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Matthew Chapter 17b and 18

As we move back into Matthew chapter 17 this morning, we are going to see some things that once again can be very perplexing. During our study last week into Matthew chapter 17 we spoke about the Transfiguration of our Messiah that took place in front of Peter and James and John... and we also spoke about whether or not the actual physical body of our Messiah had entered into the kingdom of heaven.

Of course, as we mentioned last week it is written that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And therefore, it would make no sense for the flesh and blood body of our Messiah to be taken up into heaven. But what is perplexing to some, is that when our Messiah is indeed taken up into heaven in front of his apostles, they make no mention of whether or not his physical body had ascended or whether it was his spirit alone that had ascended in front of them. And some people are very perplexed and very uncomfortable with the idea that our Messiah's flesh and bone body was most likely not taken up into heaven, at least not according to what the Scripture clearly tells us.

For some this is extremely perplexing and even challenging to understand. And because of the perplexity and the challenges that we find within the Scriptures from time to time... there are those whose faith is shaken. There are those because they do not understand... find it hard to believe one way or the other. And it's important for us as true God-fearing, Messiah following, cross bearing Christians to be not only aware of this, but to also be thoughtful when speaking to someone who is perplexed and challenged by what they are reading.

I would contend that the more you know about the Bible as a whole, the less perplexed and challenged you will be. When we read the whole book and not

just half of it... when we understand the whole of Scripture and not just the cherry-picked parts that we like... we begin to find the answers to the questions that had previously challenged us.

We must remember that the Bible in its entirety is truly one testament. It's one message given by one God to one people. From the very beginning of the book of Genesis to the end of the book of Revelation each and every one of the 66 different books that make up the Bible lays out before us the unfolding plan of salvation for mankind. And because these Scriptures are God breathed just as Paul tells us that they are... we know that we can trust that the answers that we seek can indeed be found within the confines of these God breathed Scriptures if we will simply take the time to sit down and to read the book for ourselves and ask for the discernment that only Yehovah God can give.

And so, as we continue our journey through Matthew chapter 17, I'd like to pick up at Matthew chapter 17 verse 14 and read down through the rest of the 17th chapter of the book of Matthew just in order to refresh our memories so that we can focus in on exactly what our Matthew wants us to focus in on. And so, let's go back and read **Matthew chapter 17 verses 14 through 27 E1**

Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon

Mat 17:14 And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him,

Mat 17:15 said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he has seizures and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water.

Mat 17:16 And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him."

Mat 17:17 And Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me."

Mat 17:18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly.

Mat 17:19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

Mat 17:20 He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

Jesus Again Foretells Death, Resurrection

Mat 17:22 As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men,

Mat 17:23 and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were greatly distressed.

The Temple Tax

Mat 17:24 When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the tax?"

Mat 17:25 He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?"

Mat 17:26 And when he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free.

Mat 17:27 However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

Here in Matthew chapter 7 verses 14 through 20 we see our Messiah casting a demon out of a young boy that our Messiah's disciples were not able to cast out. And I would submit to you that these verses that we find in Matthew chapter 17 through 20 are extremely important to understand.

Here in verse 14 this man comes to our Messiah, and he kneels down before him asking him to have mercy on his son because his son has seizures and suffers terribly. Upon which time Yeshua rebukes the demon and the boy is healed instantly. And when his disciples came to him privately and asked him why they could not cast out the demon, I think it's pretty important to hear and to understand the answer that our Messiah had given them.

Our Messiah Yeshua starts out with "O faithless and twisted generation how long am I to be with you?". And I'd like to stop right here for just a moment and think about what our Messiah just said. "O faithless and twisted generation".

