

## Lecture 10

### What was said and where is it found?

10 The challenge we face as we read the scriptures is how can  
 Matthew have accuracy when he quotes something that is not even  
 found in the prophets? Before I answer that question again we have  
 to understand how the Jewish mind thinks. Let us take a quote  
 from the Mishnah section that is considered the oldest.

15 *2. Said Rabbi Joshua the son of Levi: Every day, an echo  
 resounds from Mount Horeb (Sinai) proclaiming and  
 saying: "Woe is to the creatures who insult the Torah." For  
 one who does not occupy himself in Torah is considered an  
 outcast, as is stated (Proverbs 11:22), "A golden nose-ring  
 in the snout of a swine, a beautiful woman bereft of  
 20 reason." And it says (Exodus 32:16): "And the tablets are  
 the work of G-d, and the writing is G-d's writing, engraved  
 on the tablets"; read not "engraved" (charut) but "liberty"  
 (chairut)---for there is no free individual, except for he who  
 occupies himself with the study of Torah. And whoever  
 occupies himself with the study of Torah is elevated, as is  
 25 stated (Number 21:19), "And from the gift to Nahaliel, and  
 from Nahaliel to The Heights."<sup>1</sup>*

This is from the sixth chapter of Pirkei Avot: I want to focus  
 one line "*And the tablets are the work of G-d, and the writing is  
 30 G-d's writing, engraved on the tablets"; read not "engraved"  
 (charut) but "liberty" (chairut)---for there is no free individual,  
 except for he who occupies himself with the study of Torah.*"  
 Notice what the Rabbi does: he takes a word in Hebrew and  
 changes the vowel points. The first word in Hebrew is this תְּרִיטָה ,  
 35 the second is תְּרִיטָה. All he does is change the vowel point to  
 change the word's meaning. This is an important rabbinic tool in  
 teaching people by leaving the constant the same and changing the  
 vowels you expand the meaning of the word and its application. I  
 have seen it done many places unfortunately this is the only one I  
 40 can remember where I could find it again.

*Mat 2:19-21 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the  
 Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, (20) saying,  
 "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of  
 Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." (21)*

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/2122/jewish/Chapter-Six.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2122/jewish/Chapter-Six.htm)

5            *And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to  
the land of Israel.*

10            Again we find the Matthew connecting Joseph with the Joseph  
of Genesis by having him dream in Egypt. Again we find that he  
was immediately obedient and returned to the land of Israel. We do  
not know how long they were in Egypt. This also parallels Exodus  
4:19 *And Jehovah saith unto Moses in Midian, 'Go, turn back to  
Egypt, for all the men have died who seek thy life;'*. The plural in  
15            this verse "for those who sought" leaves us to wonder who else  
other than Herod sought the Master's life, but there is no  
information regarding this. We can speculate that maybe some of  
Herod's associates or Herod's father but it is unclear. Also  
Josephus gives us no extra information that would be useful in  
discerning this.

20            *Mat 2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning  
over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go  
there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the  
district of Galilee.*

25            This is important for us to understand there were four people  
vying for the throne that Herod the Great had occupied. There was  
a lengthy civil war that required Rome to intervene and the  
Governor of Syria actually secured the area for the Roman  
30            government<sup>2</sup>.

35            Now Archelaus was the most evil of the Herod's sons and  
because of this, by the time that Yeshua comes to Jerusalem to die,  
Jerusalem has become a governed district surrounding Jerusalem  
and Jerusalem itself was under Roman rule.

40            Joseph may return to Bethlehem but because of the political  
issues of the day and being warned in a dream to leave he did so.  
This is the fourth dream Matthew relates to us and again plays on  
Joseph of B'rsheet.

45            *Mat 2:23 And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth,  
that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled:  
"He shall be called a Nazarene."*

The city of Nazareth is spelled in the Greek in two different  
ways ναζαρετ or ναζαρεθ the difference is based how you  
transliterate the ך in Hebrew. The city itself is 1300 feet above sea  
level. It has only one spring for water that implies that most homes

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<sup>2</sup> Josephus Ant Books 17-19

5 in the community would have had cisterns to catch rain water<sup>3</sup>. It was an agricultural community that grew vegetables easily in that environment. Hegg in citing the Anchor Bible Dictionary indicates that it was founded in 3<sup>rd</sup> cent BCE, had a population of about 480 and was surrounded by 60 acres of tilled land<sup>4</sup>

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The next question regarding this verse is what to do with this statement, “*that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene."*” I want you to know that we can not find this in the Tanach anywhere. Again this is one of those texts the antimissionaries love to jump on and say “see Matthew does not know his Tanach”. How do we answer this charge? I think the first thing is have to understand that the Jewish mind and the mind of the gentiles in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE worked differently then ours does.

