

## **A Mitzvah, a Meal, and a Drash: Having breakfast with Messiah! Yochanan 21:1-25**

Yochanan 21:1-25 are the final words of Yochanan's besorah (gospel). Yochanan ends with a mitzvah, a meal, and a drash (teaching). These activities were so much a part of Yeshua's life; it is not surprising for Yochanan to cast his life in this light. Such activities also constituted the pattern of life adopted by the early messianic community:

“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer . . . continuing with one mind in the temple . . . they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people” (Acts 2:42ff).

As captured in this besorah, Yeshua left his talmidim a way of life to follow. All the besorot present this same message: the life of Yeshua is a life worthy of our imitation. When we aspire to this life, we live *imatatio Dei*.

Yochanan 21 starts with a familiar scene. Yeshua reveals himself on the shore of the sea of Tiberias. This circumstance parallels some of the disciples' first encounters with Yeshua. From the shore, Yeshua once again calls forth a great catch of fish. He does a miracle (a special mitzvah) by providing food for these disciples. Yeshua ends his life on earth in the same way he had always lived. He covered the length and breadth of Israel doing mitzvot, leaving an example of good deeds -- sometimes in the form of miracles, sometimes feeding the poor, sometimes protecting the weak.

Then, Yeshua shares breakfast with his disciples, just as he did so many times before. The disciples had witnessed Yeshua's mitzvah of providing fish; now they would enjoy the fruit of it by sharing a meal. It is no wonder that the disciple knew who it was and did not need to ask. Even though his appearance was different, his actions spoke to his identity. They experienced Yeshua's good deeds and shared breakfast with him. It was clear that Messiah was with them.

The provision of fish is especially meaningful, especially to a group of disciples who had returned to their trade, uncertain of their future. If they followed in the way of Yeshua, would they have enough? If they gave their lives to service, how would they provide for themselves, their families? It seemed like a safe career move to return to fishing. But by the end of that meal, Yeshua brings clarity to their calling and destiny.

Like many of their meals together, the disciples would rise from eating transformed by the experience. In the midst of bread and fish, they would hear a Torah message: ‘man shall not live by bread only, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God’ (Devarim). Through the example before them of Yeshua's life and teaching rooted in Torah, the disciples would find the vision, wisdom, and energy needed to make disciples and go forth from Jerusalem, Judea, and to the uttermost parts of the world.

If they were to follow Yeshua and if they were to love Yeshua, they would need to teach and shepherd Yeshua's disciples. Yeshua makes it clear: 'Do you love Me?' He said to him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." Yeshua said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." We must also rise from our time with Yeshua in Yochanan 21 and make disciples.

Our response is not to be concerned about what others will do, but to focus on our own response. We should not ask: "Lord, and what about this man?" (Yochanan 21:21). Yeshua's answer to us will be the same now as it was then: "You follow me!"