at this statement in the way which we have just understood, Yeshua most likely meant: *“Everyone who divorces his wife in order to marry another commits adultery and whoever who marries a woman whose husband divorced her for her sexual immorality, commits adultery.”* In Yeshua’s day, the two leading rabbinic schools, the House of *Hillel* and the House of *Shammai*, had different understandings of Deuteronomy 24:1. In this case, “something indecent in her” in the Deuteronomy verse was what they debated. *Hillel* said it could be for something as simple as being “displeased because she burned his supper.” But, *Shammai* said that “something indecent” could only be “sexual immorality or adultery.” Yeshua essentially agreed with *Shammai* in this point. Even among Yeshua’s followers today, both men and women divorce not only to marry another, but also for many other trivial reasons.

