



MINUTES WITH MESSIAH

Volume 14, Issue 6

Web Site: <http://www.minuteswithmessiah.com>

April 2013

NOBODY FROM NOWHERE

♩=144

Who are you? Where you from? What-cha know? Peop - le ask Ques-tions but Real-ly don't
 Who are you? Where you from? What-cha know? These are just Ques-tions but Real-ly I
 Who's Je-sus? Where's he from? What's he know? These are the ques-tions, and Real-ly you

want to know I'm just No - bod-y from no - where Know - ing noth - ing but That be-
 want to know You're just No - bod-y from no - where Know - ing noth - ing but Now be-
 ought to know He's the Some - bod-y from heav - en, Know - ing all things, Who died for-

- cause of my king I am Some - bod-y from no - where Go - ing some - where. And
 - cause of my king You'll be Some - bod-y from no - where Go - ing some - where. So
 - give-ness to bring. Now this no - bod-y from no - where's Go - ing Some - where. I'm

That is why I can sing.
 Join me now as I sing.
 Go - ing home with my king.

This song was written for Spiritual Explosion XIII, the annual youth rally at the Riverside church of Christ in Albuquerque, NM, USA. The theme is the same as the title. The dates for Spiritual Explosion XIII are April 19-21, 2013.

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COMMANDMENTS: 4 & 5

In the first three of the Ten Commandments for the Jewish people, God established who he was and how his people were to deal with him. That is the basis for all the other commandments. The Jewish people were coming out of a period of hundreds of years of bondage. During this time they had sunk to a level at which they did not know God. Moses required a name to give them, because even he did not know a name by which to call God. He had to see, and then perform, signs and wonders in order to establish the supremacy of God. Some have pointed out that the plagues on Egypt were really evidences of God's supremacy over the Egyptian gods. (For instance, three days of palpable darkness showed that God was more powerful than the supreme Egyptian deity, Amun Ra, the sun god.)

Once God established who he was and how Israel were to come before him, he could begin to establish the more practical matters of life. These are the remaining commandments and the rest of the Law. These commandments set the Jewish people apart from the other

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people of the world. The absolute nature of some of these commandments stand in stark contrast with the similar laws of the societies surrounding the Jewish people.

The Sabbath

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Ex 20:8-11)

For two to four hundred years, the children of Israel had been enslaved and oppressed. They were made to work without relief. When the ruler was dissatisfied, they were made to work harder without any break in productivity. These were a people who

knew what it was like to be made to work every day without rest. The fourth commandment proved that they were free from Egypt. More than that, it established that they were not to emulate the taskmasters they had known.

In Exodus 20, God (or possibly Moses) establishes a reason for the commandment. They were to rest, just as God rested. They were to follow God's example. In Deuteronomy God gave a more specific reason for sabbath.

And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day. (Deut 5:15)

The Jewish people were to keep sabbath to remind them whence they had come. They were to keep sabbath along with their slaves, tourists, and immigrants to remind them to treat others in a way they would have liked to have been treated.

A day of rest was pretty much unheard of in the world at that time. The rich needed service every day, so the poor had to work every day.

Some Christians today misunderstand the purpose of sabbath. They seem to think this was specifically a day of worship, and so those who assemble on Sunday must be wrong. While it is true that Leviticus 23:3 establishes it as a day of assembly (though it does not say the purpose of the assembly), nowhere in the Law is sabbath designated as the only day of assembly. It is common for Jewish congregations to have assemblies every day of the week. Perhaps more people do assemble on sabbath than other days, but that is because people were or are working on all those other days. The purpose of sabbath was rest, not worship. The purpose of sabbath was to remind the people to be kind to the less fortunate. Some of those Christians who insist on sabbath worship and no assembly on Sunday have yet to learn the kindness lesson.

Other Christians say that they are bound by all of the Ten Commandments except the sabbath law. If either extreme could be called error, perhaps this is the greater error. There is nothing that would prohibit Christians from assembling for worship on Saturday. Logic and scripture both indicate that it would be wrong to keep nine of the Ten Commandments and ignore one. That said, someone might ask, "but aren't these other commandments laws for us to follow?" The proper answer would be that they are laws for us to follow, but not because they are part of the Ten Commandments. The Ten were given to the Jewish people, for the Jewish people. They were never intended to be laws for the non-Jew. A non-Jewish Christian may be required to observe these other laws because from the

beginning they have been violations of God's will; he is not required to keep them because they are part of the law to the Jewish people. British law says, among other things, that it is illegal to murder, to steal, or to drive on the right side of the road except to pass. American law says it is illegal to murder, to steal, or to drive on the left side of the road except to pass. If an American drives in the designated traffic lane and avoids murder and robbery, he is doing so because it is part of American law. He does not say that he is not a murderer because that would be a violation of British law, but he can ignore their traffic laws. If one keeps British law he is obligated to keep all the law. If one keeps the Law of Moses he is obligated to keep all the Law, including the sabbath law and the sacrificial law. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal 3:10)

Honor Parents

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." (Ex 20:12)

