



Matthew Lesson 22

January 4, 2020

Scriptures from TLV

“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

16:21-17:13

We continue our study tonight in chapter 16 beginning with verse 21: *21 From that time on, Yeshua began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and ruling kohanim and Torah scholars, and be killed, and be raised on the third day* (Matthew 16:21 TLV). This is the first time that Yeshua told His disciples about His having to die and He would tell them three more times in the book of Matthew (17:22-23, 20:17-19 and 26:32). The first three of these four are also found in Mark (8:31-33, 9:30-32 and 10:32-34) and Luke (9:21-22, 9:43-45 and 18:31-34) in slightly different form. Yeshua also told them about His death several times in the Book of John, all of which came after He reached Jerusalem His final time.

*22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Never, Master! This must never happen to You!” 23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but the things of men”* (Matthew 16:22-23 TLV). *Kefa* was a bit impetuous and we can certainly understand his reaction to Yeshua’s words. His personality caused him to respond before he had thought things out. And, he had no earthly idea what ADONAI’s plan was for His Son and what His complete purpose on earth was meant to be. Peter was shooting from the hip. We do that sometimes too, don’t we? But, did Yeshua really call Peter Satan? Yes, He did. He said *Hypage* (hyp-ag-e’) *opisó* (op-is-o) *mou* (moo) *Satanas* (sat-an-as)! In other words, “get away from me, *HaSatan!*” What Yeshua said to *Kefa* was like saying “get away from me with your suggestions.” But, by bringing in *HaSatan*, wasn’t Yeshua also reminding Peter of the temptations which He had resisted from *HaSatan* in the wilderness? I believe that He was. And, His words also carried the implication that what seems right to men is not always ADONAI’s plan. *HaSatan* is always opposite of G-d’s plan. Because of his temptations to do other than G-d’s will, *HaSatan* is known by his fruit as “the tempter of the brethren.” And, that was also the role that Peter was playing, but innocently. He was not *HaSatan*, but his reaction to Yeshua’s statement was to give a suggestion in opposition to ADONAI’s plan. It was probably just Peter’s innocent wish to keep Yeshua safe that caused him to blurt it out. Nevertheless, it was the opposite of ADONAI’s plan for Israel.

*24 Then Yeshua said to His disciples, “If anyone wants to follow after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it”* (Matthew 16:24-25 TLV). When taken seriously this is a hard word, a very hard word, a word which many of Yeshua’s followers overlook. We are all guilty to some degree. How many times have we chosen to gratify ourselves rather than choosing to follow Yeshua? Do we or have we understood what Yeshua meant when He said “take up your cross daily?” Often, we think of our cross as some burden, some sickness or some hardship that we have to bear. And, these things are burdens, trying times, which every human being has. But, what Yeshua meant by “our cross” was “our death.” We must

die to ourselves daily. It's not about Him carrying the cross on the way to His death, it's about His actual death. He said: "die to self and follow after Me." "Give up your desires for your life and take on My desires for your life." If we are unwilling to do that, if we choose to save our earthly lives by doing our own thing rather than following Yeshua, it is eternal life which we will lose. We have to be alive, living, to be His disciples. Once we die, it's too late.

26 *"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matthew 16:26 TLV)? Today, we have many billionaires and millionaires too numerous to count. How many movies have we seen where the Devil comes to a man or woman and promises to give them riches if they will sell him their soul? For many who have chosen riches over Yeshua, riches instead of Yeshua, they have forfeited their eternal soul, their spirit, because they chose to follow mammon and not G-d. Mammon, money is a huge temptation even for those of us who are not rich. It is a temptation across the full spectrum of incomes. Later in His ministry, Yeshua said: 23 ..... *"Amen, I tell you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 19:23b TLV) (also in Mark 10 and Luke 18). It's hard, but not impossible, for today in our society many rich people serve and follow Yeshua as sold-out disciples. But, it's a definite temptation to substitute success for service to Yeshua. This also reminds us that when are given the power to gain wealth, it comes from Him. And, the money we make is not ours, but His. We are but stewards of G-d's money, money which He expects that we will devote a sizeable portion of to His kingdom.

27 *For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then 'He will repay everyone according to his deeds.'* 28 *Amen, I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom"* (Matthew 16:27-28 TLV). In verse 27, it's obvious that Yeshua is referring to His second coming and His judgment seat, but He spoke of it as being immediate. It is an urgent message! At that time, we will all have to answer for our deeds, or lack of deeds for Him, for that matter. Verse 27 is about the future, but verse 28 is something completely different. When Yeshua spoke about some standing there who would see Him coming in His Kingdom, He is not speaking about His second coming. It is about something which will happen very soon for three of His disciples.

