

Ask The Rabbi – January 11, 2021

Question:

Additional thoughts pertaining to the image of God from Last week's (January 4th) Ask the Rabbi

Response:

Last week I had shared with you that we are created in the image and likeness of God and what that means to us. I want to share a few more things as it pertains to God's Image and Likeness. If you were not here last week and have not yet reviewed the notes from last week, I have provided a link within this lesson.

http://www.shalommaine.com/ask_the_rabbi/Ask%20The%20Rabbi%20-%20January%204%202022.pdf

And thus want to further amplify the image and likeness of God as it is seen through His Son Yeshua.

Col 1:15 He is the visible image of the invisible God. He is supreme over all creation,

Col 1:16 because in connection with him were created all things—in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, lordships, rulers or authorities—they have all been created through him and for him.

Col 1:17 He existed before all things, and he holds everything together.

He existed before all things and was revealed to us through His entry into the world by His birth, taking on the form of His own creation.

It would be through Adonai's entry into the world in the form of His Son, who was brought forth through the woman, He would make known His ways and thus pointing to the one who would bring Him forth, The Father.

The Words He would speak would not be His own but the one who would send Him. We have seen this very dynamic when He revealed it through Moshe, in that one would be brought forth in his likeness as prophet and teacher for the nation. Moshe was also a redeemer who functioned in such a way that he was the chosen representative of God in order to lead them from bondage to freedom.

Deu 18:18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kinsmen. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I order him.

Deu 18:19 Whoever doesn't listen to my words, which he will speak in my name, will have to account for himself to me.

Yeshua would thus become the epitome of Adonai, a visible representation speaking in the authority of Adonai and thus making known to us the image and likeness of Adonai.

The very radiance that Moshe desired to see, yet Adonai would need to shield him...

Exo 33:12 Moshe said to Adonai , "Look, you say to me, 'Make these people move on!' But you haven't let me know whom you will be sending with me. Nevertheless you have said, 'I know you by name,' and also, 'You have found favor in my sight.'

Exo 33:13 Now, please, if it is really the case that I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways; so that I will understand you and continue finding favor in your sight. Moreover, keep on seeing this nation as

your people."

Exo 33:14 He answered, "Set your mind at rest—my presence will go with you, after all."

Exo 33:15 Moshe replied, "If your presence doesn't go with us, don't make us go on from here."

Exo 33:16 For how else is it to be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, other than by your going with us? That is what distinguishes us, me and your people, from all the other peoples on earth."

Exo 33:17 Adonai said to Moshe, "I will also do what you have asked me to do, because you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."

Exo 33:18 But Moshe said, "I beg you to show me your glory!"

Exo 33:19 He replied, "I will cause all my goodness to pass before you, and in your presence I will pronounce the name of Adonai. Moreover, I show favor to whomever I will, and I display mercy to whomever I will."

Exo 33:20 But my face," he continued, "you cannot see, because a human being cannot look at me and remain alive."

Exo 33:21 Here," he said, "is a place near me; stand on the rock."

Exo 33:22 When my glory passes by, I will put you inside a crevice in the rock and cover you with my hand, until I have passed by."

Exo 33:23 Then I will remove my hand, and you will see my back, but my face is not to be seen."

Though Adonai would shield Moshe from the fullness of His presence and thus His Sh'khinah, He would not forget the desires of His servant's heart. I would say that Adonai was waiting for the right moment to reveal the fullness of His Sh'khinah

Mat 17:1 Six days later, Yeshua took Kefa, Ya`akov and his brother Yochanan and led them up a high mountain privately.

Mat 17:2 As they watched, he began to change form—his face shone like the sun, and his clothing became as white as light.

Mat 17:3 Then they looked and saw Moshe and Eliyahu speaking with him.

Mat 17:4 Kefa said to Yeshua, "It's good that we're here, Lord. I'll put up three shelters if you want—one for you, one for Moshe and one for Eliyahu."

Mat 17:5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them; and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

Adonai would reveal His Glory which is seen in His Son, His Only Son.

Heb 1:1 In days gone by, God spoke in many and varied ways to the Fathers through the prophets.

Heb 1:2 But now, in the acharit-hayamim, he has spoken to us through his Son, to whom he has given ownership of everything and through whom he created the universe.