"Honour your father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with you, and you may live long on the land." (Eph 6:2-3)

The concept of honoring parents and ancestors is foundational among religions of China and Japan. It was not, however, as common in the nations surrounding Israel. Even throughout the history of the kings of Israel, who were under this commandment, we find men who ignored familial relationships to the point of killing all their relatives. In any country where power is inherited, fratricide is a means of advancement. An ambitious son does not want to wait for his father (or sometimes mother) to die so he can inherit the family business.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons God includes the phrase "that thy days may be long upon the land." Generally this is interpreted in the broad sense, saying that the nation would remain long in possession of the promised land if they honored their parents. But it may have a narrower meaning as well. One who gains power by killing his parents is subject to the same treatment by his own children. One who honors his parents may be honored by his children, rather than executed by them for personal gain. You reap what you sow.

In the broader sense, though, God is establishing that family is important. From the creation his intent was a stable family unit. He has established that he is to be honored, and that workers are to be honored. Now he commands honor within the family.

This has resulted in various questions from some people. How can you legislate honor? What do you do if your parents act in a dishonorable manner, such as abusing a child or each other? How can I respect someone who shows me no respect?

Perhaps the words translated "honor" can help answer those questions. The word does not mean respect in the usual sense. Respect is earned, or not. One does not necessarily have to respect parents to honor them.

The Greek word Paul uses in Ephesians means to place value on something. It carries the idea that even if a parent does not earn the respect of the child, the child should recognize that the parents have some value. It is, then, a command to look for the good in family, even in a bad situation.

The Hebrew word used in Exodus has various meanings: honor, harden, make heavy. When Pharaoh "hardened" his heart he "honored" his heart. This makes sense. Rather than honoring God's commands he honored his own heart. The concept is the same as value, perhaps. When something weighs heavy on your heart it is usually because it is something you value. When an object is heavy it is often considered of more value than that which is lighter, as gold is of more value than air. Parents are to be considered as having weight, and are therefore to be listened to.

Taken in another view, parents are a burden to their children. This is not that parents are to be

God and workers are to be honored. Now he commands honor within the family.

burdensome, although that might happen. Children have an obligation to parents. There was a cartoon a number of years ago (possibly one of Bob West's *Theophilus* strips) that showed a family in a car. It explains that they are taking the children's grandmother to what is sometimes called an "old folks home." One child asks the father who is driving, "Is this the same place we will be taking you when you are old?" The next panel shows the car going in the opposite direction, with the grandmother still in it. Sometimes that is what is meant by honoring or taking the burden of a parent. One mother said, "I carried you inside me for nine months, and raised you for another eighteen years. Surely, you can return the favor." Part of honoring parents is taking care of them when they can no longer do so for themselves.

This commandment permeates the Law of Moses, and indeed the attitude of God's people before and since the Law. When surrounding societies left parents in the desert to die, God's people were to treat them like they had been treated by their parents.

Honor God. Honor workers. Honor parents. And the rest of the commands are to honor life and property. But those will have to wait for the next article.

YOLO

If you are over 25 you may not understand what YOLO means. (I had to look it up, myself.) If you are among the younger set you are probably quite familiar with the term. For those of my age, more or less, an explanation may be in order. YOLO is an acronym for "You only live once." Although the phrase has been around for over a hundred years, it was popularized recently in a rap by Drake and Rick Ross. Some say it is roughly equivalent to *carpe diem* (seize the day), as in the Robin Williams film *Dead Poets Society*. In the 1960s Peggy Lee popularized the thought in the Leiber and Stoller song, *Is That All There Is?* "If that's all there is my friends, then let's keep dancing, Let's break out the booze and have a ball If that's all there is."

In popular culture, YOLO is an excuse for doing something stupid or sinful. Examples might include, "Hey, I got drunk and totaled the car, but YOLO," or, "I got an F on the exam because I didn't study, but YOLO." (These are among the cleaner examples, in deference to the sensibilities of some of my readers.) The apostle Paul expressed the meaning of YOLO in 1 Corinthians 15:32. "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." If there is no resurrection of the dead, if this life is all there is, then YOLO.

I first saw the term on the Facebook page of the daughter of an elder in the church. When I looked it up, I wondered if her parents understood the meaning of YOLO. I am hoping they talked to her and put another spin on the phrase. There is, after all, a way of looking at it in a more biblically sound manner.

As Paul said, if there is no resurrection from the dead, then YOLO. But if there is an afterlife of

punishment and reward as described in the Bible, then the term takes on a whole new meaning.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Heb 9:27-28)

Here the author turns it around. Because YOLO and judgement, Christ bore our sins. We only get one chance, and Jesus died to make sure that once is enough. Because there is a resurrection, Paul says that YOLO, in its popular sense, is an evil communication that corrupts good morals.

Because Jesus died for us, we don't take advantage of God's forgiveness. Instead, we try to live in a manner worthy of that forgiveness.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. (Rom 6:1-7)

YOLO should not be an excuse for sin or stupidity. Rather, we live as God would have us live because Jesus didn't only live once.

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