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So to understand Matthew’s argument we must understand that words of similar sound have the relationships as I showed in my opening discussion. The first thing we need to see is the word Nazarene; this tells us that this is an allusion to something more. The second clue is the phrase “*by the prophets*” this tells us that he is not referring to one prophet but to a number of them. So we seek the first clue in the text itself, the word *Nazarene*. What does this word mean and how should understand it?

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The word Nazarene is most likely a word play on Nazirite someone who is dedicated to Hashem. It also in interesting is that the Greek word for Nazirite is ναζαρ. Which again which indicate a play on the name and the title. Also it is someone who’s is dedicated to Hashem. The LXX(B) in Judges 13:7 in talking about Samson says

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*Jdg 13:7 And he said to me, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bring forth a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat no unclean thing; for the child shall **be holy to God** from the womb until the day of his death.*

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Note the standard text reads *be Nazirite to God*. The understanding is that to be holy is to be Nazirite. So that here Matthew is playing on the word and showing that Yeshua is holy and dedicated to Hashem. This is also teaches us that Nazirite was understood to be holy to Hashem. What is interesting if we read Luke’s account of Yeshua and account of Samuel in:

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<sup>3</sup> The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible vol3 pg 525

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Tim Hegg pg 69

5 *ISa 2:26 Now the young man Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.*

Compared to Luke:

10 *Luk 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*

15 Then the promise at the last supper to not drink the fruit of the vine till we are with him is very much like a Nazirite vow.

The other thought regarding this to is he could be referring to this text in Is 11:1

20 *Isa 11:1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.*

In Hebrew;

25 ויצא חטר מגזע ישי ונצר משרשיו יפרה:

30 The word underlined is נצר this is the Hebrew word for branch and I think this more the idea that Matthew had. He could be clearly playing on this more then the Nazirite idea. The words are closer and have more similar sound. It is interesting that in Rashi he sees this also as Messianic prophecy;

35 *And a shoot shall spring forth from the stem of Jesse And if you say, 'Here are consolations for Hezekiah and his people, that they shall not fall into his hands. Now what will be with the exile that was exiled to Halah and Habor, is their hope lost?' It is not lost! Eventually, the King Messiah shall come and redeem them<sup>5</sup>.*

40 There are number other references that are interesting see the note below for more references<sup>6</sup>. In my own opinion this last explanation makes the most sense.

45 *Mat 3:1-2 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, (2) "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

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<sup>5</sup>[http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/15942/showrashi/true/jewish/Chapter-11.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/15942/showrashi/true/jewish/Chapter-11.htm)

<sup>6</sup> Targum Mid Rab Gen 2:4; 97; 98.9; Mid Rab Num 11:1; Mid Rab Ruth 5:6; b Sand. 93b

5 Now without any words about the happenings in the years of  
the Master's youth, Matthew takes us the setting in the land with  
John the Baptist and begins with the beginning of the Master's  
Ministry. Why did the Gospel writers not include much in the case  
of Luke and none in the other Gospels about the childhood and  
10 adolescent of Yeshua? First the childhood and adolescent years  
were not the primary focus of his mission and therefore not  
included. Another reason might be that cost restraint and size of  
the scroll prohibit this information, so it was simply not seen as the  
most important. Matthew may have had information about these  
15 years but doing his own editorial work chose not include them. The  
last option is that maybe the information was lost with the death of  
Mary and James or not simply not available. We know that there  
significant body of apocryphal works that attempt to fill in these  
years.

20 What were Mary and Joseph's obligation to Yeshua at that  
time? There were 5 events that every Jewish parents had to fulfill  
these are;

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1. Circumcise him on the eighth day
  2. Pay redemption of the first born
  3. Teach him Torah
  4. Find a wife for him
  5. Teach him trade.

