

THE CREDIBILITY OF YASHUA
THE CRAFTSMAN

When Manchester, England, applied to host the Olympics, the media reported Londoners as saying "We should hold the Olympics in the head office - not in a branch office", "Manchester has no style", "I don't care anything about the North". Palestine also has had its North-South divide. A Jewish boy called Yashua grew up in an insignificant northern town in Palestine. The view held of anyone from his community, is reflected in one Northerner's candid statement, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

Yashua was known as the son of Yusef and Miriam. He was an ideal son. There is only one record of him being rebuked. It was a misunderstanding, but that is another story. He gained respect, being a kind person of impeccable character. His father, a craftsman, died early and no doubt, from a young age, Yashua worked to support his mother, brothers and sisters. Having learned his skills from his father, he became known as Yashua the craftsman.

Being a conscientious craftsman he would ensure his houses had solid foundations. He would carefully shape his yokes to fit comfortably on the oxens' shoulders, work which required firm and sensitive hands. Yashua had careworn hands from honest toil and hands of compassion.

He empathised with people's distress. In sympathy for a widow's sorrow he touched her son's funeral bier:- something the average Hebrew would cringe at the thought of doing. People's disadvantages were generally thought to be God's judgement on them. Despite that Yashua's compassion drove him to gently touch a blind man's eyes, even to touch lepers.

However his townsfolk could not stomach it

when "the boy next door" claimed to fulfil prophesy. One day, in the local synagogue, Yashua read a passage out of the ancient sacred scroll of their venerated prophet, Yesha'ya. He then claimed it was a prediction about himself. