

Yochanan ~ Part 16

The Identity of the Messiah

This section (3:25–36) may be divided into 3 parts, which highlight the significance of what was occurring in relationship to **Yochanan's** and **Yeshua's** ministry:

- (1) **Yochanan the Baptist** constituted the end of the old age (vv. 25–29);
- (2) the transition to **Yeshua's** ministry (v. 30);
- (3) and **Yeshua's** ministry as constituting the beginning of the new age (vv. 31–36).

Instead of jealousy, **Yochanan** exhibited humble faithfulness to the superiority of **Yeshua's** person and ministry.

²⁵ Some of the Yerushalayim people said, "Isn't this the man they're out to kill?"²⁶ Yet here He is, speaking openly, and they don't say anything to Him. It couldn't be, could it, that the authorities have actually concluded He's the Messiah?

Miraculous signs should awaken consciousness of **God**, but these people are conscious only of their own physical needs.

²⁷ Surely not - we know where this man comes from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where He comes from."

The food that passes away and the food that stays on into eternal life are opposites and constitute the theme of **Yeshua's** remarks.

²⁸ Whereupon Yeshua, continuing to teach in the Temple courts, cried out, "Indeed you do know Me! And you know where I'm from! And I have not come on My own! The One who sent Me is real. But Him you don't know!"²⁹ I do know Him, because I am with Him, and He sent me!"

Yeshua gave this important teaching the greatest publicity by voicing it loudly. *You both know Me and know where I am from.* These words stand in antithesis with 8:19 where **Yeshua** told His enemies that they neither knew Him nor the Father, thus indicating a deep irony and sarcasm on **Yeshua's** part here. **Yeshua's** point is that, contrary to what they thought, they really had no true understanding of who He was. They knew Him in the earthly sense, but not in the spiritual sense, because they didn't know **God** either, whom you do not know. Although they thought that they were acutely perceptive and spiritually oriented, their rejection of **Yeshua** revealed their spiritual bankruptcy (Romans 2:17–19).

³⁰ At this, they tried to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His time had not yet come.

This reveals why they could not seize **Him: God's** sovereign timetable and plan for **Yeshua** would not allow it.

³¹ However, many in the crowd put their trust in Him and said, "When the Messiah comes, will He do more miracles than this man has done?"³² The P'rushim heard the crowd whispering these things about Yeshua; so the head cohanim and the P'rushim sent some of the Temple guards to

arrest him. ³³ Yeshua said, "I will be with you only a little while longer; then I will go away to the One who sent me. ³⁴ You will look for me and not find me; indeed, where I am, you cannot come." ³⁵ The Judeans said to themselves, "Where is this man about to go, that we won't find Him? Does He intend to go to the Greek Diaspora and teach the Greek-speaking Jews? And when He says, 'You will look for me and not find me; indeed, where I am, you cannot come' - what does He mean?"

There was divided conviction among the people regarding **Yeshua**. While some wanted to seize Him, a small remnant of genuine **Believers** existed among the crowds. The question here anticipates a negative answer, i.e., that the **Messiah** could do no greater miracles than those **Yeshua** had done.

The Promise of the Spirit

³⁷ Now on the last day of the festival, Hoshana Rabbah, Yeshua stood and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to me and drinking! ³⁸ Whoever puts his trust in Me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from his inmost being!" ³⁹ (Now He said this about the Spirit, whom those who trusted in Him were to receive later - the Spirit had not yet been given, because Yeshua had not yet been glorified.)

While verse 14 referred to the festival being "already half over," this was now the last and greatest day of the **Feast of Tabernacles**. **Yeshua's** invitation harks back to OT prophetic passages such as Isaiah 55:1

The People Are Divided over Yeshua

⁴⁰ On hearing His words, some people in the crowd said, "Surely this man is 'the prophet'"; ⁴¹ others said, "This is the Messiah." But others said, "How can the Messiah come from the Galil? ⁴² Doesn't the Tanakh say that the Messiah is from the seed of David and comes from Beit-Lechem, the village where David lived?" ⁴³ So the people were divided because of Him. ⁴⁴ Some wanted to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him. ¹

But others said, "How can the Messiah come from the Galil? "Doesn't the Tanakh say that the Messiah is from the seed of David and comes from Beit-Lechem?" Yes, the Tanakh does say that (2 Samuel 7:12–13; Jeremiah 23:5–6; Micah 5:1(2)); Psalms 89:36–38(35–37), 132:11; 1 Chronicles 7:11, 14). Chapter 2 of **Mattityahu** explains how the **Messiah** could come from both **Beit-Lechem** in **Y'hudah** and **Natzeret** in the **Galil**: He was born in **Beit-Lechem**, taken to **Egypt** to escape the massacre of infants ordered by **Herod**, and by **God's** command returned to **Natzeret**. Luke 2:1–7 further explains why a family from **Natzeret** happened to be in **Beit-Lechem** for **Yeshua's** birth: the Romans ordered a census and required everyone to return to their own city for it. Doubters could have inquired and learned these things, but as is common with people whose minds are made up, they did not wish to be "confused by the facts." So, the people were divided because of Him. **Yeshua the Messiah** always divides people into two camps: those who are with him and those who are not. The middle ground quickly disappears.

In our next post, we will continue to explore the **Gospel of Yochanan**.

¹ Yochanan 7:25–44.