

## A HOUSE DIVIDED

As is the human way, when we hear terms like “A house divided,” our first thoughts usually zoom in to look at our personal lives and individual homes. With the emotional understanding of what a divided house can mean, we commit ourselves to overcoming struggles and differences knowing that strength in love must be used to preserve a family. But the outcome is never certain.

Then our thoughts may continue on their journey and consider the arena of politics. With the intellectual understanding that a country (as evidenced by civil wars throughout history) faces possible destruction when divided, we know that it must hold fast to a sound set of principles and values to survive. Yet, again, the outcome is never certain.

We, as believers however, are given an opportunity to see a message about a house divided that is so pure, so strong and so intricate in dimension and clarity if only we allow our thoughts to transcend for a while and rest in The Word.

The outcome here is irrefutably certain.

***“Jerusalem is home to the three largest religions of the world: Judaism, Islam and Christianity.”***

How many times have we heard this? We hear it from politicians, from economists, from theologians, from the media, from sociologists, etc., etc., etc., and when I hear it I just cringe and cry out “SINCE WHEN?!”

Why has it become *three*? I see only *two*!

Islam is growing in numbers... trying to lay claim to Jerusalem. It holds dear a singular focus that surpasses all the warring and hatred between its countries and sects. That one focus is the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people...and anyone who sides with the One, True, Living G-d. They have sworn themselves as enemies to the other two ‘religions’ and as their numbers and influence grow, Jews and Christians remain separated. The Hebrew translation of Jerusalem (Yerushalayim), with all of the symbolic translations attributed to it, can literally be translated into “their inheritance”. The benefactors of this inheritance are Believers, yet here they stand, two camps: **A divided house.**

How is it that *our* house can be divided and hope to stand? The Jewish camp stands staunch holding on to the Tanakh (Torah, instructions for a priestly nation often called the law; Nevi'im-prophets; Ketuvim-writings; also known as the Old Testament) and the Talmud, a collection of traditions, commentaries and laws created by rabbi's from long ago. The Christian camp stands just as staunch, holding on to the New Testament, the stories and accounts of the Messiah and the apostles; and over 2,000 different church doctrines. Each thinks that they hold the perfect truth. Each thinks that this truth is theirs, alone, by providence. The Jewish camp acknowledges that the gentile nations are

part of G-d's promises.....if they convert and accept His law. The Christian camp acknowledges that all can be saved.....if they convert and accept 'Jesus' into their hearts.

\*\*\* Please note that as this continues a very generic approach is being taken when attempting to compare the camps of G-d's divided house and is **only referencing** how they stand **today** in terms of general divisions. Text observant Jews and Faith observant Christians have existed throughout the centuries. They have written and spoken many proofs that would question where their camp stands today. Many of those proofs still exist but have managed to be overlooked by spiritual leaders from both sides. Preferring authority over truth is a sin both camps share equally. \*\*\*

But our Father is patient and merciful. He is faithful to His promises. If we delve a bit deeper into Matthew 12, we find a path to hope in a **united house!**

Nothing in the New Testament can stand alone because it is built upon what came before. If a house divided cannot stand, how then can the scriptures stand, when divided, if they house His Holy Word? To fully appreciate the significance and beauty and depth of anything in the New... we **must** take a trip back. You see, G-d is most definitely in the details as the saying goes, but His details cannot be seen on a flat screen. His details are in the dimensions. He speaks to us in pictures. We take these pictures, in all their uniqueness, and press them together to create a new picture. From the olive to the oil is a process. In Matthew 12... lie the words from Isaiah 42:

*“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold,  
My Elect One in whom My soul delights!  
I have put My Spirit upon Him:  
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.  
He will not cry out, nor raise His voice,  
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.  
A bruised reed He will not break,  
And smoking flax He will not quench;  
He will bring forth justice for truth.  
He will not fail or be discouraged,  
Till He has established justice in the earth;  
And the coastlands shall wait for His law.”*

But in Matthew 12, the last sentences read:

*“Till He sends forth justice to victory;  
And in His name Gentiles will trust.”*

The Jewish camp, holding the Tanakh, sees *justice* and the *Torah* and the suffering of Israel for years of discrimination and hatred shown to them by the nations.

The Christian camp, holding the New Testament, sees *victory* and *trust* and a home team pep-rally for 'Jesus'.

