

The Red-Letter Words of Yeshua ~ Part 51

The Ministry Continues ~ Part 15

We continue our study of **The Ministry Continues**, beginning in **Luke 13:1**.

Repent or Perish

Continuing the theme of judgment from chapter 12, **Yeshua** uses two calamities that befell certain **Jews** to illustrate the fate that awaits those who do not repent. This material is unique to **Luke's Gospel**. These verses exemplify **Pilate's** brutality (see Mattityahu 27:2, 16–24).

¹ Just then, some people came to tell Yeshua about the men from the Galil whom Pilate had slaughtered even while they were slaughtering animals for sacrifice. ² His answer to them was, "Do you think that just because they died so horribly, these folks from the Galil were worse sinners than all the others from the Galil? ³ No, I tell you. Rather, unless you turn to God from your sins, you will all die as they did! ⁴ "Or what about those eighteen people who died when the tower at Shiloach fell on them? Do you think they were worse offenders than all the other people living in Yerushalayim? ⁵ No, I tell you. Rather, unless you turn from your sins, you will all die similarly." ~ Luke 13:1-5.

Unless you turn to God from your sins (repent, do t'shuvah ¹), **you will all die as they did**. The "Bad News" (Romans 1:18–2:8) is explicit, the **Good News** implicit (Romans 3:19–3:26). Then as now, people did not want to think about their evil ways, so they put their attention on current events to distract them. News is the opiate of the people. In today's world, it is overwhelming. With a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and a Master's Degree in Public Administration, it is tough for me to take a break from the day's news, but occasionally I have to. Most of us cannot affect world events very much, but all of us can worry about them and criticize the sins of others - instead of focusing on our own lives and our sins.

Yeshua's Illustration Using A Barren Fig Tree

⁶ Then Yeshua gave this illustration: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit but didn't find any. ⁷ So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'Here, I've come looking for fruit on this fig tree for three years now without finding any. Cut it down - why let it go on using up the soil?' ⁸ But he answered, 'Sir, leave it alone one more year. I'll dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good; if not, you will have it cut down then.'" ~ Luke 13:6-9

(As an aside, when I worked on my grandfather's date ranches in the Coachella Valley of California, I learned it took at least five years for a newly planted date tree to bear fruit and at least a couple more years to bear a decent crop.)

Yeshua shows how patient **God** is with wayward humanity in general in these verses. However, the **fig tree** metaphor is frequently used in the **Tanakh** and also at Mattityahu 21:18–22 to represent the **Jewish** people, who were expected to **bear fruit** (v. 9) by leading righteous lives and by communicating **God's** truth to the other nations of the world (Isaiah 49:6). So, has the "**one more year**" ended? - are the **Jewish** people **cut down** or set aside by **God**? Certainly not! (Jeremiah 31:34–36 (35–37)) Heaven forbid! (Romans 11:1–2, 11–12) Some **Jews**, having trusted in **Yeshua HaMashiach** and remained united with Him, **bear fruit** (Yochanan 15:1–8), while God patiently preserves the **Jewish** people until "**all Israel will be saved**" (Romans 11:26).

¹ Turning from sin to **God**.

A Woman with a Disabling Spirit

In another passage unique to **Luke**, **Yeshua** again faces criticism after He performs a healing on the **Sabbath** (compare 6:6–11).

¹⁰ Yeshua was teaching in one of the synagogues on Shabbat. ¹¹ A woman came up who had a spirit which had crippled her for eighteen years; she was bent double and unable to stand erect at all.

The woman's distorted posture appears to be the result of demonic activity instead of a defect suffered from birth.

¹² On seeing her, Yeshua called her and said to her, "Lady, you have been set free from your weakness!" ¹³ He put His hands on her, and at once, she stood upright and began to glorify God.

¹⁴ But the president of the synagogue, indignant that Yeshua had healed on Shabbat, spoke up and said to the congregation, "There are six days in the week for working; so come during those days to be healed, not on Shabbat!"

The people were coming to **Yeshua** for healing without regard for the day. **Yeshua** was not bothered by this; indeed, His actions encouraged it. The religious leaders saw His healings as a violation of God's command to honor the Sabbath by refraining from work.

¹⁵ However, the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Each one of you on Shabbat - don't you unloose your ox or your donkey from the stall and lead him off to drink?

Yeshua calls attention to the religious leaders' willingness to make exceptions to the law to care for animals but not to care for God's people.

¹⁶ This woman is a daughter of Avraham, and the Adversary kept her tied up for eighteen years! Shouldn't she be freed from this bondage on Shabbat?" ¹⁷ By these words, Yeshua put to shame the people who opposed Him; but the rest of the crowd were happy about all the wonderful things that were taking place through Him. ~ Luke 13:10-17

In our next post, we will focus on **Yeshua's Teaching Through Parables** beginning in Mattityahu 13.