



Sheep, Shepherds and THE Path of Righteousness

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January 2020
Written for WCN



We have just returned from the wonderful opportunities and blessings of the Raising UP the Remnant conference in Potosi, MO. It is possible to purchase Video on Demand coverage to take it all in at their website. Connecting with those who are serious about honoring Messiah and heeding the call to come out of Babylon as far as we can was very joyful!

I spoke about the combined metaphors of people as sheep and living stones, ultimately being built together to mature unto Messiah and as stones built into walls into His spiritual house.

*Coming to Him as to **a Living Stone**, rejected indeed by men,
but chosen by God and precious, you also,
as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house,
a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
1 Peter 2:4-5 NKJV*

The various challenges along the way, for both the individual and for the assembly, were addressed with suggestions for how to incorporate both Papa's and Mama's Torah/ Knowledge of the Word and building of character and maturity.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed about by the waves and carried around by every wind of teaching and by the clever cunning of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ Himself, who is the head.

Ephesians 4:14-15 NKJV

The response was overwhelmingly positive! It is indeed our Abba's time for us to be speaking more publically about this necessary preparation of His Bride to be ready and made without spot or wrinkle!

Anyone interested in hosting my presentation or a similar one, please contact us at info@set-apart-ministries.org.

Before I write anything further about the conference, I will go back to follow up on the various questions that previous articles have led to. There was a question as to why I noted that those who received John's baptism were able to recognize Messiah Yeshua/Jesus when others were not. I refer to:

"I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

John 1:31 NKJV

I was asked why I referred to Messiah Yeshua/Jesus as a Personal Shepherd, having only heard "personal Saviour" before. Consider Psalm 23: "The LORD is my Shepherd. I shall not want." "My" is a possessive term so my personal Shepherd.

In my presentation at the Raising Up the Remnant conference, I considered just what shepherding is and the difference between good and bad shepherding. A shepherd/shepherdess is one who takes care of the sheep, being personally involved, not elevated and distant, finding good and safe pastures for them, good water and shelter; and protection from harm. All of these good things are also a picture of what our Messiah Jesus does for us. He walks with them and does not drive them, thus the sense of following the Shepherd. There are descriptions of bad shepherds in Ezekiel; those who take advantage of the sheep for their own gain, without properly leading/teaching them in safety. It also refers to separating not only the sheep from the goats, but also the sheep from the sheep.

The word "shepherd" is from Strong's # 7462, ra'ah. The KJV translates it as "pastor" but a good many other translations say "shepherd."

*As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee:
neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest:
that which came out of my lips was right before thee.*

Jeremiah 17:16 KJV

I was asked what the "path of righteousness" that I mentioned was about. This Jeremiah reference to a pastor/shepherd following YHWH/Jesus seems to fit right in there. Sheep are metaphorical references to people. We the people/sheep follow THE Shepherd, but we also have need of a human shepherd who ALSO follows THE Great Shepherd, Yeshua/Jesus.

"He leads me in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake." He leads us in right paths for His Name's sake....so that when the world looks at us, walking in His paths of being righteous according to the LORD's way, we will reflect well on His Name and character.

We are to follow after Messiah, in the same sense that sheep follow their shepherd. He leads the way for us through our lives when we follow the principles He has established. YHWH is the Father, and Yeshua/Jesus is the Son, yet they are One. "The LORD" in all caps is YHWH, Strong's #H3068. And per

Isaiah 43:11, YHWH is our Saviour; there is no other. Yeshua/Jesus confirmed that He did not “make up” new teachings, which can be called doctrine.

Jesus answered them and said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

John 7:16 NKJV

Proverbs 2:20 and 8:20 also refer to the path of righteousness, and compare it with goodness and justice. It isn't hard to do some word study on key words here. “Path” is “ma’gal” Strong’s #H4570. It refers to a way, a trench and has a circular “revolve” implication as in a rut made by an animal moving in a circle with a harness. We might call this a cycle. There are many wonderful references to this path.

Among them are:

*You crown the year with Your goodness,
And Your paths drip with **abundance**. Psalm 65:11*

*Then you will understand **righteousness and justice**,
Equity and every good path. Proverbs 2:9*

*I have taught you in the way of **wisdom**;
I have led you in **right** paths. Proverbs 4:11*

*The way of the just is **uprightness**;
O Most Upright,
You weigh the path of the **just**. Isaiah 26:7*

*For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD,
And He ponders all his paths. Proverbs 5:21*

These paths in our lives are before the eyes of the LORD. All of these references are to the good path and pair it with wisdom, justice, abundance, uprightness, His ways, and goodness.

How does the Word define “righteousness?” Strong’s #H 6664 is tzedek: referring to being right, normal, of just weights and measures, referring to God’s justice and His ways.

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT) requires two and a half pages to fully describe this concept, well worth the read at #1879. The standard is always YHWH whether in reference to relationships between YHWH and man, or between men. One interesting point is that righteous behavior/good conduct by an individual “establishes a claim on the LORD of deliverance from calamitous judgement.”

This concept of “path” has a circular or rotation aspect of it. Where do we see an indication of a circular path of walking out our lives? When we follow a calendar, we follow a yearly/annual cycle of events...a path through the year.