1 *After six days, Yeshua takes with Him Peter and Jacob and John his brother, and brings them up a high mountain by themselves* (Matthew 17:1 TLV). The question is, "which high mountain." I suppose that it really doesn't make any difference on which high mountain. What happened there happened. But, as I read Scripture, I picture in my mind where Yeshua is and follow Him across the map as He moves about. Visualizing his journeys and where He is performing ministry helps me to keep things straight in my mind. When we last noticed, Yeshua and His disciples were in the region of Caesarea Philippi. They were standing at the base of Mount Hermon when *Kefa* said: "You are the *Mashiach*, the Son of the Living G-d!" We haven't been told that they went anywhere else. That makes me believe that the high mountain was Mount Hermon. Just a few days ago they were standing right at the base of it. Look at the top right corner of this map, just above and to the right of the red arrow pointing to Caesarea Philippi. Mount Hermon is the high mountain that I believe they were on. And, it is high, actually 7, 336 feet high. It's high enough to have snow and they even have skiing there today. The other option which many people choose is Mount Tabor. On this same map you will see it below the Sea of Galilee and to the left. In my mind, it's just a high hill. Driving by and seeing it in the distance, it appears as a rounded hill rather than a mountain. And, its only 1,886 feet high. I suppose it is possible that it was

Tabor. Yeshua and His group could have walked that far in six days. But still, I choose Hermon. But, the bottom line is not where, but what. What is important is what happened there.

*2 Now He was transfigured before them; His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Yeshua* (Matthew 17:2-3 TLV). That Yeshua had, just a few days before, acknowledged that He was divine, the Son of G-d and a part of the G-dhead, was significant. It was preparation for *Kefa, Ya'acov* and *Yochanan*, that now, what He had told them would be confirmed from Heaven. Now, a few days later, Yeshua is transfigured and His divine nature is visibly displayed to Peter, Jacob and John. This confirmed to them the truth of the words which they had heard six days before about His death.

The appearance of Moses and Elijah with Yeshua is very significant. Luke tells us something which Matthew doesn't: *31 "Appearing in glory, they were speaking of Yeshua's departure, which was about to take place in Jerusalem"* (Luke 9:31 TLV). They heard Moses and Elijah verify that Yeshua would die on the cross.

What was the purpose of Moses and Elijah as a part of the transfiguration? Some say that the symbolism in the appearance of Moses and Elijah was that they represented the *Torah* and the *Nevi'im*, the Law and the Prophets. Moses was the great lawgiver and Elijah is recognized as the greatest of the prophets. That is true, but there there is something else. What specifically did they individually represent? With Moses, there are many parallels with Yeshua, but it was his prophesy about Yeshua that most stands out: *15 "Adonai your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst—from your brothers. To him you must listen"* (Deuteronomy 18:15 TLV). The people of Israel understood this. It was a question they had asked of *Yochanan* the Immerser. They said: "are you the Prophet?" He, of course, said no. Elijah didn't prophesy about Yeshua, but he is intimately connected with the time of His first and second comings by prophecy: *23 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of Adonai. 24 He will turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and the hearts of children to their fathers—else I will come and strike the land with utter destruction"* (Malachi 3:23-24 TLV). In Matthew chapter 11, verse 14, Yeshua told His disciples that *Yochanan* the Immerser, John, was Elijah: *14 "And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come"* (Matthew 11:14 TLV). The 1<sup>st</sup> century, the time that John came, was definitely before the coming great and terrible day of ADONAI, a day on which we are still waiting. The connection between John and Elijah is also explained by the prophecy of the Angel Gabriel nine months before his birth: *17 "And he (John) will go before Him (Yeshua) in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to the children and the disobedient ones to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready for Adonai a prepared people"* (Luke 1:17 TLV). These words of Gabriel connect John with Malachi's prophecy.

*4 Peter responded to Yeshua, "Master, it's good for us to be here! If You wish, I will make three sukkot here—one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"* (Matthew 17:4 TLV). Good old Peter! Again, it was *Kefa's* impetuous nature coming out. Just as he did not wish to even think about Yeshua's death in Jerusalem earlier, he did not want this moment to end.

