

# THE HEBREW GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The Gospel of Matthew is a Gospel of Law and differs radically from Paul's gospel which is based of Faith. The intrinsic difference between these lies in the fact that Paul's audience were Gentiles whereas Matthew was preaching to Hebrew believers-in- **Yahusha** and was faced with competition by the developing Rabbinic Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism at that juncture in history differed significantly from that practiced by the Qumran Community and by the Sadducees; both largely destroyed in the Roman War.

In order to place the Gospel of Matthew in an historical perspective one must understand the context in which it was composed (80-90 CE). The Temple had been destroyed and **Yahu's** (Jews) had began their rejection of sectarianism. Believers-in- **Yahusha** were being rejected by Rabbinic Judaism and had begun the path towards a Gentile religion. The most compelling is the argument that Matthew and his community were composed of Hebrew believers-in- **Yahusha**, which was competing with the traditional Jewish Synagogues.

**1 Matthew** appears to be preaching to those believing in Hebrew law and custom and his style of argumentation bears much resemblance to Jewish modes of thought and argument.

In the Gospel of Matthew it is clear that the Law - **Halakha** - is the expression of **Yauhah's** will. The law of Moshe (Moses) is still in force (**Matthew 23:3**) but **Yahusha** is the new teacher of the law (**Matthew 23:8**).

**Yahusha** assumed for the Matthean community a stance parallel and equal to Moshe (Moses) for the Hebrews. In the Gospel of Matthew there is no denigration of Moses – in stark contrast to the Gospel of John.

Moses, the giver of the law, is a figure of great importance for Matthew. Many parallels are explicitly drawn by Matthew between Moses and **Yahusha**; danger from death at the hand of Pharaoh and **Yahusha** from Herod, both live in exile in Egypt, Moshe's (Moses) forty years in the desert is compared to **Yahusha's** forty days of temptation and both ascend the mountain in order to proclaim the law.

As Eusebius stated 'no one but our Messiah (savior) can be shown to resemble Moshe (Moses) in so many ways'. More than sixty quotations from the scripture times appear in Matthew. The law in Matthew's Gospel is in fact stricter than that of Moshe's (Moses). It is not Pharisaic law that is being criticized but the ethics and hypocrisy of individual Pharisees.

Matthew (and Mark) claim that the Pharisees not only criticized **Yahusha** for having performed healing on the Sabbath but weighed the option of having him executed with the help of Herod Antipas (**Mark 3:6, Matt 12:14**).

In Luke, it is the Pharisees who warn **Yahusha** of Herod's plan to kill him (**Luke 13:31**).

Mark and Matthew may have been referring to the followers of Shammai who opposed healing on the Sabbath and Luke to the followers of Hillel who did not.

**Yahusha** according to the Gospel of Matthew stated a ringing affirmation of the law.

"Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete/Fulfill them. In truth I tell you, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke is to disappear from the Law until all its purpose is achieved. Therefore anyone who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the person who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the Kingdom of Heaven." (**Matthew 5:17-19**)

These verses are an unambiguous statement about the importance of the Law. There is a statement in the Talmud which seems to quote **Yahusha** 'I come not to destroy the Law of Moshe (Moses) nor to add to the Law of Moses'.

Matthew's definition of **Yahusha**' Law is defined in chapters **5-7**, beginning with the 'Sermon on the Mount'. The Sermon of the Mount (**Matthew 5:3-11**) begins with a statement about the blessedness of the poor, the gentle, the mourners and the righteous. This ethical statement which reminds the people to act righteously towards the underprivileged is highly reminiscent of the words of Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel.

**Matthew then proceeds to introduce stringent appendices to the Law:**

\*The Torah commands Do not murder - Matthew orders do not be angry – **Matthew 5:21**

\*The Torah commands Do not commit adultery - Matthew orders not even in your heart. **Matthew 5:27**

\*The Torah says fulfill your vows - Matthew says do not make vows – **Matthew 5:33**

\*The Torah says Love your neighbor - Matthew says Love your enemies – **Matthew 5:43**  
- offer no resistance to the wicked and offer the other cheek – **Matthew 5:39.**

(Matthew's statement that Judaism teaches 'hate your enemy' (**Matthew 5:43**) in fact appears in no Jewish text.)

