

Believing Right: A Jewish Believer's Discipleship Guide
Lesson 5
The Death of Y'shua

"I believe . . . in Jesus Christ . . . who . . . suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. . . ."

As a result of studying this lesson, the student will understand the need for and contemplate the death of Y'shua.
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The Prophecies of the Suffering Messiah

Comment

The Talmud—the ancient rabbis' book which interprets the Old Testament—maintains that the psalmist and the prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of a suffering messiah. They even named the messiah in his suffering—messiah, Son of Joseph. They were referring to Joseph, son of Jacob, Abraham's grandson. The Book of Genesis depicted Joseph as a man who suffered unjustly: His brothers sold him as a slave. Slandered by the wife of his boss, he was sent to prison. Though he eventually ruled Egypt at the Pharaoh's side, he experienced much physical and emotional humiliation. The rabbis associated this characteristic of Joseph with the messiah.

Reading

The student should read Psalm 22 and answer the following questions:

1. The psalmist (King David) is in agony over ridicule and mockery—which is aimed at whom?
2. What are the various aspects of the emotional abuse of the agonizing one?
3. What are the various aspects of the physical torment and torture of the agonizing one?
4. What happened to his (the agonizing one's) clothing?
5. How will people ultimately respond to the agonizing one?

Comment

Isaiah wrote his prophecies three hundred years after King David wrote the Psalms, about seven hundred years before Y'shua lived (700 B.C.E).

Reading

The student should read Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and answer the following questions:

6. What are the various aspects of the physical torment and torture of the suffering servant?

7. What are the various aspects of the emotional abuse of the servant?
8. To what animal was the servant compared and in what context was this comparison made?
9. With whom would the servant make his grave?
10. Why was the servant “stricken” to death?
11. What was God’s reaction to the redeeming death of the Servant (see Isaiah 53:10)?

The Death of Y’shua

Comment and Reading

The student should read again the Gospel of John, chapter 3. Y’shua told Nicodemus that Y’shua would be lifted up on a pole. This refers to a prophecy in the Torah, the Book of Numbers chapter 21. When a plague of poisonous snakes struck and threatened the survival of the Jewish people who were wandering in the wilderness, God told Moses to build a bronze serpent. God said to put it on a pole (like the American Medical Association symbol); whoever looked at the serpent would be healed of the effects of the deadly bites. This, Y’shua told Nicodemus, is a metaphor describing what would happen to the Messiah. He would be lifted up on a pole (the cross) and whoever looks to him (in faith) will be born again and not suffer the ravages of eternal death.

Now answer the following questions:

12. Using the comparison of himself and the serpent on the pole, what did Jesus declare that one had to do to receive eternal life?
13. What are the results of his death for those who do not believe?

Comment and Reading

The student should read the Gospel of John chapter 19. The recording of the name “Pontius Pilate” in the Creed is not for Pilate’s ignominy, but to establish the time or era of Y’shua’s death. It is a historical marker. After reading the text, answer the following questions:

14. What did the soldiers do with Jesus’ clothing?
15. This chapter quotes five sayings of Jesus as he was dying. What are they?

16. Another saying is recorded in Mark 15:34. What is that?
17. Who actually killed Jesus (see John 3:16; John 10:17-18; and Isaiah 53:12)?

Opinion Questions:

What might Jesus have meant when he said, "It is finished"?

Could Y'shua have decided to not allow himself to be crucified? (See Matthew 26:53, which contains Jesus' words the night before his death. Also John 18:36, which contains Jesus' words in the trial that preceded his death.) Why?

Y'shua Ministers to the Dead

Comment and Reading

The student should read 1 Peter 3:18-4:6. This passage refers to what happened to Jesus immediately after his death. Isaiah 53:9 declared the servant made his grave with the wicked. Peter says Jesus went to the spirits now in prison. The Apostles' Creed uses the word *hell*. After reading the text, answer the following questions:

18. In Jesus' death, who suffered for whom and why?
19. What did Jesus do in "the prison" or hell?

Comment

Allowing himself to be crucified was Y'shua's greatest work. He demonstrated his ultimate devotion to God and the deepest desire to accomplish the will of God. His death did not come upon him unavoidably or without awareness; it was a definite choice on his part. Y'shua the messiah did not come to earth primarily to set an example for us, or to give us correct instructions. He came to die for us.

Y'shua's crucifixion is God's love gift to all of humankind. We who were to tend and keep the Garden (as in Genesis) rebelled. We sinned and, thus, became outcasts, separated from God. Since then, it has always cost someone's or something's life to make restoration possible. Consider the animal skins that covered Adam and Eve after they felt the shame of their sin (see Genesis 3:21). Consider the blood of bulls and goats in the Tabernacle sacrifices (see Leviticus 16-17). Consider the death of Y'shua. I call it God's "bloody path" back to himself. Hebrews 9:22 reads, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission [forgiveness]."

And Hebrews 10:10 reads, "We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (NIV). God satisfied his own justice in sending Y'shua to die for us. Let us give him great thanks!

Memory Verse: John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."