

Yochanan ~ Part 22

Yeshua at the Festival of Dedication

The **Feast of Dedication**, now known as **Hanukkah**, was established as a memorial to the purification and rededication of the **Temple** by **Judas Maccabeus** on **Kislev** (December) 25, 165 BC., after its profanation three years earlier by **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**. **Antiochus**, the King of Syria, had captured **Yerushalayim**, plundered the **Temple** treasury, and sacrificed a sow to Jupiter on the **Temple** Altar. His attempt to Hellenize **Judea** resulted in the **Maccabean** revolt, which, after three years, was successful in defeating the **Syrian** armies and liberating the **Jewish** people. **Solomon's Colonnade** (or Porch) was a long walkway covered by a roof supported by pillars on the east side of the **Temple**, overlooking the Kidron Valley. The **Colonnade** served as a shelter from the heat of the sun in summer and from the cold rain in winter. **Yeshua** used it as a center for informal teaching and preaching since there would almost always be some people present for worship at the **Temple**.

10²² Then came Hanukkah in Yerushalayim. It was winter,²³ and Yeshua was walking around inside the Temple area, in Shlomo's Colonnade.²⁴ So the Judeans surrounded him and said to him, "How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us publicly!"

So the Judeans surrounded him wanted to compel **Yeshua** to make a categorical statement of His identity. Their demand *How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense?* reveals their impatience. If He was the Messiah, they wanted him to fulfill His calling by achieving independence for the nation; if He was not the Messiah, they would look elsewhere. They could not escape the fact that His miracles exceeded the powers of any ordinary man and that His teachings carried an authority greater than that of the established religious leaders. On the other hand, He had not formally presented Himself as the **Messiah**, nor had He showed any political ambitions. The crowd was demanding a declaration that would either dispel an illusion or enlist their allegiance.

²⁵ Yeshua answered them, "I have already told you, and you don't trust me. The works I do in my Father's name testify on my behalf,²⁶ but the reason you don't trust is that you are not included among my sheep.

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

- (1) John the Baptist constituted the end of the old age (vv. 25–29);
- (2) the transition to **Yeshua's** ministry (v. 30);
- and (3) **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.

²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice, I recognize them, they follow Me,²⁸ and I give them eternal life. They will absolutely never be destroyed, and no one will snatch them from My hands.²⁹ My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all; and no one can snatch them from the Father's hands.³⁰ I and the Father are one."

Yeshua's claim that He and the Father are one (cp. vv. 33–38; 5:17–18) echoes the **Shema**, the basic confession of Judaism (Deuteronomy 6:4) and amounts to a claim to **deity**. **Yeshua's** unity with the Father is later said to be the basis on which **Yeshua's** followers are to be unified (Yochanan 17:22).

Renewed Efforts to Stone Yeshua

³¹ Once again the Judeans picked up rocks in order to stone Him. ³² Yeshua answered them, "You have seen me do many good deeds that reflect the Father's power; for which one of these deeds are you stoning me?" ³³ The Judeans replied, "We are not stoning you for any good deed, but for blasphemy - because you, who are only a man, are making yourself out to be God [Hebrew: Elohim]."

The **Judeans** once again picked up stones in order to stone Him, as at 8:59 and for the same reason, self-identification as **God**, which they understood as blasphemy (v. 33).

³⁴ Yeshua answered them, "Isn't it written in your Torah, 'I have said, "You people are Elohim' "?"

Yeshua's point in quoting Psalm 82:6 was that if human judges can in some sense be called "**Elohim**" in the Scriptures, this designation is even more appropriate for Himself.

³⁵ If he called 'elohim' the people to whom the word of Elohim was addressed (and the Tanakh cannot be broken), ³⁶ then are you telling the one whom the Father set apart as holy and sent into the world, 'You are committing blasphemy,' just because I said, 'I am a son of Elohim'? ³⁷ "If I am not doing deeds that reflect my Father's power, don't trust me. ³⁸ But if I am, then, even if you don't trust me, trust the deeds; so that you may understand once and for all that the Father is united with me, and I am united with the Father." ³⁹ One more time they tried to arrest Him, but He slipped out of their hands. ¹

The reference to **Yeshua** being set apart for His mission echoes language used of appointed men such as **Moshe** the lawgiver, **Jeremiah** the prophet, and the Aaronic priests. On **Yeshua's** works testifying about Himself, go back to Yochanan ~ Part 11 and review verses 5:31–47. This was not the first attempt to arrest **Yeshua**.

At work, you may often feel pressure and competition that lead you to doubt your worth and security in **Yeshua**. Reflect on John 10:29-39 where **Yeshua** assures us that we are safe in His grip. Consider initiating a weekly prayer meeting with colleagues or friends to share burdens and pray for one another's needs. At the Church my wife and I attend, there is a heavy emphasis on joining one of the many small groups. This not only strengthens your faith but cultivates a supportive environment that reminds all of you of your true identity in **Yeshua**, irrespective of workplace challenges.

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

¹ Yochanan 10:29-39.