Why was that generation faithless? Why was that generation twisted? I would submit to you that that generation was faithless and twisted because of what they had been taught by the men who were standing behind the pulpits of their time. The very reason that they were faithless and twisted was because they had faithless and twisted teachers. And I would also submit to you that nothing has changed today in our time. The majority of the men standing behind our pulpits today are nothing more than faithless and twisted teachers who care more about furthering their denominational agendas than they do teaching the truth of the

word of God. I'd like us to turn this morning to **Ezekiel chapter 22 verses 17 to 31 E2**

Eze 22:17 And the word of the LORD came to me:

Eze 22:18 "Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are dross of silver.

Eze 22:19 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Because you have all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.

Eze 22:20 As one gathers silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace, to blow the fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you.

Eze 22:21 I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst of it.

Eze 22:22 As silver is melted in a furnace, so you shall be melted in the midst of it, and you shall know that I am the LORD; I have poured out my wrath upon you."

Eze 22:23 And the word of the LORD came to me:

Eze 22:24 "Son of man, say to her, You are a land that is not cleansed or rained upon in the day of indignation.

Eze 22:25 The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured human lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst.

Eze 22:26 Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.

Eze 22:27 Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain.

Eze 22:28 And her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD has not spoken.

Eze 22:29 The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the sojourner without justice.

Eze 22:30 And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.

Eze 22:31 Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them. I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. I have returned their way upon their heads, declares the Lord GOD."

I have many times over made the statement that our adversary who is the devil, the serpent, Dragon, the little "g" god of this world, the Prince of the air... is

indeed wonderfully brilliant and we need to make no mistake about that. Because to say that he is not brilliant is to be caught in his snare.

Our adversary is immensely brilliant. As we read through our Father's Torah... (the first five books of the Bible)... we see the house of Israel consistently being led astray by our adversary. And as we read on throughout the history of the Bible, we see our adversary once again leading not just one tribe astray, not just two tribes astray, not just three, four, or five tribes of Israel astray... but leading all 12 tribes of Israel astray at one time in one fail swoop. And what's worse is that he continues to lead God's people astray in masses even to this very day.

To say that our adversary is not absolutely brilliant is to be a fool.

The very moment that we think that we are smarter than our adversary... is the very moment that he will sift us to nothing. It has been done over, and over, and over again throughout each and every human generation. Time and time and time again our adversary doesn't even have to change his tactics. He doesn't even have to change his game plan. He doesn't have to change any of his tricks or any of his deceptive propaganda because he knows that each generation will soon forget how he sifted the last generation.

Our adversary is wonderfully brilliant in making sure that the world captivates our attention in every respect so that we will lose sight of what our Father in heaven has clearly established from the very beginning of time.

In Matthew chapter 17 our Messiah goes on to tell his disciples who could not cast the demon out of the boy that it was because of their lack of faith that they were not able to cast the demon out of the boy. Which once again brings us right back around to exactly what faith is and just as importantly... what true faith is not.

As we have said many times before "faith" is synonymous with "love". If you have true faith, then you just don't run around saying that you have faith... you do what your faith proclaims. You see, faith must be justified. If your faith is not justified... then your heart is not in it. And if your heart is not in it... then the faith that you say you have... is dead.

What's important for us to understand here in Matthew chapter 17 concerning this young boy who had a demon that the disciples could not cast out... is that the disciples of our Messiah even back in our Messiah's time, even when they were walking with our Messiah, did not always have enough faith.

To this very day there are people who are keeping the law of God haphazardly. There are people who will keep his Sabbath this Saturday but will profane his Sabbath next Saturday. There are people who will tell the truth today when it is convenient but will tell a lie tomorrow when it is more convenient. There are people standing behind the pulpits of today's modern-day churches who will preach and teach the truth of God's word this Sunday morning... and yet will turn right around and teach their own twisted denominational dogma next Sunday morning. Just as we see here in Ezekiel chapter 22 these men that are standing behind our pulpits today are doing violence to the law of Yehovah God by profaning his holy things. The very idea that the first day of the week Sunday is the Sabbath day of God is nothing short of a man-made lie that was perpetuated by the Pope of Rome hundreds of years ago.

