

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

The Gospel

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

What shall I do then With ... JESUS?

Reading:

Matthew - Chapter 27: 17-38

1. Introduction

Before the Saviour returns to earth every man and woman will have the opportunity of hearing the Gospel. The Bible says "***This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world, and then shall the end come.***" (Matthew 24: 14) Before that event occurs all of us need to answer this burning question:

"What shall I do then with Jesus?" (Matthew 27: 22)

How you respond to this question about Jesus is critical. It is a decision that is far more important than choosing a career, a house or even a spouse. What you do now - during this short life of yours - with **God's Son** will determine what happens to you in the soon-coming Day of Judgement. There are many courses of action you could take. This Sabbath I will consider a few taken by people in ancient Israel when **Yeshua (Jesus)** walked the earth.

2. Crucify Him

You could choose to totally reject him, yea even to the point of crucifying him in your thoughts, words and actions. Millions do this - quite blatantly.

Matthew 27: 22: "***Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified,***
23: ***And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.***
24: ***When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.***
25: ***Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.***"

Their decision was disastrous: for it has resulted in tragic onsequences for the people of Israel down through the

centuries. Consider the story further:

They mocked Him

Matthew 27: 28: *“And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.*

29: And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

30: And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31: And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.”

Mockers will be judged. When Christ returns in glory mockers will realize that he is in fact the King of Kings! Only then will they realize what a blunder they had made when they mocked him. Their future sorrow is described in these words.

Matthew 24: 30: *“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and glory.”*

Revelation 1: 7: *“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall **WAIL** because of him. Even so, Amen.”*

3. Betray Him

Betrayal is another response to the question. **What shall I do then with Jesus?** Betrayal can be as painful as outright rejection. Many who reject the Saviour are at least honest enough to openly declare their unbelief. They may be unbelievers, but you usually know where you stand with unbelievers. Betrayal by a friend or fellow believer is altogether a different matter. It cuts deep. Those who betray a trust, especially for gain, hurt themselves most of all.

Matthew 26: 14: *“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,*

15: And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16: And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.”

Consider the result of Judas' betrayal

Matthew 27: 3: *“Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,*

4: Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

5: And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.”

4. Deny Him

Most believers do not profess friendship and then betray Jesus for cash. They often take another course. They deny him. To be sure they believe in him, but they are somewhat ashamed to openly acknowledge that they are believers.

John 18: 17: *“Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, **I am not.***

18: And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself ...

*25: And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? **He denied it, and said, I am not.***

26: One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I

see thee in the garden with him?

27: **Peter then denied again:** and immediately the cock crew.”

5. Follow Him

What does the Saviour advise us to do? The answer is found in these verses:

Matthew 16: 24: *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, **If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.***

25: *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*

26: *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

The best thing any person can do with Jesus is to **follow him**. This action is a lot more difficult than it appears. It takes courage. To begin with it could upset the family. It could result in the loss of cherished friends or a job. It will certainly be hard going in some way or the other. For this reason the word '**cross**' has become synonymous with trials, pain and persecution. But to follow Yeshua (Jesus) is the only course worth taking. Any other action: **rejection, denial** or **betrayal** will end in disgrace or even death. To follow Jesus is the only guaranteed path to joy and life eternal. What does following the Saviour involve?

Self-Denial

It involves, amongst other things, **self-denial** and sometimes the loss of material possessions. The word self-denial is easy to understand but very difficult to practice, even for professed Christians. Those who practice self-denial, some do so even to the point of martyrdom, make up a very special group indeed. I quote a few texts on self-denial:

Matthew 16: 24: *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, **If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me**”.*

Philippians 3: 7: *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*

8: ***Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,**”*

Relatives

Matthew 10: 34: *“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

35: ***For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.***

36: *And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*

37: *He that loveth father or mother more than me **is not worthy of me:** and he that loveth son or daughter more than me **is not worthy of me.***

38: ***And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”***

This doesn't mean that a believer has to at constant war with his/her relatives. What it does mean is that no one should allow a relative to stop him/her following Christ. See **Lesson 18** concerning the **Family Circle** on this matter of family relationships.

Friends:

Luke 9: 61: *“And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

62: ***And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”***

Matthew a good example

Matthew 9: 9: *“And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. **And he arose, and followed him.**”*

Do not look at others:

John 21: 22: *“Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? **follow thou me.**”*

Follow wherever the Saviour leads:

Luke 9: 57 ... *Lord I will follow thee whither-soever thou goest.*

6. Eternal Privileges

How a believer **follows** the Saviour in this present life will determine at what spiritual distance he/she will follow him throughout eternity. That may sound strange: but it's true. **How you follow the Saviour in this present age, that is, with what commitment, sacrifice and zeal you follow, will determine your spiritual proximity to him for all time.** Consider the privilege this self-denying group will enjoy for all time.

Revelation 14: 1: *“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an **hundred forty and four thousand**, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*
2: *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*
3: *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and **no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand**, which were redeemed from the earth.*
4: *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. **These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.** These were redeemed from among men, being the **firstfruits** unto God and to the Lamb.*
5: *And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”*

The 144000 are not men who never had sexual relations with women. Neither are they unmarried female virgins. Their physical gender and sexual experience is not the issue here. Nor are they a group of perfect people who have never told a lie in their lives. The 144000 are followers of a different kind. They follow the Lamb **whithersoever he goeth** because - in this life - they became **totally dedicated, self-denying and obedient**. They are free of sin: having laid aside every impurity as it became known to them. Because of this mentality they will continue to follow the Lamb **whithersoever he leadeth**. We are now in the closing days of this age. Soon there will be signs in the sun, moon and stars indicating the imminent return of the Saviour. What he does with us at that time will depend on what we do with him now. So I ask again: **What shall I do then with Jesus?** It is a question, a vital question, which **you** must answer for yourself. Beware how you answer it.

AMEN!

In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.
Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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