

Yochanan ~ Part 29

Yeshua's Gift of Peace

14²⁷ "What I am leaving with you is shalom - I am giving you My shalom. I don't give the way the world gives. Don't let yourselves be upset or frightened."

I am leaving you my shalom, my peace. "If **Yeshua** is the **Messiah**, where is world peace?" The question is often asked as if the implied negative answer proves that **Yeshua's** claim to **Messiahship** is false. For it is true that the swords have not yet been beaten into plowshares, and nations still learn war (Isaiah 2:4). The answer is that **Yeshua** is indeed fulfilling His promise, but not all at once. Peace does not come to those who refuse it, to those who, as it were, fight peace, but to those who gladly receive it. Within every **Believer** is a **Shalom** (which means not only "peace" but also "health, wholeness, integrity" that comes from **God** Himself. It is not a self-satisfied false peace that ignores suffering, but a compassionate peace that longs for **God's shalom** to be present with everyone and motivates action to help bring it about. When the **Messiah** returns to rule with a staff of iron (Revelation 12:5, 19:15), He will compel cessation of hostilities between nations. Meanwhile, where is world peace? In the lives of **Believers**; so that in **Yeshua**, blacks and whites, **Israeli Jews** and **Palestinians**, indeed members of any groups at enmity, can experience in themselves and in each other **Yeshua's shalom**.

28 You heard Me tell you, 'I am leaving, and I will come back to you.' If you loved Me, you would have been glad that I am going to the Father; because the Father is greater than I.

The Father is greater than I. **Yeshua** here is speaking of Himself in His limited capacity as a human being. For as the **Word** He had glory equal to the **Father's** (17:5), but as a human being He humbled Himself (Philippians 2:6–8) - there were times when He grew tired (4:6) and things He did not know (Mark 13:32). Yet in his essence, **He and the Father are One** (Yochanan 1:1–3, 5:23, 6:62, 10:30; 14:9).

29 "Also, I have said it to you now, before it happens; so that when it does happen, you will trust."

30 "I won't be talking with you much longer, because the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on Me; 31 rather, this is happening so that the world may know that I love the Father, and that I do as the Father has commanded Me. "Get up! Let's get going!"

After **Yeshua's** exaltation, His **Talmidim** could call on the exalted **Yeshua** and the indwelling **Ruach**. **When I say the Father is greater**, I refer not to ontology ¹ (**Yeshua** and the **Father** are one), but to **Yeshua's** subordination as eternal **Son**. On the ruler of the world, **HaSatan** has no legal claim or hold on **Yeshua**.

The Vine and the Branches

This allegory is at the heart of **Yeshua's** farewell discourse to the **Talmidim**. The **Tanakh** used the vineyard or vine as a symbol for **Isra'el**, **God's** covenant people, especially in two "vineyard songs" (Isa 5:1–7; 27:2–6). However, **Israel's** failure to produce fruit resulted in divine judgment. **Yeshua**, by contrast, is the true vine, and His followers are to remain in Him and produce much fruit for **God**.

¹ The branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being.

This passage in **Yochanan** is among my favorites in the **Bible**. In my youth, I worked on my grandfather's date and citrus ranches. On the ranch where we lived, rows of grapevines had also been abandoned because of market conditions. Through this experience, I developed a strong interest in cultivating dates and citrus and gained considerable knowledge of grapes.

15¹ "I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener.

The fact that **"vine"** describes both the **Jewish** people and its **Messiah** reinforces the close identification of **Yeshua** with **Israel** (Matityahu 2:15). The **Messianic Jewish** remnant (Romans 9:6ff., 11:1–10) will obey **Yeshua's** commands, stay attached to the real vine, and have the real vine's power and strength to bring forth good fruit (Matityahu 7:16–19). And so will the grafted-in **Gentile Christian** branches (Romans 11:17–24).

2 Every branch which is part of Me but fails to bear fruit, He cuts off; and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes, so that it may bear more fruit.

To ensure maximum fruit production, the divine vineyard keeper removes dead branches and prunes the rest (Hebrews 6:7–8). In **Yochanan's Gospel**, **Y'hudah** the betrayer exemplifies the former scenario (Yochanan 13:10–11). **Kefa**, who denied **Yeshua** three times, exemplifies the latter (Yochanan 18:15–18, 25–27; 21:15–19).

3 Right now, because of the word which I have spoken to you, you are pruned. 4 Stay united with Me, as I will with you - for just as the branch can't put forth fruit by itself apart from the vine, so you can't bear fruit apart from Me. 5 "I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who stay united with Me, and I with them, are the ones who bear much fruit; because apart from Me you can't do a thing.

You are the branches refers to **Yeshua's talmidim**, who depend on the true vine (**Yeshua**) for all things, including life. *You are not able to do anything:* **Yeshua** means that people cannot access **God** without Him, and consequently they cannot bear fruit. All life-giving things require access to the source of life, **Yeshua** (Yochanan 14:6; 15:1).

6 Unless a person remains united with Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up. Such branches are gathered and thrown into the fire, where they are burned up. 7 "If you remain united with Me, and My words with you, then ask whatever you want, and it will happen for you. 8 This is how My Father is glorified - in your bearing much fruit; this is how you will prove to be My talmidim. 2

Yeshua wants the opposite of destruction for His disciples: He wants them to make God's greatness known. The way His disciples prove to be His is by loving others as He loved them and by believing and proclaiming God's gift of eternal life through Jesus' death and resurrection (12:50; 13:34).

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

² Yochanan 14:27-15:8