Was it the intention of Matthew to change Isaiah's words? Not at all. This is just a misfortunate reality that occurs when translating the New Testament. The writers, like Matthew, were Jewish. They had the Jewish mindset and the Jewish understanding of the Tanakh and were observant to its instructions. But they were living in a Greek, Hellenistic society that had no concept of the ideas central to the New Covenant. Translating these new ideas into Greek words that both the Jews at that time could appreciate and the Gentiles could understand was hard enough, but translate them yet again into Latin and eventually into English and what you see is what you get.

But here we are given the opportunity to see text in the original Hebrew, and when that occasion arises, take hold of it! For Hebrew is G-d's language and is itself multi-dimensional being a language built by pictures, ideas and arithmetic pressed into letters and then pressed again into pictures, ideas and arithmetic. It is beautiful. It is perfect. In Isaiah, Matthew saw *justice* **and** the *Torah* **AS** *victory* **and** *trust* in 'Jesus'. (Appropriately, it is here that we will start calling 'Jesus' by His Hebrew name, *Yeshua*.)

Matthew (*Mattityahu*- meaning 'gift of God') recorded Yeshua's words and actions with the realization that these prophetic portions of Isaiah had been fulfilled. If someone recalls to you a scene from a movie... is your entire understanding of that movie and all that you experienced while watching it limited to that one scene? Of course not. Mattityahu knew the portions he was referencing in Isaiah. He was recalling for us the place to look... and once there... to grasp hold of the entire picture!!!

If we read on, Isaiah: 6 says this: "...I will keep You [the suffering servant] and give You as a covenant to the people..." The Hebrew word for *covenant* is b'rit. Within its meaning is the recognition of blood and cutting; for the Jewish custom of circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. The custom of sacrificing an animal then walking between the pieces (as was the Middle-east custom) was also a sign of a covenant. The word b'rit does not distinguish between who the parties are (G-d and man or man and man). A deal is made in blood regardless of how you look at it. But the text "*as a covenant*" is literally "*for a covenant*". The Hebrew letters for b'rit are preceded by the Hebrew letter 'lamed'. Yes, lamed is a letter. But it is also the symbol for the Hebrew prepositions 'for', 'at' and 'towards'. Based on the context, we know which preposition is fitting. But nothing written in the Hebrew text is by chance.

If we look at the 'lamed' we also are given some wonderful food for thought!

The picture created by the construction of the letter lamed in ancient times was seen literally as a shepherd's staff because it is constructed of two other Hebrew letters 'kaf' and 'vav' one atop the other...and looks like a shepherd's staff.

The lamed is the tallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet and is therefore seen as being mightier and of more importance. It stands between the Hebrew letters 'mem' and 'kaf', in the alphabet and together the three spell the word "melekh".... KING.

If we go further and look at the arithmetic we see that the two letters 'kaf' and 'vav' that are put together to create the lamed, numerically add up to 26.... which is the same numerical value as the sacred name of the LORD (known as the tetragrammaton) which is comprised of four letters; 'yod', 'hey', 'vav', 'hey'. So when you look at the Hebrew text, you see KING, MIGHT, STATURE, A SHEPHERD'S STAFF and the Father Himself, sitting next to covenant.

One of Judaism's great sages wrote that he saw the lamed as an acronym for the Hebrew phrase "lev meivin da'at" meaning "A heart that understands knowledge."

For the sake of consistency, take a quick jump to the prophet Jeremiah 31: 31-33

*"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.....(33) .... I will put **My law** in their minds, and write it on their hearts.."*

Back to Isaiah 42: 21 and we can see the delight that this idea gives G-d:

*"The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake;  
He will exalt the law and make it honorable."*

As stated earlier, G-d is faithful to His promises. Isaiah- 42:9 is His promise referring to new things.

*"Behold, the former things have come to pass,  
And new things I declare;  
Before they spring forth I tell you of them."*

Mattiyahu was listening! He saw that these awesome pictures were being unveiled in the life of Yeshua! He represented what a united house should be! Text observant and faithful!!! The Torah on our hearts!!!!

The Jewish camp knows the depth of the scriptures but fails to see Yeshua as the Suffering Servant and keeper of these promises. The Christain camp knows Yeshua, but fails to see that His promises are revealed and kept in **His** perfect law, the Torah.

If we let our thoughts take the same journey that they started when considering "a house divided," we see that we *are* a family of believers that requires strength in love *and* the nation of Israel that needs a sound set of principles and values. We need the emotional and the intellectual to stand strong. And we must stand strong together.

The divisions are weakening as the LORD moves between His two camps, tearing down the walls, whispering in our ears and pulling on our hearts to see His Truth.

He's saying, "You, over there!" as He points to the Jews..... "and you, over there!"..... as He points to the Nations of believers.... "get back in line!"