

Study on Philippians 2:5-11

Two Different Kingdoms, Two Different Directions

Part 1

*“Your attitude should be the same as that of Messiah Yeshua:
Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped”
(Philippians 2:5-6 – NIV with Messianic terms added)*

Two different kingdoms exist, the Kingdom of Messiah and the Kingdom of the world, both of them going in two different directions. The Kingdom of Messiah has subjects that do things the Lord's way, according to His Scripture. The citizens in the kingdom of the world think they know better than the Lord does and try to do things their own way. These two kingdoms are completely different kingdoms with completely different agendas. Sometimes we can get the two of them mixed-up, thinking one is the other and vice-versa. Mostly though, we try to blend them together into a synchronistic system thinking they can coexist even though they can't.

The kingdom of the world says you can be like God. Satan told Adam and Eve that when they ate of the fruit of the tree they would be like God. This temptation is a line that Satan continues to tell people to this very day – You can be like God. Many philosophies and religious systems tell people overtly or subtly they can be a god. All they have to do is say certain words, achieve certain tasks, or learn certain things. Sometimes people are told an opposite philosophy: to be a god they have to empty their mind of everything. Then they will eventually achieve a god-like state of being. The kingdom of this world contains billions of people who each think of themselves as the King (as in God). That is actually a recipe for chaos.

The Kingdom of Messiah is completely opposite to the kingdom of the world. There is **only one King and Lord**. The subjects know that they are a member of the Kingdom strictly by the work and will of the One and Only King. The members of the Kingdom have their right standing before the Lord, their King, given to them, it was not something they earned or could ever earn. The subjects of the Kingdom of Messiah have been given royal status, yet they walk in humility before the King, their Lord and Messiah, serving one another not themselves. Though they have royal status in God's Kingdom, they know that does not make them God (or a god). Their King, Messiah and Savior, states that someone of royalty is expected to empty oneself. They know all this because the King demonstrated this by emptying Himself and becoming like His subjects. It is something He expects everyone in His Kingdom to emulate.

Sometimes we try to blend the two kingdoms together, thinking that they will peacefully coexist. However, because the ultimate goals of each kingdom are going in different directions mostly what you end up with is a lifestyle in conflict. As Joshua told the nation of Israel, we need to choose whom we will serve.

*“So fear the LORD and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD alone. But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”
(Joshua 24: 14-15 (New Living Translation-NLT))*

Something from Nothing

Part 2

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Messiah Yeshua:
Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
Philippians 2: 5-7 (NIV) Messianic Jewish terms & **bold emphasis added***

The kingdom(s) of this world contain people that have become preoccupied with exalting themselves, making their name and reputation great and well known. We become so used to people doing things in this manner that we have adjusted our thoughts and lives into believing the best way to accomplish things or to get ahead is to make a big deal about yourself.

What we forget is that the Kingdom of our Lord Yeshua is set up very different. Yeshua himself demonstrates how different when He left heaven, took on flesh and becoming like us. He came to serve His people Israel (and still does) by taking the role of a servant. In God's Kingdom, the way to accomplish something is to make yourself nothing. Glorify the Lord, not yourself, Glorify His Kingdom not your own, put others first, not yourself, be willing to give up everything, not try to hoard it all in your basement.

Yet to this day, many people cannot conceive of someone, let alone God, leaving their high and exalted place and be willing to serve someone else. In many companies, the CEO of a company would refuse to or even consider changing his clothing, put on old clothes and clean the toilet. There are philosophies and religions out there that refuse to even acknowledge the possibility that someone in a high position should be willing to lower themselves (let alone God).

Nevertheless, as was said earlier, that is exactly what Yeshua did. He revealed to the world the **only** way to operate in His Kingdom. **Make yourself nothing and take on the role of a servant.** The only way to be a "something" in God's Kingdom is to be nothing, that is, to be a servant.

Obedient Unto Death

Part 3

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Messiah Yeshua:
Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death
even death on a cross (execution-stake)!
Philippians 2: 5-8 (NIV-Messianic Jewish terms and **bold emphasis added**)*

We've come to the scripture that many of us, including myself, stumble over - obedience to the point of death or obedient to death. To be completely honest, I haven't "arrived" yet but I am on the road to getting there. I think

that this is a life-long process for most of us, particularly in a western culture. In many countries though, there is no time to think about whether you are obedient unto death. They live with the “Sword of Damocles” over their head every second of every day because of their faith in Yeshua (Jesus), you are either willing to die or you aren’t.

