

Yochanan ~ Part 18

Yeshua Predicts His Departure

Yeshua revealed the consequence of rejecting Him as **Messiah** and **Messiah**: spiritual death (v. 24; cf. Heb 10:26–31). These verses reveal 4 ways that ensure people will die in their sins and, as a result, experience spiritual death:

- (1) being self-righteous (vv. 20–22);
- (2) being earthbound (vv. 23, 24);
- (3) being unbelieving (v. 24);
- and (4) being willfully ignorant (vv. 25–29).

The **Jews** who rejected **Yeshua** displayed all 4 of these characteristics.

8²¹ Again He told them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, but you will die in your sin - where I am going, you cannot come."

And *you will die in your sin*. A new teaching. Until now, **Yeshua** has not said you must trust Him unless you are prepared to die in your sin.

22 The Judeans said, "Is He going to commit suicide? Is that what He means when He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" 23 Yeshua said to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. 24 This is why I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not trust that I AM [who I say I am], you will die in your sins."

25 At this, they said to Him, "You? Who are you?" Yeshua answered, "Just what I've been telling you from the start. 26 There are many things I could say about you, and many judgments I could make. However, the One who sent me is true; so I say in the world only what I have heard from him." 27 They did not understand that He was talking to them about the Father. 28 So Yeshua said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM [who I say I am], and that of myself I do nothing, but say only what the Father has taught me."

When you lift up the Son of Man. **Yeshua** is predicting the manner and instrumentality of His death: these **Judeans** will have him crucified by the **Romans**.

29 Also, the One who sent Me is still with Me; He did not leave Me to myself, because I always do what pleases Him." This speaks of **Yeshua**' sinlessness.

Truth and Freedom

There is a kind of trust which falls short of making one really a **talmid** of **Yeshua**. Real **talmidim** obey **Yeshua**, which is more than mentally acknowledging who He is. The popular quotation, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free," is conditioned on obeying what **Yeshua** says.

30 Many people who heard Him say these things trusted in Him.

These verses (8:31–36) are a pivotal passage in understanding genuine salvation and true discipleship.

Yochanan emphasized these realities by stressing truth and freedom. The focus in the passage is upon those who were exercising the beginnings of faith in **Yeshua** as **Messiah** and **Son of God**. **Yeshua** desired them

to move on in their faith. Saving faith is not fickle but firm and settled. Such maturity expresses itself in full commitment to the truth in **Yeshua**, resulting in genuine freedom.

The passage has 3 features:

- (1) the progress of freedom (vv. 31, 32);
- (2) the pretense of freedom (vv. 33, 34);
- and (3) the promise of freedom (vv. 35, 36).

³¹ So Yeshua said to the Judeans who had trusted Him, "If you obey what I say, then you are really my talmidim, ³² you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." ³³ They answered, "We are the seed of Avraham and have never been slaves to anyone; so what do you mean by saying, 'You will be set free'?" ³⁴ Yeshua answered them, "Yes, indeed! I tell you that everyone who practices sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ Now a slave does not remain with a family forever, but a son does remain with it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son frees you, you will really be free!"

"If you obey what I say. These disciples have agreed in principle with **Yeshua's** teaching, but their perseverance in following His teaching will reveal whether they are genuine disciples, *You will know the truth.* Likely invokes the **Tanakh** concept of truth, referring to a dependable foundation for building a way of life. Knowing the truth about **Yeshua** is a sign of spiritual freedom from the bondage of sin (see John 8:34).

The seed of Avraham refers to God's promises to **Avraham** concerning descendants (see Genesis 12:2). Their ancestry was a great source of pride. *We are the seed of Avraham and have never been slaves to anyone.* The **Jews** speaking take **Yeshua** literally and thus respond by declaring that they are not enslaved. The Jews speaking could also be declaring that they are not enslaved in idolatry (compare Jeremiah 2:10–14). A slave does not remain in the household. A **Jewish** slave was only supposed to serve for six years and go free in the seventh (Exodus 21:2).

³⁷ I know you are the seed of Avraham. Yet you are out to kill me, because what I am saying makes no headway in you. ³⁸ I say what my Father has shown me; you do what your father has told you!"

Even in the **Tanach**, physical descent from **Avraham** was insufficient to establish one's lineage (Jeremiah 9:25–26; Rom 2:28–29; 9:7; Galatians 4:21–31).

³⁹ They answered him, "Our father is Avraham." Yeshua replied, "If you are children of Avraham, then do the things Avraham did! ⁴⁰ As it is, you are out to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Avraham did nothing like that!"

Yeshua had surreptitiously called them children of the **Devil**, to which they replied that they were children of **Avraham**. Here, **Yeshua** argues that that cannot be the case.

⁴¹ You are doing the things your father does." "We're not illegitimate children!" they said to Him. "We have only one Father - God!" ⁴² Yeshua replied to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; because I came out from God; and now I have arrived here. I did not come on My own; He sent Me. ⁴³ Why don't you understand what I'm saying? Because you can't bear to listen to My message. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, Satan, and you want to carry out your father's desires.

From the start, he was a murderer, and he has never stood by the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is speaking in character; because he is a liar - indeed, the inventor of the lie!

You belong to your father, the **Satan** (Greek diabolos, “devil,” used in the Septuagint to translate Hebrew **Satan**, “adversary”; see Mt 4:1N). **Yeshua** is through playing games: He has listened to these people claim **Avraham** and **God** as their father; He is no longer interested in wrong answers.

⁴⁵ But as for Me, because I tell the truth, you don’t believe Me. ⁴⁶ Which one of you can show Me where I’m wrong? If I’m telling the truth, why don’t you believe Me? ⁴⁷ Whoever belongs to God listens to what God says; the reason you don’t listen is that you don’t belong to God.” ¹

Ouch!!!

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

¹ Yochanan 8:21–47.