*5 While He was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice from out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him"* (Matthew 17:5 TLV). In Judaism, a voice speaking from Heaven is known as a *bat kol*. It literally means "a daughter of a voice," a voice seeming to come from an invisible

source. The prophets heard directly from ADONAI through the *Ruach*, the Holy Spirit, but everyone could hear a *bat kol*, at least those who were spiritually attuned. ADONAI's voice at Sinai is one example. Everyone there heard His voice and the heavenly *shofar*. Another example is ADONAI's voice after Yeshua was immersed in the Jordan River. But sometimes, not everyone heard and understood the *bat kol*. During Yeshua's last week in Jerusalem, Phillip brought a group of Greeks who had asked to see Him. Speaking before the crowd, Yeshua said: 28 *"Father, glorify Your name!"* Then a voice came out of heaven, *"I have glorified it, and again I will glorify it!"* 29 *Therefore the crowd that was standing there and heard it was saying that it had thundered. Others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him."* 30 *Yeshua responded, "This voice hasn't come for My sake, but for yours"* (John 12:28-30 TLV). Because of Yeshua's statement that this voice was their sake, we know that some heard it. But, some in the crowd only heard thunder or angel language which they didn't understand. Not everyone heard ADONAI's words, only those who were spiritually attuned. But, if seeing was not enough, ADONAI provided the three disciples with audible evidence, a *bat kol*: "Hear Him!" This would prove to be especially important to Peter and John who would go on to write letters to Yeshua's followers in later years. This experience on the mountain solidified not only their belief in Yeshua as Messiah, but also their calling to serve Him. In John 1, John wrote: 14 *"And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. We looked upon His glory, the glory of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14 TLV). When John wrote these lines in the opening chapter of his Gospel, isn't it possible that he was looking back on this experience? He said: "we saw His glory." And Kefa also wrote about it: 16 *"For we did not follow cleverly concocted tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, a voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory: "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased!" 18 And we ourselves heard this voice come out of heaven, when we were with Him on the holy mountain"* (2Peter 1:16-18 TLV).

6 *When the disciples heard this, they fell face down, terrified. 7 But Yeshua came and touched them. "Get up," He said. "Stop being afraid."* 8 *And lifting their eyes, they saw no one except Yeshua alone* (Matthew 17:6-7 TLV). If I had been in the presence of Yeshua, Moses and Elijah and had ADONAI speak, I would have been terrified too.

9 *As they were coming down from the mountain, Yeshua commanded them, saying, "Do not tell anyone about the vision until the Son of Man is raised from the dead"* (Matthew 17:9 TLV). Why did Yeshua say this? He may have had several reasons for it. The most probable one that I can think of is that the people were already looking upon Him as a king. They called Him "Son of David." Because Israel was occupied by Rome, their hope was in a king to deliver them. A human being as a sin sacrifice was not even in their realm of possibility. They were so attuned to the Temple and the current way in which *Torah* was being followed that they could not possibly have understood that ADONAI was going to do a new thing. Not that the Temple and animal sacrifices were wrong. After all, it was ADONAI's plan. And, the people who had been following Yeshua around had no idea that it would soon come to an end. Just thirty years in the future, there would be no more Temple and no more animal sacrifices. The *am ha'arets*, the people of the land, who followed Yeshua around calling Him "Son of David," had no concept of what this was all about. Not even Yeshua's disciples understood it. They had been told about it, but they still didn't understand it.

10 *The disciples questioned Him, saying, "Why then do the Torah scholars say that Elijah must come first?"* 11 *Yeshua replied, "Indeed, Elijah is coming and will restore all things."*

12 I tell you that Elijah already came; and they didn't recognize him, but did to him whatever they wanted. In the same way, the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands." 13 Then the disciples understood that He was speaking to them about John the Immerser (Matthew 17:10-13 TLV). Yeshua had already told His disciples that *Yochanan haMa'tavil*, John the Immerser, was Elijah, and that he had operated in the spirit of Elijah, for this generation. They had forgotten it and now remembered. It seemed to take seeing Elijah, himself, for them to understand that. But, Yeshua's words in verse 11 are the ones which are important for us today: "*Indeed, Elijah is coming and will restore all things.*" Yeshua was speaking about someone in the spirit of Elijah coming in the time right before He returns in power and glory. What does it mean "he will restore all things?" I believe it means that he will proclaim the truth to the whole world just as John did. Just as John called the Pharisees a "brood of vipers" (Matthew 3), a family of snakes, the Elijah of this generation will also address hypocrisy. And, he will restore the truth of ADONAI's word! He will clearly spell out *Torah* so that none can miss his meaning. And, it will be a last chance to make a change for those who need it. Jewish tradition teaches that Elijah will come before the Messiah. We pay homage to this idea every Passover when we set a place at the table for Elijah. He will come and "all Israel" will hear him speak of Yeshua. May it be soon!

We'll stop at this verse tonight and continue in two weeks. *Shalom aleichem!*