

NO LONGER AS IT WAS BEFORE (2)

In a previous study we have looked into how things have changed in the lives of the true followers of the Messiah. Taking the bold step of turning (back) to Yahweh is like walking into a realm that marks the beginning of a complete new life style. A life style that can no longer be viewed as gloomy and insufficient. A life style not filled with emptiness and confusion any more. Once this new road is chosen, our lives become enriched with powerful promises, a new understanding of Yahweh's ways and even a changed and renewed identity in Messiah. When we look back and think about where we were and what we believed (and practised) before we turned to Yahweh, and measure it up against what we have gained since then, there really is no comparison. Let us continue this study and once more allow Scriptures to increase and enhance our understanding in this regard. In the previous study our main focus was on the Pre-Messianic Scriptures (Old Testament). In this study our focus will mainly be on the Post-Messianic Scriptures (New Testament).

NO LONGER IGNORANT OF THE NAME OF YAHWEH - Yechezkel 39:7 "And I shall make my set-apart Name known in the midst of my people Yisrael, and not let my set-apart Name be profaned (or: be wounded / be made weak) any more. And the gentiles shall know that I am Yahweh, the set-apart One of Yisrael." This is not the only place in Scriptures where this prophesy is given. YeshaYahu 52:6: "Therefore my people shall know my Name, in that day, for I am the One who is speaking." YermeYahu 16:21: "Therefore see, I am causing them to know, this time I cause them to know my hand and my might. And they shall know that my Name is Yahweh." Yechezkel 36:23: "And I shall set apart my great Name, which has been profaned among the gentiles, which you have profaned in their midst. And the gentiles shall know that I am Yahweh, declares the Master Yahweh, when I am set-apart in you before their eyes." Two of the seven assemblies in Revelation (Pergamos and Philadelphia) are praised for the fact that they have held on to (and not denied) the Name of Y'shua (see Rev 2:13 and 3:8). What a privilege it is, not only to know the Names of the Father and the Son, but to use them (respectfully), even in our testimonies before those who do not know Him yet. In doing so, Yahweh's Name is no longer being made weak, or brought to nothingness by those who claim to be his people. What is happening, instead, is that the Almighty is being set-apart in us (that is: in our words and our deeds) before the eyes of the nations.

NO LONGER RELYING ON RUMOURS - Yahuchanan 4:42 "And they said to the woman: We no longer believe because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard, and we know that this is truly the Messiah, the Saviour of the world." This change in the way the Shomeronites (Samaritans) believed, reminds one of what is being said of the Bereans in Acts 17:11: "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonike, who received the word with great eagerness, and searched the Scriptures daily, if these words were so." What a difference there is between faith that is based on hear-say and upon the doctrines and testimonies of human beings, on the one hand, and a firm belief, on the other hand, that is based on a personal encounter with the living Elohim, confirmed by the inward testimony of the set-apart Spirit of Yahweh, that grows alongside an increased and continued study of the Word of Yahweh. There are so many so-called "believers" who are trying to build their belief on rumours, and even traditions of men. And yet, it is only the Word of Yahweh, confirmed by the words of the Messiah, that will set us free and bring us to that point where we may confess: "We know that this is truly the Messiah, the Saviour of the world."

NO LONGER REMEMBERING THE AFFLICTION - Yahuchanan 16:21 "The woman has grief when she is in labour, because her hour has come, but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the affliction, for joy that a man was born into the world." No matter how negative our past experiences have been or whether they have been experiences with people or doctrines or church institutions - discovering the truth of the Word of Yahweh will enable us to look beyond these negative experiences and focus our full attention on that day when the believers in Messiah will truly be reborn into the kingdom of Yahweh. The next verse (Yahuchanan 16:22) is a

confirmation that the "birth" being envisaged here, is associated with the second coming of the Messiah, and that it is only by focusing on this day that we shall manage to overcome our daily encounters with grief and affliction in this world.

NO LONGER BOASTING ABOUT WORKS - Romans 11:5-6 "At this present time a remnant according to the choice of favour has come to be. And if by favour, it is no longer of works, otherwise favour is no longer favour. And if it is of works, it is no longer favour, otherwise work is no longer work." It should be noticed that "favour" (as opposed to "works") is described here as the way in which the remnant "has come to be". The mere existence of this remnant is due to Yahweh's favour. Nobody who is part of this remnant can boast of certain works that earned this privileged position for them. Being made part of the remnant, however, brings a renewed desire to please the Almighty and do those things that honour Him as the set-apart One.

NO LONGER LIVING FOR OURSELVES - 2 Corinthians 5:15 "And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them, and was raised." The Messiah's death and the attitude of unselfishness that was revealed through his death, has established a clear-cut pattern for those who are associated with Him. Like our Master, who did not live for Himself but, instead, emptied Himself and took the form of a servant (Phil 2:7) we should no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died for us. Those who do not honour this pattern will find a conflict within themselves and will not manage to persevere unto the end.

NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS - Ephesians 2:19 "So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the set-apart ones and members of the household of Elohim." This is one of the clearest proofs in Scriptures that what the Father had in mind from the beginning is ONE household of Elohim and ONE citizenship for all believers. In the Father's mind there is only ONE plan of salvation and ONE set of rules (with corresponding promises) that was given to accompany this plan. Both Yehudim (Jews) and gentiles are included in this plan. When those who were previously branded as "gentiles" wish to "join themselves to Yahweh" (see YeshaYahu 56:3), their status is changed from "stranger" and "foreigner" to "set-apart one" and "member of the household of Elohim".

NO LONGER CHILDREN - Ephesians 4:14-15 "So that we should no longer be children, tossed and borne about by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men, in cleverness, unto the craftiness of leading astray, but, maintaining the truth in love, we grow up in all respects into Him who is the head, Messiah." One of the advantages of coming to know the truth is the ability of standing firm in the midst of false teachings and doctrines and not be vulnerable and distractible like one who is only a child in faith. There is another sense in which we are no longer like children. No longer do we need to be reminded continually about the ins and outs of the Torah, like children. Yahweh has given us his Spirit and has written his Torah on our hearts (YermeYahu 31:34). Now that belief has come, we are no longer under a trainer (or "schoolmaster", Greek: "paidagogos"). This does not mean that the Torah has been removed, but only that the Torah is now in our hearts and that we do not need the pedagogical methods, associated with bringing up a child, any longer.