30 Luke's account in chapter 2 shows that Mary and Joseph's had  
the first 3. It is clear from the text that he did not have a wife.  
There were most likely many young women whom his parents  
would have consider for Marriage; it was for him to accept or  
35 reject them. It was well known that some great teachers were not  
inclined to marry<sup>7</sup>. Joseph being a carpenter would have taught him  
a trade (Mk 6:3)<sup>8</sup>. I believe that both Mary and Joseph would have  
taught him Torah. Also I think that he would have had Teacher of  
the Torah and of the Oral Torah who would have been a local  
40 teacher.

John the Baptist: the Hebrew title would have been Yochana  
Hamatbil (יְהוֹנָן הַמַּטְבִּיל). Next week I will talk about what it means  
to be immersed or baptized in the context of a Jewish setting. This

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<sup>7</sup> Hegg pg 74

<sup>8</sup> *Mar 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.*

5 week let us just focus on the message that John is proclaiming.  
(2) "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." . This is also  
paralleled in Mar 1:14-15 Now after John was arrested, Jesus  
came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, (15) and  
10 saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand;  
repent and believe in the gospel." We can see the message of John  
and Yeshua have many similarities. The first one is repent; what  
does that mean? In a 1<sup>st</sup> cent CE context in Israel it means obey  
Torah. The meaning behind the word repent in both Greek  
μετανοεω and Hebrew שׁוּב or "to return or turn" the other word in  
15 Hebrew is also נָחַם "to be sorry, regret or repent". Many times you  
will hear it in Hebrew as Teshuvah meaning "you returned or are  
returning to obedience to Torah". This means to come back from  
ways to Hashem's ways. Repentance in both messages to repent  
has equal importance.

20 The next phrase that both have in common "*the Kingdom of  
God or Heaven is at hand*" the word Heaven means God in the  
first century mind. What does this mean? It's a fact that whole  
books have been written about these two statements. It means that  
25 people will be obedient to Hashem. The time of ownership of God  
of the Earth and of the people is to be reestablished. This is good  
news in a world where food, health and safety were always at risk.  
Famine and hunger were common in those days. To be robbed was  
not uncommon: a merchant always traveled with guards. Health  
30 was always at risk: we forget that just over 100 years ago aspirin  
was developed. What aspirin allows is to control a fever, prior to  
aspirin fevers killed or left many handicapped (blindness in  
particular). Antibiotics are a relatively new invention as well.  
Infections, even as simple as an infected cut or sliver, could cost a  
35 person their life. To be healthy is a precious thing and we forget in  
this world where most children grow to adults. In the 1st century  
world 50% died before their 1<sup>st</sup> birthday and most died prior to  
there 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. To be captured as a slave was not uncommon;  
to not have that fear any more would be incredible freedom and  
40 relief. So the kingdom of God was and is and will be always good  
news. We must understand that.

Today we see the beginnings of the falling apart of western  
world and in particular the USA. The world of uncertainty appears  
45 to be returning: I just read to today of large tent city in Calif, where  
people that have lost their houses and now are living in a tent city.  
How long before we see it spill over to other areas of the world I  
do not know. What we need to see and remember is that  
community must be an important priority; to care for each other  
50 and to see that we are not without. If we live as a community we

5 will survive but if we live as individuals we will always feel at  
risk. In the middle ages during times of great hardship the Jewish  
community survived because they always were just that -- a  
community. Many sought to join because of that. This is one of the  
reasons why conversion is so hard. During the famines in Russia,  
10 for instance, people flocked to convert to Judaism, simply because  
they were the one group that managed to survive the best, because  
they worked together to support and feed each other. Rabbis made  
rules about conversion so people would not convert just for the  
food. We on the other are just beginning to form communities and  
15 we must be aware of two risks in community. The first is  
dictatorial leadership in which their word is final and absolute. The  
second a community filled with dissension in which we are  
fighting, and disagreements destroy the fabric of the community.  
Division and discussion are necessary for a community to thrive  
20 and prosper. So as we come to maturity as a community we will  
have walk between these two poles. Then the kingdom of God will  
be seen. The repentance that leads to Torah observance is the  
foundation for community that pushes aside selfish interest and  
places boundaries in leadership and the community. Our message  
25 to be true and meaningful in the last days is a message that will  
also be the same as the Master's and Yochana Hamatbil, "Repent  
for the Kingdom of God is at Hand". We are those that have come  
out of Babylon: now we must proclaim the message without fear  
"Come out of her my people".  
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