Yeshua knew that He was born to die for the sins of the world. It was an ever-present reality. It was His Father’s will and it shaped Yeshua’s life and ministry. Yeshua stated that those who follow him must also take up their execution-stake and follow him.

*And anyone who does not take up his execution-stake and follow me is not worthy of me.
(Matthew 10:38 – Complete Jewish Bible CJB)*

It is not always fun to be obedient, it certainly wasn’t for Yeshua. Even if we don’t have to physically die, being obedient requires us to put to death our own desires, will and emotions. It’s not that we should have no emotions or a will. It is just that they don’t always follow the will of the Lord. When they don’t, they need to be put on the cross. We must even love the Lord and be obedient even when it means dying to dreams given by the Lord. An example is Abraham who was willing to sacrifice his own son Isaac. Executing our desires, though not as painful as a real execution, is still quite painful.

Putting the Lord Yeshua as first, last and only was Saul’s (Paul) life-long passion. Scripture shows us how much he loved Yeshua.

*But the things that used to be advantages for me, I have, because of the Messiah, come to consider a disadvantage. Not only that, but I consider **everything** a disadvantage in comparison with the supreme value of **knowing** the Messiah Yeshua as my Lord. It was because of him that **I gave up everything and regard it all as garbage**, in order to gain the Messiah and be found in union with him, not having any righteousness of my own based on legalism, but having that righteousness which comes through the Messiah’s faithfulness, the righteousness from God based on trust. (Philippians 3:7-9 CJB- **bold emphasis added**)*

After reading the above scripture from Philippians try putting yourself in Paul’s place for a moment. Ask yourself these two questions: What did it take to be where Paul was? What will it take for us to be at that same place? I am not asking for sinless perfection, just a realistic assessment. Remember, for many of us (including myself), this is a life-long process.

This attitude of obedience to death is not new or unique to Yeshua or to Paul. Moshe (Moses) stated the same thing to the children of Israel and to us as well.

*Sh'ma, Yisra'el! ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad [Hear, Isra'el! ADONAI our God, ADONAI is one]; and you are to love ADONAI your God with **all your heart, all your being and all your resources**. These words, which I am ordering you today, are to be on your heart; and you are to teach them carefully to your children. You are to talk about them when you sit at home, when you are traveling on the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them on your hand as a sign, put them at the front of a headband around your forehead, and write them on the door-frames of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 CJB – **bold emphasis added**)*

What will it take?

“Therefore God Raised Him. . .”

Part 4

*Let your attitude toward one another be governed by your being in union with the Messiah Yeshua: Though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God something to be possessed by force. On the contrary, he emptied himself, in that he took the form of a slave by becoming like human beings are. And when he appeared as a human being, he humbled himself still more by becoming obedient even to death - death on a stake as a criminal! **Therefore God raised him to the highest place and gave him the name above every name; that in honor of the name given Yeshua, every knee will bow - in heaven, on earth and under the earth and every tongue will acknowledge that Yeshua the Messiah is ADONAI - to the glory of God the Father.***

(Philippians 2: 5-11 – Complete Jewish Bible CJB – bold type added)

In the last three teachings, we’ve seen part of the Biblical pattern of living in the Kingdom of God. They are:

1. Have the same attitude as Messiah – don’t imitate the world which is filled with people constantly trying to promote themselves. It is not about gaining a lot of power and prestige. Instead, we should imitate Messiah who...
2. Humbled Himself by becoming a man and a servant. To use an old and common phrase: “the way up is down”.
3. He became obedient up to death, atoning for the sins of all of us.

The Final Part of the Pattern

Notice the word “**Therefore**” in the passage above. In other Bible translations it is stated as: “For this reason” or “Because of that obedience”. There is a direct link between Yeshua’s humility, servanthood and obedience and the resulting exaltation after His resurrection. Many people think the Yeshua failed when He died on the tree (cross). Yet scripture clearly states that His death and resurrection was a victory. Several times in Yeshua’s ministry, men and/or Satan tried to get Yeshua to accomplish His goals by other means. Yeshua refused to go that direction. His father’s will allowed only one avenue to accomplish the atonement of the sins of humanity. It was a painful road but it was God’s will.

During the journey to accomplish God’s will in our lives we will find ourselves being tempted to use shortcuts. Before we take up the offer of using those shortcuts, we need to seek first the face of the Lord to see whether it is from Him or not. If he says “NO, REMAIN OBEDIENT”, the journey ahead might be painful for a while but the long-term benefits of following the will of the Lord far out-way the passing pleasures of a short-cut.