Each of these statements by Matthew (with the exception of 'hate your enemy') can be found in the multi-faceted streams of Judaism that existed during the lifetime of **Yahusha**.

A Rabbinic statement declares 'Keep away from what leads to sin and from whatever resembles sin'. Furthermore what does the commandment 'do not covet' imply? If you covet your neighbor's wife and act upon it you have committed adultery. As an example we find in the Talmud the following statement: "Whoever looks lustfully at a women is like one who has had unlawful intercourse with her".

If one covets ones neighbor's house and acts upon it he has stolen. What therefore is the sin of coveting? Is it not that lust itself and anger itself are sins in and of themselves?

Can **Yahusha's** statement 'love your enemies' be interpreted as referring to Rome, the premier Jewish enemy at the time and can it mean do not resist the Roman enemy? The statement which many Jews reject as being specifically Christian 'love your enemy' has many Jewish underpinnings: Lamentations states that one should 'offer one's cheek to the striker' (**Lamentations 3:30**).

The conflict surrounding plucking and eating on the Sabbath or healing on the Sabbath, issues which were greatly debated in this gospel, also lie within the acceptable range of interpretations found in the many sides of Judaism in the first century.

Jews are forbidden to go hungry on the Sabbath (although it can depend on the degree of hunger) and if one is hungry one would be allowed to pluck. In regard to healing on the Sabbath when **Yahusha** said to the man with a withered hand "hold out your hand" (**Matthew 12:13**) he did nothing to violate Jewish law.

Speaking or asking **Yahuah** to heal is not a violation of any Jewish law on the Sabbath. There is nothing in **Yahusha's** position, as annunciated by Matthew, regarding the Sabbath suggesting abrogating the law. Furthermore questions about circumcision or dietary are not raised in Matthew in contrast to the Gospel of **Mark 7**. **Yahusha** is in fact behaving in ways similar to the Prophets who criticized sacrificing and the Temple.

He concentrated on the ethical content of Judaism rather than ritual law. Divorce was forbidden to community of Qumran and among Galilean Hebrews.

The anti-Judaic statements of the Gospel of Matthew begin in chapter 10 and continue in chapter 15,22,23 and 27. In chapter 10 **Yahusha** warns his disciples that they will find hostility within the Jewish community when they attempt to witness to them.

**Yahusha** is clear 'do not travel to into Gentile lands and do not enter any Samaritan cities' (**Matthew 10:5**). In view of the above it appears unlikely that **Yahusha** would say after his resurrection 'you are to go and make followers of all the people. You are to baptize them in the name of the Father (**Yahuah**) and the Son (**Yahusha**) and the **Ruach ha Kodesh**'. **Matthew 28:19**

**Yahusha** according to the Gospel of Matthew told his followers not to go and preach to Gentiles. The phrase 'in the name of the Father and the Son and the **Ruach ha Kodesh** came in a latter stage of Christianity, not during the lifetime of **Yahusha**.

Chapter 23 begins with a recognition of both the scribes and Pharisees authority to interpret the law. 'Do and observe what they tell you'. (**Matthew 23:2**) The gospel proceeds to list the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees in seven categories. They are accused of being blind guides and fools (five times -**Matthew 23:16,17,19,24,26**) being liars (18) of being corrupt and lawless men (**Matthew 23:25,28**) and of committing murder (**Matthew 23:29-39**).

**Yahusha** also tells us that the Pharisees 'sit in Moses' seat: you must therefore do and observe what they tell you; but do not be guided by what they do, since they do not practice what they preach' (**Matthew 23:2-3**). **Yahusha** required of his disciples that they exceed that of the Pharisees (**Matthew 5:20**).

### **Hebraic poetry**

Much of the Old Testament is poetry. In fact one third of it is written in Hebrew poetic form, equivalent to more than the entire New Testament. **Isaiah 40-66**, Job and Lamentations are arranged poetically, as are the Psalms and Proverbs. Many of the prophecies are also poetic.

