

Yeshua calls us to walk with an unoffendable heart.



9“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. 10And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13But he who endures to the end shall be saved. Matthew 24:9-13

An Unoffendable Heart

As I've looked at the Hanukkah story again this year, I have had reconfirmed in my heart that I believe the next significant stage on the timeline (before the AntiChrist and Yeshua's subsequent return) is a time of great persecution against Yeshua's true Believers. Matthew 24:9-14 describes this time clearly **before** the abomination of desolation marks the beginning of the final three and a half year period tribulation (Matthew 24:15) before Yeshua's return. Here's the progression as I see it from Matthew 24:9-14:

Believers are killed, delivered up to tribulation and hated by all nations (ethnic people groups) because of their identification with Yeshua (24:9). We have not yet had the challenge of having this prophecy fulfilled with all nations hating us as true Believers....but these days are coming.

After this, many Believers will be offended, will betray one another, and hate one another (24:10). I think it makes sense that these negative relational dynamics will be in play because of Yeshua's followers not anticipating the suffering that He promises will be a portion of our inheritance in the time preceding His return. Just as Yeshua suffered and willingly went to His death for our sakes before His exaltation to the right hand of the Father, so too will we as His followers have a time where we will identify with Him and suffer before our exaltation at our death or His return.

Then out of this base of offense and hatred, false prophets will arise and deceive many. And, because of the lawlessness of this time, the Scriptures indicate that the agape love of many Believers will grow cold (24:11-12). I believe this is a reference to the great falling away that precedes Yeshua's second coming (see 2 Thes 2:3). But there will also be faithful Believers who endure to the end and are saved (24:13).

So how can we be more assured that we won't be in this undesirable camp of offense, cold love, and lawlessness but be in the camp of the faithful who endure to the end? I think it starts with a consistent abiding relationship with Yeshua and walking in forgiveness and love right now when the stakes are lower with the folks who hurt and offend us now. It also means that we walk in present tense repentance with those who we have wronged. Yeshua called us to pray for our adversaries, to bless them with our words, and to do kind actions towards them (Matthew 5:43-48). And He in fact stated multiple times that if we don't forgive from our hearts those who sin against us that the Father will not forgive us (Matt. 6:15). To most effectively forgive others, we need a greater revelation of the great forgiveness that Yeshua provided for us (see Matthew 18:23-35) and not to see the "great wrongs" that others have perpetrated against us.

At the end of the day, I know I can't walk this life that God has called us to without Yeshua's direct help. I can't consistently walk in the meekness, purity, mercy, forgiveness, love, etc. that He calls us to without a present-tense connection with Him....and an acknowledgement of my spiritual poverty before Him. Thankfully this spiritual poverty is the entry point to the kingdom (see Matt 5:3).

The link below is to an excellent teaching by John Bevere on this subject of not taking Satan's bait of offense into our lives. He teases out more of the how and why from his own life--highly recommended!

Father, we can't walk this narrow path that You've called us to without Your help. Help us on this journey. Show us where we are falling short and then help us to repent where needed, to make things right with others around us, and to lean into You for the love we need to receive and then to give back to You and those around us.