They make no distinction between the holy and the common. They don't teach the difference between the unclean and the clean. They have indeed disregarded his Sabbaths literally for generations. And their followers are indeed like wolves tearing apart the prey and destroying lives to get dishonest gain. Her prophets have smeared whitewash for them speaking of false visions and divining lies for them saying thus says Yehovah... when Yehovah has not spoken.

The Internet today is full of the false prophets of men standing behind today's modern-day pulpits. They are indeed her princes who lie about their dreams and their visions for no other reason other than for monetary gain and infamy. With tears and heartfelt passion, they are like actors on a stage proclaiming that Yehovah has said things that Yehovah has not spoken. O faithless and twisted generation... O faithless... and twisted... generation!

How many people do you know today that leap from one rabbi to another on the Internet? How many people do you know that listen to a sea of different so-called Bible teachers who really can't agree on much of anything? Men and

women who claim to be prophets who are no prophets at all. Men and women who claim to be teachers and are no teachers at all. Men and women who claim that Yehovah has said this or that Yehovah has said that when Yehovah has not spoken to them. And why do they do these things? Because they find it far to difficult to sit down and to read the Bible for themselves. And because they don't spend enough time in the Scripture building their own relationship with Yehovah, and with Yeshua his only begotten Son... they lean on the discernment of someone else other than God. They would rather allow their man-made denominational Empires tell them a lie... rather than listen to their own God breathed Scripture and allow the spirit of God to tell them the truth. This my friends... is how a faithless and twisted generation arises...

As we move down in Matthew chapter 17 to verse 20 our Messiah explains to them that if they have even have the faith of a mustard seed they will be able to say to this mountain move from here to there and it will move and nothing will be impossible for them. Listen closely to what our Messiah told his disciples clear back in **Matthew chapter 13 (scrn 1)**

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

Mat 13:31 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field.

Mat 13:32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

Mat 13:33 He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."



Once again, our Messiah is using a mustard seed in order to get his point across concerning what true faith is. You see there is a difference between a faithless

and twisted generation seeking a sign... and a true believer with true faith asking for healing. There are many people who will ask for something in prayer but will not truly believe that God has the power to grant their request. **James chapter 4 verses two through four (scrn 2)**

You Ask But You Do Not Receive...

Jas 4:2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask

Jas 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Jas 4:4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.



James tells us that we often times ask and do not receive because we ask wrongly to spend it on our own passions. How many people do you know out there who have made themselves famous by proclaiming themselves to be supernatural healers? How many preachers have you seen on television raking in millions of dollars from people who believe that these preachers are truly healing people? This my friends is the quintessential definition of making yourself a friend of the world.

If we today pray for someone to be healed and we do not believe that God has the power to heal them, how then can we expect that God would heal them? If we today pray for someone to be healed in order to see a sign from him... are we not a wicked and twisted generation who have made ourselves friends of the world just as the Pharisees had? Think about what we just read in Matthew chapter 16 just one chapter back in our study... when the Pharisees and the Sadducees came to our Messiah demanding a sign... what did he tell them? He

said and I quote in Matthew chapter 16 verse four, “an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.”

If we are praying for healing in order to see whether or not God can or whether or not God will heal a person... all we are essentially doing is seeking for a sign which once again puts us in the category of an evil and adulterous generation. However... if we are praying in full faith knowing and understanding and believing that Yehovah God is indeed well able to do as we ask... then there is no reason for our Father in heaven to not grant our request as long... as long as... he agrees with our request... which brings us to a whole conversation.

The question that is often asked in Matthew chapter 17 is why can't we heal people today in our time. Why can't we cast out demons? And the answer to that question is that no-one ever could cast out demons without first having faith in our Messiah and his Father. And even then... we must remember that when we ask for a healing... we are asking.... emphasis on... “ASKING”... for a healing. When you “ask” for something... there is a variable involved. And the variable in of itself dictates that the answer for what we are asking may be a “yes” or... it may be a “no” for reasons that are beyond our knowledge and understanding.

