

Unveiling The Righteous Jewish Jesus

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If you want a penpal!

I want to ask you, what is it you *love* about Jesus? His God-sized love for humanity, of course, is pre-eminent in reasons to love Him. But I want to touch on aspects of His character and person that have been -- "veiled", shall we say? I want to touch on the middle-eastern Jewish Jesus' zeal and moral fiber - His rugged, robust, rich personality - how He taught people with *authority* in His words, cleared the temple of the money-hungry businessmen with zeal, and yes, embraced the tender child with a deep pure love of the Father.

He grew up in a Jewish culture and the blood of His mother Mary was Jewish, of the tribe of Judah, of King David's line, as was his adoptive father, Joseph. In short, Jesus was JEWISH, by blood and by faith. And in the book of Revelation He is indeed called the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah' as His mother and adoptive father were both from the tribe of Judah, of which it was prophesied that a ruler would come! And indeed, Yeshua, or Jesus, is STRONG like a lion! He is majestic and royal like a lion! And His Father God was and is the God of Israel!

And in Jesus' teachings, we will see that He did not abolish the beloved Torah, or Law, of the Jews, but established it, as Matthew 5:17-19 speaks of. He was a Jewish rabbi, this Jesus was, as people would call Him rabbi, and he instructed that only He, the Messiah, be called rabbi, - which is literally 'my great one' but commonly translated as teacher.

To Mary it was told that Jesus would inherit the throne of His father David and reign over Israel forever as king! Yes, the people of Israel is not just a thing of the past! Thus, the New Jerusalem, apparently the eternal capital and home of the saints, the 12 gates have the 12 tribes of Israel written on them - suggesting that these tribes of Israel (and the Gentiles attached to Israel - see **Romans 11:13-24**) will live within the gates in the city, with each tribe having their own entrance to the city. Also, in **Jeremiah 31:35-37** it says that as long as there is sun and moon, the nation Israel exists. Thus, in addition to Jesus being Jewish, the Jewish NATION will continue to exist as well! (Jewish here meaning of any of the twelve tribes). And so Jesus, or His more truer Hebrew name Yeshua, will rule over Israel, the forever people of God, forever, as the King of Israel, with Jew and Gentile grafted into (or attached to) the so-called Olive tree of Israel!

Thus, the usual white-skinned Jesus is actually probably a darker skinned Jewish man named something similar to Yeshua, which means salvation in Hebrew, the Language of the Jews and the land of Israel!

Are these thoughts new to you? If so, that's ok! It's all part of connecting with the Jewish way of our Lord Jesus, or Yeshua.

Now I'd like to touch on one aspect of Jesus' Jewishness a bit more. And this is His stance towards the Law of God given to Israel at Mount Sinai. Yes, this is the law God gave to Moses to give to Israel, called the Torah in Hebrew. In Judaism, the Torah is always greatly revered. Sometimes, a few verses are taken from Paul's letters in the Bible to say the law has been abolished - done away - but is this what Jesus preached and practiced? In the book of 1 John, it says we are to walk as Jesus walked. And so, let's look at the Master Jesus' stance on the Law to clear up some of the questionable verses from Paul. And note, that Paul also said the Law reveals what sin is in Romans 7:7. And we don't want to break the law and sin!

But to consider the Master's words, let's examine one of His clearest statements on the Law - Matthew 5:17-19:

Matthew 5:17-19 NASB — “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

So Jesus didn't come to abolish or cancel the law but to fulfill it. But if fulfills means we don't do it anymore, that would be the same thing as abolish - which He didn't do. So fulfill can mean 'fill up' here - bring it to it's fullness! And then as Jesus continues talking, He clears it up even more - the Law won't pass til Heaven and Earth pass! And whoever KEEPS and TEACHES the Law will be HONORED by God!

Now let's look at an interaction between Jesus and another man in the book of Luke:

Luke 10:25-28 NASB — “And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?” And he answered, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.”

So here, Jesus says the way to eternal LIFE is keeping the commandments of the Law, summed up by the two great commandments - love God and love others! In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus also confirms that the whole Law and Prophets hang on those two principles - loving God and loving others!

But of course, we fall short of that, and that's why we need His forgiveness, purchased by the cross of Calvary! But the goal is righteousness! To be righteous like our Master Jesus.

Now let's look at one last example of Jesus standing up for the Torah (or Law).

It comes from Mark 7:1-23.

In this story, the Pharisees are upset with Jesus because His disciples are not ceremonially washing their hands before they eat, a tradition the Pharisees kept, but not a commandment of God.

Jesus was upset with these people because they put their tradition ahead of God's actual commandments, and Jesus reprimands them for a specific example of this - saying sons could give their money they would normally use to honor their parents with to the temple instead, nullifying God's command to honor your father and mother - one of the 10 commandments! So Jesus was concerned with the commandments of the Law here. Yet in the same passage, Jesus seems to also say that it doesn't matter what goes in your mouth because that doesn't defile you - it's what comes out of the heart that defiles you - seeking to contradict God's commands about avoiding eating certain animals...

But in light of the context of the whole story, remember, it was about eating with unwashed hands, not eating unclean meat. And to solidify this, in the parallel passage of this story in Matthew 15, Jesus concludes His whole message by clarifying that to eat with unwashed HANDS does not defile a man, as opposed to eating unclean meat, in verse 20.

Thus, what have we seen from the Scriptures? That Jesus was a Jewish man by blood, culture, and faith, and that, though He was untrained in human institutions, He was the greatest Jewish rabbi, or teacher, ever, because of His eternal identity as the son of God! We also saw from the Scriptures that Jesus, or Yeshua, His natural Hebrew name, did teach obedience to the Jewish Torah, or Law, given at Mt Sinai, summed up by the 2 greatest commandments, love God and love others.

And lastly, we saw that Jesus will reign forever over Israel, the forever people of God, as the Lion King of the tribe of Judah, in a heavenly city called the New Jerusalem, in which the twelve gates bear the names of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Jesus was Jewish. Jesus was righteous. He calls us to learn from the Jewish law, and be a part of Israel, like a wild branch grafted into a cultivated Olive tree.

May the Lord bless you as you consider these things and seek the Father's face. Amen.

Thoughts, Questions, or prayer requests?

Prayer