Hebrew poetry does not use rhyming words but rhyming ideas. Complementary or duplicate descriptions are written in parallel, line by line. This adds helpful insights for translation through word equivalence, and interpretation of difficult phrases by comparison with an easier to understand parallel phrase.

Additionally, it acts as an aide memory in that the idea when spoken twice is doubly memorable and like poetry or song is easier to remember than mere prose or narrative. Most believers know more hymns and choruses than Bible verses because more of their senses are involved in singing and dancing than in mere silent reading. At the very least we should get back to reading Scripture aloud so that we hear it twice, once with the mind and once with the external ear.

So, "ask, seek and knock", in the gospels, are three ways of saying 'inquire of **Yahuah**'.

### **Hebrew & English Beatitudes, Matthew 5:3-10**

#### **Ashrei A'ni'yei ha-Ruach, Ki la'hem malkhut ha-Shamayim**

Blessed are of the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven

#### **Ashrei ha-Avei'lim, ki'hem ye'nu'cha'mu**

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted

#### **Ashrei ha-Ana'vim, ki'hem yir'shu et ha-Ar'etz**

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

**Ashrei ha-Ree'vim ev'hatz'melm litz'dakah, ki'hem yis'ba'u**

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied

**Ashrei ha-Racha'manim, ki'hem yeru'cha'mu**

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy

**Ashrei ba-Rei le'vav, ki'hem yiru et-Alahym (Elohim)**

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God

**Ashrei o'sei shalom, ki B'nei Alahym (Elohim) yika'reu**

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God

**Ashrei ha-Nir'da'fim big'lal ha-Tzedakah, ki la'hem malkhut ha-Shamayim**

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

**Ashrei'kem im ye'char'fu ve'yir'de'ful et'khem vey'a'lilu leikhem big'lali, sim'chu ve'gi'lu, ki se'khar'khem rav ba'Shamayim, ha'rei kakh ra'de'fu et-Ha'ne'vi'im she'ha'yo lif'nekhem**

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**ashrei** (translating to *"happy"* or *"praiseworthy"* or *"fortunate"*)

**Poor in spirit = meek**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (**Matthew 5:3**). Our English translations somewhat distort what the original (Hebrew) text is saying. If we read the text in a Hebrew context we find that the word for poor does not mean to be materially destitute or in contrast to being well-to-do; it means to be “humble” or “meek.”

Poor is a Hebrew idiom for repentant.” To be poor/meek/humble before **Yahuah** necessarily requires that one be repentant. Remember that **Numbers 12:3** describes Moses as the “meekest” man on earth. The closer one is to **Yahuah**, the meeker one becomes.

Citing Isaiah's messianic passage early on in **Yahusha's** ministry He declared, "The Spirit of **Yahuah** is upon Me, because **Yahuah** has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor" (**Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18**). What He had to say, even today, are words of salvation only to the meek, the repentant, the "poor in spirit."

Using Old Testament language context we can see that 'poor in spirit' does not refer to material poverty as **Luke 6:20** taken in isolation might suggest. Rather, it refers to being 'meek' or 'humble'.

This is relevant because another passage used by **Yahusha** to describe his ministry is **Isaiah 61:1**, this refers to the Spirit's anointing to preach the gospel to the poor, or so it is usually translated. However, the Hebrew word in Isaiah is again 'meek' and not 'poor'. Thus, it is not material poverty but spiritual humility which is most open to hear the gospel. **Yahuah** shows no partiality to rich or poor.

The New Testament, or B'riyt Ha Hhadashah in Hebrew, was written by Hebrews, for Hebrews and within an Hebraic Culture. While the only New Testament manuscripts known to exist are written in Greek, with the possible exception of the book of Matthew, the evidence suggests that much of it was originally written in Hebrew and afterwards translated into Greek.

While there are many textual evidences to support this theory, **Matthew 5:3** is a good example of this.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

The Greek word for "poor" is **ptochos** and means one who is destitute, afflicted, and lacking. What this verse is literally saying is "Blessed are the ones destitute/afflicted/lacking in the spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

This does not make any sense. However, if we translate the Greek word *ptochos* into Hebrew we have the word **aniy** which also means destitute, afflicted and lacking. More literally the Hebrew word **aniy** means "bent down low" such as a poor person who is destitute. But, this Hebrew word can also mean one who is humble, in the same sense of bending down low.