And although we have covered this in detail in our previous studies it's important to mention here as well that it is written that God has mercy on whom God has mercy not necessarily on whom we have mercy. There are many reasons why our Father in heaven may not heal someone at our request. It is written that the apostle Paul himself had physical ailments that he prayed to God for healing from three different times in fact and yet... God's reply to the apostle Paul was that his grace was sufficient for him.

Often times our Father in heaven will allow a sickness or an illness or a thorn to be put in our sides in order to hold us back from something or to possibly reign in our narcissism and are vanity. There are all kinds of reasons why our Father in heaven may not heal a person. If our Father in heaven is trying to reach someone or someone close to someone... it may very well be the will of our Father in heaven to allow an illness or a sickness or an ailment or an

infirmity to buffet that person for any number of reasons.

We must never think in our minds that we have the power or the ability to heal anyone without the hand of God being involved. We as human beings have no healing power. What we do have is the ability to make our petitions known before our Father in heaven who then in turn according to his mercy and his grace will indeed act accordingly. And this is something that we as modern-day professing Christians must always remember. Once again... God does not have mercy on whom we have mercy on necessarily. It is written that God has mercy on whom God has Mercy on and that God has compassion on whom God has compassion on.

And we must remember that the very reason that many of the healings were happening during the time of our Messiah was to prove to people that our Messiah was exactly who he said that he was. In other words... these healings were glorifying God. They were turning people away from sin and transgression and back to him by following his only begotten Son back to him. These healings were causing people to wake up and turn back. That was the very purpose of these healings.

And we must also remember that it is written that our Father in heaven only chastises those whom he loves. Those who are not chastised by our Father in heaven are those who are not loved by our Father in heaven according to... our Father in heaven.

And I would like to stop here for just a moment once again just to reiterate the fact that there are many people in the world today who are no longer Christians because they prayed for someone who did not get well, or they prayed for someone to live who did not live. It is written that God gives, and that God takes away. Yehovah is the creator of all things seen and unseen. And we must always relinquish our own narcissism and our own vanity and except the ultimate decision that our Father in heaven ultimately decides when we ask for something. It is not up to us who lives and who dies. It is not up to us who gets sick and who does not get sick or who it is that has an infirmity and who it is that does not have an infirmity. If a sickness or an illness or an infirmity cause someone to stay closer to God... you can bet every time that God will allow that person to have an illness or an infirmity. If an illness or an infirmity stops a

person from sinning and slows them down enough to stop and think... you can bet that God will allow an illness or an infirmity. And I say these things to you for a number of reasons.

There is no need for anyone to fall away from the faith because they think that their prayer was not answered. Our prayers are always answered. The problem is that some people just simply cannot accept a “no” for an answer. If we make a request to our Father in heaven and we lay that request at his feet, there should be no doubt in our minds that our Father in heaven has surely heard our request and has weighed it and has made a decision concerning it. When the answer is “no”... we need not become like spoiled brat children concerning his answer.

We must always remember that our Father in heaven knows things that we do not know. When we pray for someone to get better, we do not know the heart of that person. Only our Father in heaven knows the heart of that person. We do not know the standing of the relationship that that person has with our Father in heaven. We do not know whether that person is being dealt with by God or not for any number of reasons. And therefore... when we pray for healing let us not pray in vanity. When we pray for healing let us not be so ignorant as to think that it is we who decide the fate of the person that we are praying for. When we pray for healing let us come before our Father in heaven with our hat in our hands... and let us come before him in humility and in humbleness and let us give a reason for the healing that we ask for. And let us remember how to pray as our Messiah has taught us to pray by asking that God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And if the answer that is handed down from the throne of heaven is not exactly what we wanted or even expected... let us not rent our clothes and kick our pulpits and act like a spoiled child at the grocery store.

And I say all of that to once again say this... we as God’s chosen set apart remnant people are indeed growing up amongst the weeds. And we must be careful because it is a well-known fact that the weeds will indeed choke out the wheat if the root of the wheat does not run deeper than the root of the weeds.

And so, my hope and my prayer is that we have not muddied the waters here but that we have brought some light and some insight and understanding to those who are perplexed when someone is not healed every time they pray for

someone to be healed. Faith must come first, and we must indeed believe that our Father in heaven has the ability and the power to answer our prayers. But by the same token we must always remember that it is our Father in heaven who is in charge and not us. It is our Father in heaven who has mercy on whom he has mercy on and it is our Father in heaven who does indeed chastise those whom he loves. And so, as we read through these God breathed Scriptures let us not cherry pick them and take them out of context but let us meditate and dwell and pray over the entirety of these Scriptures so that we may have the discernment of our Father in heaven to understand them properly.

Moving forward, Matthew chapter 16 verses 21 through 23 once again for the second time tells us that our Messiah once again foretells and prophesies about his death and his resurrection. We must remember that our Messiah already foretold about his death and his resurrection in the very last chapter in Matthew chapter 16 verse 21. And this of course is when Peter tried to rebuke our Messiah by telling him that this would never happen at which time our Messiah looks dead in the eye at Peter and calls him Satan and tells him to get behind him. Once again making it clear to Peter that these things must take place in order for him to take his rightful place on the throne of David at the right hand of his Father.

And so, when we read these two foretelling's or these two prophecies concerning the death and the resurrection of our Messiah, it's important that we mark these things not only within the pages of our Bibles, but also within our minds because when the death and the resurrection of our Messiah takes place later on in the book of Matthew, we are going to see the apostles completely forget what it was that our Messiah told them was going to take place not once... but twice. And so, this is also very important for us to put in our memory banks so that when we get to the end of the book of Matthew, we will remember our Messiah telling the apostles beforehand about his death and about his resurrection.

Keeping all of this in mind I love how Matthew chapter 17 ends when the tax collectors asked Peter if his teacher pays taxes are not. And before we get too far into this particular study, it's important to understand that these tax collectors were not Roman tax collectors. These tax collectors were there to collect taxes for the temple. The annual temple tax required of every male 20

years of age and older was commanded in Exodus chapter 30 verse 13 and seen again in second Chronicles chapter 24 verse nine and again in Nehemiah chapter 10 verse 32 and it was used for the upkeep of the temple. Two drachma was equal to ½ a shekel. And again, this was used (or at least supposed to be used) for the upkeep of the temple. But what is even more interesting is the question that our Messiah asks Peter. Yeshua asks Peter “from whom do the kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons, or from others?” And Peter answered “from others” and Yeshua said to him “then the sons are free” but Yeshua says however do not give offense to them, he tells Peter to go to the sea and to cast a hook in and to take the first fish that comes up and when Peter opened it in its mouth he would find a shekel and Yeshua told Peter to take this shekel and give it to them on behalf of Peter and himself. Remember... the God ordained temple tax was ½ a shekel per person so one whole shekel would’ve covered both Peter and our Messiah.

The point that our Messiah was trying to make to Peter is that Peter and the rest of his disciples belonged to his Father’s royal household, but the unbelieving Jews did not. Once again, our Messiah is teaching Peter through parables training him up once again to think in spiritual terms which is extremely important for all of us today to understand.

Once again, as we have said so many times before, God is spirit, and he is looking for those who will worship him in both spirit and in truth. Our Father in heaven is not looking for denominational slaves. He’s not looking for those who worship the Pope of Rome he’s not looking for those who worship their rabbis. He’s not looking for those who worship a denominational charter of men. He’s not looking for those who worship a religion or a tradition or a dogma or a philosophy. He’s looking for those who would worship him in both spirit and in truth and not just one or the other but both. If we are not worshiping him in both spirit and in truth... then we are not the ones that he is looking for.