Heb 1:3 This Son is the radiance of the Sh'khinah, the very expression of God's essence, upholding all that exists by his powerful word; and after he had, through himself, made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of HaG'dulah BaM'romim.

Question:

Can you expand upon what it means to be “Born Again” and within the context of Yeshua's interaction with Nakdimon (Nicodemus)?

Response:

Joh 3:1 There was a man among the P'rushim, named Nakdimon, who was a ruler of the Judeans.

Joh 3:2 This man came to Yeshua by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know it is from God that you have come as a teacher; for no one can do these miracles you perform unless God is with him."

Joh 3:3 "Yes, indeed," Yeshua answered him, "I tell you that unless a person is born again from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Joh 3:4 Nakdimon said to him, "How can a grown man be 'born'? Can he go back into his mother's womb and be born a second time?"

Joh 3:5 Yeshua answered, "Yes, indeed, I tell you that unless a person is born from water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

Joh 3:6 What is born from the flesh is flesh, and what is born from the Spirit is spirit.

Joh 3:7 Stop being amazed at my telling you that you must be born again from above!

Joh 3:8 The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it's going. That's how it is with everyone who has been born from the Spirit."

Joh 3:9 Nakdimon replied, "How can this happen?"

Joh 3:10 Yeshua answered him, "You hold the office of teacher in Isra'el, and you don't know this?"

Joh 3:11 Yes, indeed! I tell you that what we speak about, we know; and what we give evidence of, we have seen; but you people don't accept our evidence!

Joh 3:12 If you people don't believe me when I tell you about the things of the world, how will you believe me when I tell you about the things of heaven?

Joh 3:13 No one has gone up into heaven; there is only the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man.

Joh 3:14 Just as Moshe lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up;

Joh 3:15 so that everyone who trusts in him may have eternal life.

We are introduced to a man who is identified as a ruler and leader within Judea...

Joh 3:1 There was a man among the P'rushim, named Nakdimon, who was a ruler of the Judeans.

Nakdimon (Greek *Nikodemos*), who held "the office of teacher in Israel" ([Joh 3:10](#)), must have been a very important figure; but he is not mentioned in traditional Jewish literature. However, some have identified him with Nakdimon ben-Gurion, mentioned in the Talmud as a wealthy merchant at the time of the Second Temple and its destruction. Even if he is not the same, we learn at least that this Greek name was used by Jews. Nakdimon is called **a ruler**, which implies he was a rabbi and a member of the *Sanhedrin*.

He would appear to Yeshua at a time when one would not truly meet, thus concealing his appearance before Yeshua...

Joh 3:2 This man came to Yeshua by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know it is from God that you have come as a teacher; for no one can do these miracles you perform unless God is with him."

Joh 3:3 "Yes, indeed," Yeshua answered him, "I tell you that unless a person is born again from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Yeshua neither criticizes Nakdimon for fearing to seek him openly nor praises his insight in perceiving that Yeshua has come **from God**. Rather, he deals with him at his point of need, which is to be **born again from above**.

The Talmud: "Shim'on Ben-Lakish said, '... a proselyte is like a newborn infant' " (Yevamot 62a); likewise Rabbi Yosi (Yevamot 48b). The idea resembles that of the "new creation", which too is found in rabbinic literature (e.g., in Genesis Rabbah 39:11).

Thus this idea, this concept offers its roots within Judaimis and is not exclusive to the New Covenant writings nor is it exclusive to the Church.

It appears that Yeshua knew what Nakdimon was there to talk about and thus did not wait for his question, yet posed this statement to him. To which He would pose the question to Yeshua...

Joh 3:4 Nakdimon said to him, "How can a grown man be 'born'? Can he go back into his mother's womb and be born a second time?"

Understanding the premise, yet not understanding how it would be possible to reenter one's mother's womb. Nakdimon was looking at Yeshua's statement in the premise of p'shat, the plain and simple understand of what Yeshua had conveyed.

Joh 3:5 Yeshua answered, "Yes, indeed, I tell you that unless a person is born from water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

Joh 3:6 What is born from the flesh is flesh, and what is born from the Spirit is spirit.

Born from water and the Spirit. Immersion in water is connected with ritual cleansing of the body which we have seen through Torah, whether it pertained to the Priesthood, coming contact with a corpse or infected with Tza'arat. For further context read Matthew 3:1 – 17 as it pertains to Yochanan the Immerser.