The Feasts of the LORD are on an annual cycle, or path per Leviticus 23. These Feasts are often incorrectly referred to as being “Jewish” when in the Scriptures, they are always referred to as YHWH’s or The LORD’s Feasts for His people.

*“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the LORD,
which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.
Leviticus 23:2 NKJV*

In this case then, the path of righteousness is referring to following the calendar of The LORD as He has listed it in His Word: an annual cycle of Feast Days, all of which are metaphorical and physical pictures about the spiritual truth about Messiah Yeshua/Jesus. He confirmed this Himself, in His conversation with the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets,
he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.
Luke 24:26 NKJV*

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread which includes First Fruits are all spring events, foretelling the story of His first coming, as our Gentle Shepherd/ Sin Bearer/Suffering Servant in which He was crucified for our sin and overcame sin, death and the devil in His resurrection. The summer Feast gathering of Shavuot has been called Pentecost, remembering the time 50 days after His death when He sent His Spirit to rest on those who trusted in Him, who are under the Blood of the Lamb, in His House. The Fall Feasts of Day of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles are all a picture of His second coming, when He will return as Conquering King, and come for His Bride at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, which is Tabernacles. Considering the timing of Mary and Elizabeth’s pregnancies, a strong case can be made that Messiah’s Birth took place during Tabernacles. In our SAM community, we often sing “O Come, O Come Emmanuel...and ransom captive Israel” as well as “Joy to the World” during Tabernacles gatherings.

To follow after His ways and walk in His Feasts through the year would be considered a righteous path that we so often confess we want whenever we recite Psalm 23.

To follow after some other schedule of holidays/feasts through the year would be considered an unrighteous path, because it is not centered on what He has written.

I am so grateful for His grace to me and to us all, both before we understood that there is a difference and His grace in making it known to us in this day as we are drawing nearer to the time of Messiah’s return! (There are several hours of teaching to further understand this topic but consider Leviticus 26, particularly 40-46.)

In our day, many believers follow an annual calendar/cycle/path of Feast Days that are not listed in the Bible. I am well aware that this is NOT a popular topic to address, nevertheless, there is no mention of “Christmas” in the Bible. “Christmas” does not go back to Bethlehem as we have been led to believe. This is historical fact: The celebration of christmas was outlawed by the Pilgrims/Puritans from the beginning in America until the arrival of the German immigrant wave (my own German heritage) in the 1800’s. It is easy to check this reference by researching the term ‘Christmas.’ Though it has become a cherished tradition of celebrating Messiah’s birth with much family sentiment, not to mention being used as an opportunity for merchandising galore, we are never told in the Bible to honor this day in December. It is not hard to find information on Saturnalia and other festivals that were celebrated at this time that influenced the early church.

Truly, we didn't know because as Jeremiah wrote, we inherited lies from our fathers. No one alive today is responsible for this. I am again, so thankful that He knows our hearts and the genuineness of our love and faith through it all.

The question is which path do we follow? Are we "truth seekers" and loving Him with our whole heart, are we giving lip service or are we more like some in the first century?

*Nevertheless among the chief rulers also **many believed on him**; but because of the Pharisees **they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.** Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.*

John 12:42-45 KJV

As I understand it, He knows where we have been ensnared from the past, but at some point, our God YHWH/Yeshua also known as Jesus, will ask all of us to consider if we love Him and want to follow after Him and His ways or after our beloved traditions. Are we God centered or man centered?

I do not believe that He will force it as Yeshua never forced anyone to follow Him when He was on earth.

Nor should we.

He makes known His way and leaves it up to us.

(It IS a hard choice in the sense of loss of sweet sentiment, but when we realize it comes down to following after THE Shepherd or another shepherd, we see that we need to make a choice. We can lay it down and begin to develop new family memories as we celebrate the Feasts of the LORD as listed in Scriptures.)

As for the Spring holiday path, there is one reference to "Easter" in the KJV,

*And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after **Easter** to bring him forth to the people.*

Acts 12:4 KJV

BUT when you go to the Strong's #G3957 for the Greek word that was translated as "easter" you will find "pascha" which is a reference to the "paschal Lamb" or "passover lamb" that is part of the yearly celebration of Passover, which was when the angel of death "passed over" the houses of those who had put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their home. This is a metaphorical picture of what was to come: Yeshua/Jesus is our Passover Lamb, the sinless One without blemish, Who gave His life in our place, so that the angel of death will pass over those who put their trust in Him and His shed blood on our behalf.

There are also indications of a wrong path:

*Whose ways are crooked,
And who are devious in their paths; Proverbs 2:15*

*For her house leads down to death,
And her paths to the dead; Proverbs 2:18*

*Lest you ponder her path of life—
Her ways are unstable;
You do not know them. Proverbs 5:6*

*The way of peace they have not known,
And there is no justice in their ways;
They have made themselves crooked paths;
Whoever takes that way shall not know peace. Isaiah 59:8*

There is no room to further consider this crooked path here but that, too, isn't hard to research.

May our Messiah Yeshua, Jesus of Nazareth, the sinless obedient One, lead us in HIS paths of righteousness BECAUSE HE IS OUR PERSONAL SHEPHERD!

Contact us at info@set-apart-ministries.org with questions!