And in order to worship our Father in heaven in spirit we must indeed have spiritual eyes to see spiritual things in spiritual ways that the world cannot perceive nor understand because they do not know him, nor do they see him. Which brings us very nicely into Matthew chapter 18.

As we move into Matthew chapter 18 one of the first things that we will see is the disciples asking our Messiah “who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven”. And the answer that our Messiah gives to them is undoubtedly not exactly what they were probably thinking. Keeping this in mind, I’d like us to now turn to Matthew chapter 18 and I would like to read through Matthew chapter 18 verse one through 14 this evening so that we can once again know exactly what it says and just as importantly what it does not say. **Matthew chapter 18 verses one through 14 E3**

Who Is the Greatest?

Mat 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

Mat 18:2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them

Mat 18:3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 18:4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 18:5 “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me,

Mat 18:6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Temptations to Sin

Mat 18:7 “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!

Mat 18:8 And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire.

Mat 18:9 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Mat 18:10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

Mat 18:12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?

Mat 18:13 And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray.

Mat 18:14 So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

And so once again, the disciples come to our Messiah asking him who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven and our Messiah answers them plainly that whoever humbles himself like a child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And I would like to once again stop right here and just pause and consider what it is that our Messiah just told his disciples.

Narcissism and vanity are indeed the devils' favorite snares. They are the devils' favorite traps and it is through narcissism and vanity that our adversary most often times sifts God's people. Narcissism and vanity is a disease that much like the flu can be easily contracted by those of us who are living in this world today. Today the world is all about the me, myself, and I. It's all about what I want. It's all about what I look like. It's all about what I desire. It's all about what I believe. It's all about what I say. It's all about whether or not I'm offended. It's all about what I like and what I don't like. The selfie... has become a worldwide phenomenon overnight. The world today has indeed traded good for evil and evil for good. The world today has indeed traded what is sweet for what is better and what is better for what is sweet. And the world today has completely bought into this trade lock stock and barrel.

Character and honor and self-control and humility have all become things of the past. They have all been traded for narcissism and vanity and whoever has the most narcissism and the most vanity... whoever speaks the loudest... whoever makes the most ruckus... whoever rebels the most... becomes the winner of the prize today in our time.

We as modern-day professing Christian who are true God-fearing Messiah following cross bearing Christians must be extra judicial... we must have a heightened awareness of the symptoms of narcissism and vanity. Because I tell you the truth my friends, narcissism and vanity can often times go unchecked by a person who does not recognize that they have this very disease.

And by the same token, we must not confuse narcissism and vanity with speaking the truth. If what we say is what God has already said... then there is no narcissism and vanity to be found within us. Many people will wrongly point to narcissism and vanity in someone who is standing firmly on the truth of their God breathed Scripture. There is indeed a difference between someone

who is proclaiming their denominational dogma as truth over what our God breathed Scripture says is true because of their own narcissism and vanity and someone who is speaking boldly in the name of Yeshua, Hamashich.

We must remember what our Messiah said when he said that the word that you heard from him was not his word but his Father's word. If we have picked up our crosses and are following him and doing as he did and walking as he walked... then the word that we speak also should not be our word but our Father's word. And it is this word that we do indeed speak boldly just as our Messiah spoke boldly and just as his apostles spoke boldly because you simply cannot hide a lamp on a hill.