Now, if we translate the Hebrew back into English we have, "Blessed are the humble in

spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." By understanding this passage from its Hebrew background, we are able to better interpret the New Testament Scriptures.

"poor", *ptôchos* (34x), refers to abject poverty, unable to even scrape a living and therefore reduced to begging, having come to an end in oneself. In Greek, more poor than *penês* (also, 'poor'). The word is used in **Luke 4:16** to translate **Isaiah 61:1**, '*ânâv* 'poor'.

Thus "poor in spirit" means having nothing to offer **Yahuah**, and thus meek and humble, the opposite of self-righteousness. It sometimes stand for 'the oppressed' of **Yahuah's** own people. The OT has 179 references to 'poor' and more than 8 words to describe it.

Significantly, **Isaiah 61:1** and **66:2** are sometimes mistranslated as 'poor' creating a mandate of exclusivity to the poor, which is just as wrong in **Yahuah's** sight as partiality to the rich - **Yahuah** shows no partiality.

The Isaiah references actually use '*ânâv* and '*ânîy* both from '*ânâh*, 'to depress' or 'abase', and really mean humility or meekness. **Numbers 12:3** uses the first of these to describe Moses as the meekest man on earth, *i.e.*, there is no insinuation as to Moses' bank balance or state of poverty!

**Yahusha** nowhere sanctifies a state of poverty or describes it as a 'blessed' position to be in, as anyone who has been poor can agree with. In fact, Scripture's comment on blessed finances is that "the blessing of **Yahuah** brings riches without sorrow [or grief]" (**Proverbs 10:22**).]

**Isaiah 66:2** and a Dead Sea Scroll passage also pair up these synonymous phrases:

"But on this one will I look:  
On the poor and of contrite spirit,  
And who trembles at My Word" (**Isaiah 66:2**)

"to proclaim to the meek the multitude of Your mercies,  
and to let them that are of contrite spirit he[ar salvation . . .]"  
(DSS, 1QH, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 18.14-15)



Additionally, it has also been interpreted as **Yahuah** favoring the poor, with disdain toward the rich, which is just as un-scriptural as it would be if **Yahuah** were favoring the rich to the neglect of the poor. Both perspectives misrepresent Him because **Yahuah** shows no partiality. "The rich and the poor have this in common; **Yahuah** is the maker of them all" (**Proverbs 22:2**).

Admittedly there are verses in Scripture that warn of self-sufficiency of the rich as opposed to the meekness of those who recognize their need of **Yahuah** and His provision.

One can be rich in material wealth and still be meek or 'poor in spirit' before **Yahuah**. King David is a prime example. **Yahusha** was not saying that being rich in itself is bad or ungodly. To the contrary, there are many Biblical examples of **Yahuah's** riches blessing His people. Nowhere did **Yahusha** call a state of poverty "blessed." Scripture puts it this way: "It is the blessing of **Yahuah** that makes rich, and He adds no sorrow to it" **Proverbs 10:22**.

The greatest example of **Yahuah's** blessings of prosperity is that of David and Solomon after him who were the richest kings on the earth at that time because of the abundant blessings of **Yahuah** upon David for his obedience to Him.

**"Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." To mourn = to hunger and thirst for righteousness**

Blessed are they that mourn - That is, those who, feel their spiritual poverty, mourn after **Yahuah** , They who mourn over sin are blessed.

Mourning in ( **Psalms 119:136; 42:9; 43:2; 38:6**) was often associated with grieving over personal or national sin, over the oppression of an enemy, over injustice, or over lack of respect for **Yahuah's** Law.

In this context the corresponding parallel in the Beatitudes explains it perfectly, the mourners are 'those who hunger and thirst for righteousness', the coming of the 'reign of **Yahuah**' (the kingdom) will comfort and satisfy ('fill') them.