To understand what "*baptizein*" means here one needs the Jewish background. According to the *Torah* one had to be ritually pure before entering the Tabernacle or Temple. Ritual purity could be lost in many ways; the preeminent means of restoring it was through washing. A quick review of Leviticus shows how frequently the matter is mentioned, and one of the six major divisions of the Talmud (*Taharot*, "Cleansings") is devoted to it. Even though there is no longer a Temple, observant Jewish women immerse themselves in a *mikveh* (ritual bath) after each menstrual period, in obedience to Leviticus 15.

While the Holy Spirit gives power for turning from sin and living a holy life; both bespeak aspects of purification. This is why "born from water" does not mean ordinary human birth; moreover, since everyone is "born from water" in that sense, it would be silly for Yeshua to make a condition out of it with the word "**unless**." This is related in our Mikveh message.

http://www.shalommaine.com/sermon_notes_pdf/Mikveh.pdf

Whatever Nakdimon's expression or response is to Yeshua's words convey one of astoundment.

Joh 3:7 Stop being amazed at my telling you that you must be born again from above!

Joh 3:8 The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it's going. That's how it is with everyone who has been born from the Spirit."

Yeshua is like infusing a play on words here when He is referring to the wind. There is a wordplay here, since both the Greek word "*pneuma*" and the Hebrew word "*ruach*" may mean either "wind" or "spirit," depending on context.

Thus you might say, Nakdimon is astounded by the words of Yeshua...

Joh 3:9 Nakdimon replied, "How can this happen?"

An equally stunned Yeshua is in amazement that he does not know how this would even be possible considering Nakdimon's position as a Torah teacher. "You are the teacher of Israel." The use of the definite article implies that Nakdimon's position was uniquely important, although it is difficult to reconstruct precisely what it was.

Joh 3:10 Yeshua answered him, "You hold the office of teacher in Israel, and you don't know this?"

Joh 3:11 Yes, indeed! I tell you that what **we speak about**, we know; and what we give evidence of, we have seen; but you people don't accept our evidence!

Joh 3:12 If you people don't believe me when I tell you about the things of the world, how will you believe me when I tell you about the things of heaven?

Joh 3:13 No one has gone up into heaven; there is only the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man.

It is sometimes asserted that Yeshua never claimed to be more than an ordinary human being. But here he affirms his heavenly origin; and indeed, throughout Yochanan's Gospel he presents himself as divine as well as human, both in function and in essence.

"We speak" and "we give evidence", in verse 11 conveys and Yeshua is referring to witnesses, whether a great cloud (Hebrews 12:1) or two or three (Deuteronomy 17:6 & 19:15). He is not speaking solely, but is referring to that which is found in the Tanakh. Sir Edwin Hoskyns in his commentary on John, *The Fourth Gospel*, explains the plural here as Yeshua associating himself with other witnesses: Yochanan the Immerser ([Joh 1:7](#), [Joh 1:32-34](#)), [Isa 12:41](#)), Abraham ([Joh 8:56](#)), Moses ([Joh 5:46](#)), and the writers and subjects of the *Tanakh* ([Joh 5:39](#)).

Joh 3:14 Just as Moshe lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up;

Joh 3:15 so that everyone who trusts in him may have eternal life.

Just as the Israelites were saved from the plague of serpents when they gazed on the brass **serpent** raised by **Moshe** ([Num 21:6-9](#)), so all people are saved from eternal death, torment and separation from God by gazing with spiritual eyes on the person of the Messiah Yeshua **lifted up** in death on the execution-stake.

Thus this concept of being born again as conveyed by Yeshua in some ways gets lost in translation because it has become "watered down" and thus not fully understood in the context Yeshua is teaching within. Nakdimon should have understood that which Yeshua was conveying, yet he did not in that the concept though immersed throughout the Tanakh was not always understood.

Today, the premise of being born again has become so watered down is because the absence of the foundation of being born again has been minimized to the point it has lost its authority and relevance. Yet the Tanakh is

the very foundation by which everything revealed by Adonai is established. From redemption / salvation, forgiveness of sin to being born again, believers today have not fully immersed themselves into these realities. All point towards Yeshua, the epitome of Israel and the Scriptures. To ignore such truth is to further reduce your understanding and thus the fullness that resides throughout Adonai's revelation in His Word.