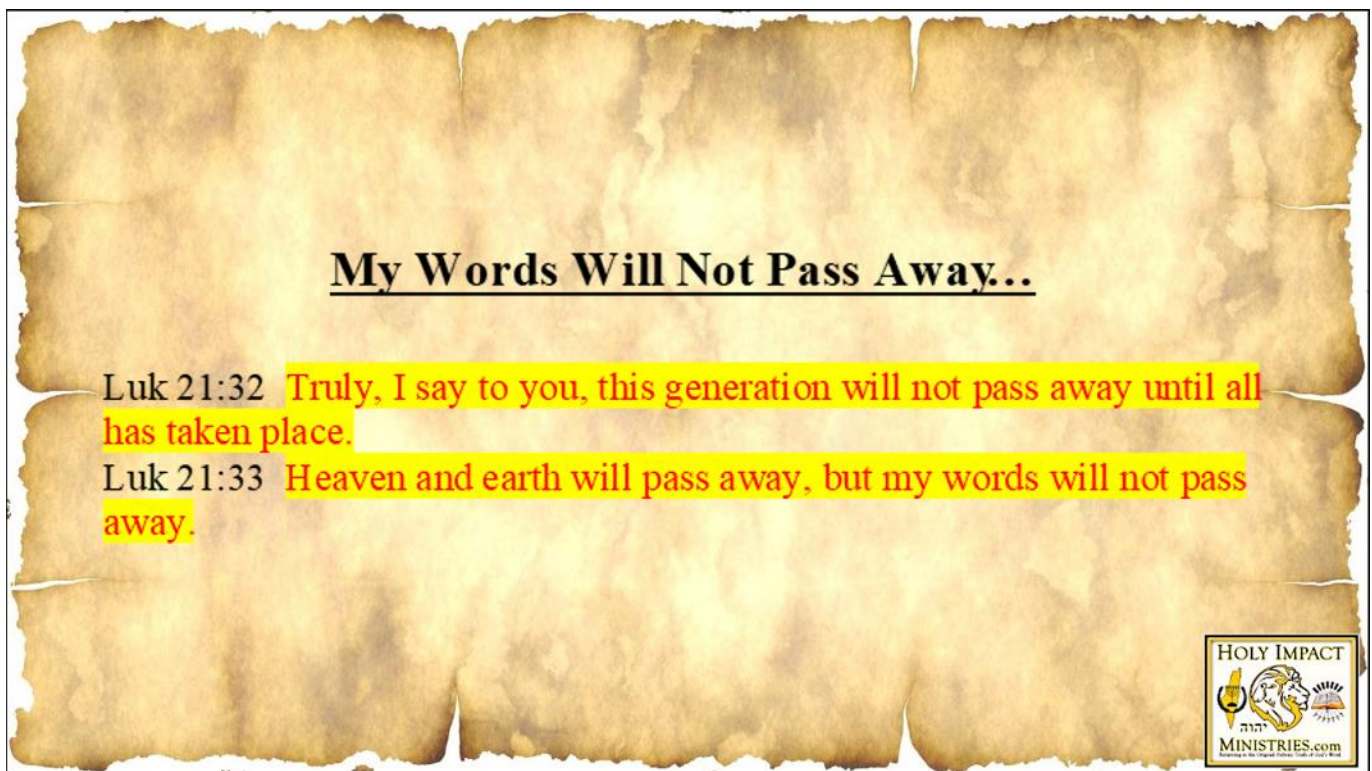
There is often times a very fine line between those who speak the truth with boldness and those who speak narcissism and vanity in boldness. One is right and is justified and is blessed... and the other is wrong and unjustified and doomed. Although they may seem much alike, I can assure you their destinations are very, very different.

The temptations of the world are indeed strong. And our Messiah tells us in verse seven that it is necessary that these temptations come but woe to the one by whom the temptation come. Our Messiah tells us very clearly in verse six that whoever causes one of these little ones of his to sin.... It would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Once again, I like to pause here for just a moment so that we might contemplate what it is that our Messiah is telling us here in the 18th chapter of the book of Matthew. When we lie to our children about Sunday being the Sabbath day of God... are we not causing them to sin? When we lie to our children and tell them that the anniversary of the death of our Messiah is on a Roman Catholic created Good Friday instead of Passover day... are we not causing them to sin? When we lie to our children about a Roman Catholic created Easter Sunday morning instead of First Fruits... are we not causing our children to sin? When we lie to our children about December 25th being the birthday of our Messiah because the Pope of Rome has declared December 25th to be the birthday of their popish god... are we not causing our children to sin?