'Mourn' occurs 10x in the NT. **Isaiah 61:2-3** refers to the comforting of the mourners

but is not included in **Yahusha** address to the synagogue in **Luke 4:18-21**, where he rolls up the scroll halfway through verse 2 indicating that only verses 1-2a were fulfilled in Him, verses 2 onward awaited a later time, that of the day of **Yahuah's** vengeance rather than the present year of acceptance (jubilee period when all debts were canceled, all slaves set free. **Leviticus 25:8.**, **Ezekiel 46:17.**

**Isaiah 61:2-3** probably refers to mourning over the state and fate of Israel, *i.e.*, over a nation and over their own sin, they will be 'comforted' or 'encouraged'.

In fact, **Isaiah 40:1-2** speaks of true comfort for **Yahuah's** people since "her warfare is done, her iniquity is pardoned".

To "hunger and thirst for righteousness" is more than for personal holiness. As with Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel and Jeremiah, *etc.*, it is those who mourn over a nation's sin and oppression and desire to see righteousness and justice in the land, for "righteousness exalts a nation" **Proverbs 14:34.**

### **Comforted = filled/satisfied**

These mourners and 'hungerers' will be 'Filled/comforted'. Perhaps a better translation of **chortazô**, 'filled', would be 'satisfied' as when justice is seen to be done, when the wicked no longer prosper and the righteous are not oppressed.

### **"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."**

"Blessed are the meek", this by Hebrew parallelism may echo and explain **Matthew 5:3**, "blessed are the poor in the spirit". 'Meek' does not mean 'weak', but humility and gentleness, someone who acknowledges their need. It is taken straight from **Psalms 37:11**, "the meek shall inherit the earth", here 'meek' is the Hebrew **'ânâv** again, from which **Isaiah 61:1's** "poor/humble/meek" and Matthew's "poor in spirit" are taken.

Hence it is the meek and humble who inherit, those who are teachable (**Psalms 25**), who receive the good news (**Isaiah 61:1**).

Meekness is the active fruit of the other two, but whereas being poor in spirit and **mourning** are both internal in operation, meekness is both internal and external in its execution in one's life.

The word for "meek" here in the Hebrew, (**ענוי**) means lowly or humbled. Zephaniah

equates meekness with righteousness, which itself means being in the right both morally and legally.

So being righteous (being in the right) involves being meek. Meekness, in other words, is not for wimps. It is for those who look to **Yahuah** for protection and seek to glorify only **Yahuah** in their "rightness." (Please don't misinterpret this to mean that being meek means that you are automatically righteous).

The word "meek" does not mean weak, but a quality of humility and gentleness, that of someone who acknowledges their need of **Yahuah**.

It is to such people that **Yahusha** came to preach. Matthew records **Yahusha** quoting directly from **Psalms 37:11** which says, "The meek shall inherit the earth." He had just mentioned the "Kingdom of heaven" and now He's talking about inheriting "the earth".

The Beatitudes build one upon another. A humble person becomes meek, or becomes gentle and kind, and exhibits a docility of Ruach, even in the face of adversity and hardship. A person that is meek is one that exhibits self-control.

**"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."**

**"Righteousness has 3 aspects in Scripture - legal, moral and social.**

Legal righteousness refers to a right relationship with **Yahuah**. The **Yahu's** (Jews) pursued this by trying to follow the law but the only way we can be in right relationship with **Yahuah** is through faith in **Yahusha's** death on the tree.

As a result we stand 'righteous' in **Yahuah's** sight. But the beatitudes refer to those who belong to **Yahusha** already.

Moral righteousness refers to our character and conduct – living in accordance with **Yahuah's** will and seeking to please him. This is not merely external like the Pharisees (**Matthew 5.20** but internal expressed externally– about the heart, mind and motives behind our actions) Social righteousness is concerned with seeking liberation for the oppressed, promotion of civil rights, justice, integrity in

A continuous desire for justice and moral perfection will lead one to a fulfillment of that desire - a transition and conversion to **Yahuah's** righteousness.

**"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Merciful = pure in heart**

"pure in heart" and "peacemakers" are both phrases that occur only here in the NT. The pure in heart according to **Psalm 24:4** and **Proverbs 20:9** are those without sin, *i.e.*, the righteous. The actual phrase "pure in heart" occurs also in **Psalm 73:1** **Psalm 34:19**, but comes primarily from **Psalm 24:3-4**.