I tell you the truth my friends these Scriptures that we have just read have absolutely nothing to do with racism. These red-letter words and these red-letter warnings have nothing to do with what color you are or what nationality you hail from or what part of the world you live in. These red-letter words pertain to us all and they also pertain to the wicked things that we do each one of us no matter our race creed or color. No matter what particular dispensational time span that you live in. These red-letter warnings were not just for the disciples. They were not just for the apostles. They were not just for the people who were living in the days of our Messiah's time. These red-letter words and warnings span across all time and all generations from the beginning of time to the end of time.

You cannot run, you cannot hide, you cannot explain them away, you cannot belittle them, you cannot escape them. Evil is as evil does no matter where you live no matter who you are no matter when you were born and no matter when you died. Heaven and earth may pass away but Yehovah's word will not pass away. **Luke chapter 21 verses 32 and 33 (scrn 3)**



Today's modern-day professing Christian has an extremely bad habit of assuming that what is written in the Bible only pertains to those who lived

thousands of years ago. Today's modern-day version of Christianity by and large would have you believe that do as thou wilt is now the whole of the law which tickles the devil pink.

But the truth of the matter is, that these red letter words are indeed universal words that span the halls of time and that do indeed come directly from our Messiah's Father who is indeed our Father who is in heaven. They were given to him to give to us and he has given them to us. The problem is that because of our own narcissism and vanity it's much easier to believe in a do as thou wilt is the whole of the law religion than it is to believe in the truth of the spoken word of our Father in heaven. At least for the world it is.

Our Father in heaven has sent his only begotten Son to be our Passover lamb. To shed his blood as the perfect unblemished sacrifice for mankind. And our Messiah has willfully and intentionally picked up that mantle and has willfully and intentionally drank from that cup that he feared so much in the garden of Gethsemane. It was because his love for us was greater than his fear of death... that we now can walk through that door that no man can shut back to our Father in heaven and back to the tree of life that we were banished from so long ago in the garden of Eden.

It is important to be kind and to be gentle, but it is equally as important to be bold and truthful. For someone to lie to you is for someone to hate you. But for someone to tell you the truth whether you like it or not... is for someone to love you. For someone to allow you to sit in a puddle of gasoline and play with the book of matches is to hate you. But for someone to wash you clean and to replace that book of matches the fire of the spirit of God... is to love you.

Love is not always about emotion. Love is not always about who is being the kindest to us. Love is not always soft-spoken. Love is not always willing to go along with the majority. Love is not always about holding hands and singing Kumbaya. True love stands in truth. True love protects. True love resists evil. True love is as bold as the lion of Judah. True love is willing to go the distance. True love is willing to say... no! True love leads to where true love was first invented. True love leads to the creator of love itself. True love leads to the humble desire of obedience to the one who loved us first while we were still sinners.

Let us not be swayed and the lured by Hollywood's version of "love". Let us not be swayed by the dark magic of the silver screen or today's soap operas and sitcoms. Let us rather ask, seek, and knock on the one door that belongs to our Messiah who is calling us back to walk through the one door that no man can shut. And above all... let us always remember the true biblical definition of the love of God. (scrn 4)

The Biblical Definition of The Love of God:

1Jn 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

1Jn 5:3 **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.** And his commandments are not burdensome.

Is this what your Pastor is teaching?



And with that being said... we will once again close the books for today and allow you to once again take these things to your prayer closet and to bow your head and to bend your knee and to face the holy promised land of Jerusalem and to ask in the name of Yeshua, Hamashiach you if what you have heard here today be true or not.

Ask, seek, and knock on his door and on his door alone so that the proper door can be opened to you. And if you will do that, and if you will stay the course to the end, you and I will surely walk through the gates of his soon coming kingdom together.