Mercy is the compassionate care for others whereby one (**Yahuah**) takes on the burden of another as one's own. It is an active quality of the virtue of **Ahauah** (Love), motivated by **Ahauah** (love). While mercy is often treated as a rather benign term, its power is conveyed more accurately by looking at it in a scriptural context.

"Mercy" is used as the translation of three Hebrew words, the most common one being **hesed**, which has a broad range of meaning. It is the covenant love between Abraham and Sarah (**Genesis 20:13**), David and Jonathan (**Samuel 20:8**), and **Yahuah** and the people (**Exodus 20:6**). It is mutual and enduring, implying action on both parts.

**Rahamim**, the plural form of "womb," is also translated as "mercy." **Yahuah**'s mercy is a nurturing womb, implying a physical response and demonstrating that mercy is felt in the center of one's body. This dimension of mercy also requires action.

Also translated "mercy" is the Hebrew **hen/hanan**, meaning "grace" or "favor." Unlike the other terms, this is a free gift, with no mutuality either implied or expected. Not necessarily enduring, this quality is dependent solely on the giver and usually occurs between unequals.

Taken together, these three roots give us an understanding of **Yahuah**'s mercy in the Tankh (Old Testament). It is best demonstrated by Hosea and Jeremiah, who use the analogy of marriage between **Yahuah** and Israel, showing us that mercy is the fruit of the covenant, forgiving as well as caring and nurturing

**"Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see Yahuah."**

To be pure in heart is to seek to live a Set Apart life unto **Yahuah**

Strong's #2513: **katharos** (pronounced kath-ar-os') clean (literally or figuratively):-- clean, clear, pure. **Pure** – The real translation of this word is not "pure" but "clean." It means to "purge or cleanse.

**"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of Yahuah."**

**Peacemakers = persecute/pursue righteousness**

The "peacemakers" shall be called "sons of **Yahuah**". Two meanings may, either instead of each other or together, be taken from this. A son of **Yahuah**, according to Romans, is someone who has been adopted by **Yahuah**, note in Jewish families it was the son who inherited, hence to degenderize (out of political correctness) and translate as "child of **Yahuah**" immediately strips the phrase of any connotations of inheritance.

A second meaning may be taken from the Hebrew underlying "son of . . .", which may also mean someone who acts according to the character of the attribute or person of which he is a son. Thus, a "son of peace" is a 'peaceful one', and "son of **Yahuah**", may be a 'godly one'. Here **Yahuah**'s character is that of a 'peacemaker' and the true disciple acts similarly and is called both a son of **Yahuah** and a son of peace.

The only other place in the NT using a similar word to 'peacemaker' is **Colossians 1:20** which refers to the making of peace between **Yahuah** and man, the reconciliation affected through **Yahuah**'s mercy demonstrated on the tree.

Peacemaking was not only a NT concept, just prior to **Yahusha** ministry, Rabbi Hillel had said, "Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace". Peace makers or peace pursuers would be *rodphe shalom* in Hebrew. To 'pursue peace' occurs in the NT at **Romans 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 3:11**.

**"Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."**

"Persecuted for righteousness sake" may also be translated from the Hebrew background as "those that pursue righteousness". This comes from *nirdephe tsedeq* in the Hebrew of similar sound to the *rodphe shalom* 'peace pursuers' above. To 'pursue righteousness' occurs in the NT at **Romans 9:30; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22**.

Righteousness and peace are parallel terms in the following verses: **Psalms 72:3; 85:10; Isaiah 32:17; 48:18; 60:17; Hebrews 7:2**.

## Kingdom of heaven = inherit the earth

'Heaven' is a Jewish synonym for **Yahuah** Himself, hence the 'kingdom of heaven' in Matthew's Jewish language is identical with 'the kingdom of **Yahuah**' in the other gospels. Furthermore, Jewish kingdom expectation was not of a celestial heavenly kingdom, but of a messianic millennial earth where **Yahuah** dwelt with man. It is not that we ascend to be with **Yahuah** in the long run, but that **Yahuah** descends, once sin and evil are banished, to once more dwell with man and walk with him, as He did with Adam in the garden of Eden. Compare the picture of the earthly eternal reign of **Yahuah** in **Revelation 21-22**.

One can see, then, that 'to inherit the earth' is the same as inheriting the kingdom of **Yahuah**, or experiencing His eternal rule. His kingdom is "not of this world", means that it is not of this 'worldly order' or of this 'age', but rather it 'of the age to come'.

The Hebrew idea of heaven is a messianic millennial kingdom on earth with **Yahuah** dwelling with man.

Matthew alone uses the term "Kingdom of Heaven" 32 times while Mark and Luke use "Kingdom of **Yahuah**" 68 times collectively. Both "kingdom of heaven" and "Kingdom of **Yahuah**" mean the identical thing for the reason that "heaven" is a Hebrew synonym for **Yahuah** Himself. For example, "...whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of **Yahuah** and by Him who sits upon it" (**Matthew 23:22**).

Now, here's some food for thought. The Hebrew idea of heaven is not an celestial worldly kingdom, but of a messianic millennial kingdom on earth with **Yahuah** dwelling with man. The Hebrew expectation is not that we would ascend to be with **Yahuah** to some 'other' place, but that once He banishes sin and evil from the earth, He comes again to dwell with man and walk with him much as He did with Adam in the Garden of Eden, as He had intended to dwell with mankind from the beginning.

The earth will be renewed to be without any sign of the Fall. Read through **Revelation 21** and **22** with this in mind. If you compare the picture of the earthly eternal reign of **Yahuah** in these two chapters in the book of The Revelation, you can see that to "inherit the earth" is the same as inheriting the Kingdom of **Yahuah**.

In both we experience His eternal rule. When **Yahusha** said, “My Kingdom is not of this world...not of this realm” (**John 18:36**), this is what He meant. The realm of which Pilate spoke was of an earthly realm not submitted to the reign of **Yahuah**. What **Yahusha** meant was not this worldly order or even this age, but of “an age to come, eternal life” (**Matthew 12:32; 13:39; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Ephesians 2:7; Hebrews 6:5**) which would be both.

It is to the repentant and those who know their need of **Yahuah**, that the Kingdom of **Yahuah**’s reign and presence belong! This is what He was saying. The Pharisees made it seem that only those who studied as they did and lived scrupulous lives of cleanliness, searching the Scriptures and writings all day were worthy of heaven or **Yahuah**’s acceptance.

All of these “works” were attempts to earn or insure **Yahuah**’s favor, in itself a good thing, to want to please **Yahuah**, but it sees only from the limits of man’s minds, and not from the expanse of Who **Yahuah** is. Who could possibly earn their way to **Yahuah**? **Yahusha** was saying that **Yahuah** looks at the hearts, the motives of men and He is well aware of who basks in the pride of their own accomplishments verses the repentant ones who know their need of **Yahuah**’s mercy.

By inference, **Yahusha**’s words meant that those who are sure that they have earned a place with **Yahuah** and boast of it have no part in His Kingdom. All they stood for was counter to everything that He stood for in terms of relating to **Yahuah**. Now can you understand why the leaders were so enraged against Him and what He was teaching the people?

One would have to own up to being repentant to receive Him and what He was saying, which would mean exposing your vulnerability and admitting you weren’t what all the Pharisees and scribes worked so hard to be. It would mean a complete turn around of values. Or, you would be one who considered Him someone to be done away with. There is no fence-sitting for those who truly hear what **Yahusha** has said.

This issue of the language of **Yahusha** is critical, for when **Yahusha** was extricated from His Hebrew background, including that He spoke Hebrew to people whose language it was, what was subsequently written and said about Him in Christian circles created a profound misunderstanding of who and what he was.

"Although **Yahusha** was Hebrew, his theology is sometimes treated as if he were Christian. But **Yahusha** never attended a church. He never celebrated Christmas. He never attended an Easter Sunday service...**Yahusha** worshiped in the synagogue.

He celebrated the Passover. He ate kosher food. He offered prayers in the temple in Jerusalem. The Hebrew religious heritage of **Yahusha** impacted his life in every dimension of his daily experience. **Yahusha** must be understood as a Hebrew theologian. His theology is Hebrew to the core..." This would include the language He spoke and in which, at the least, the Gospel of Matthew was written.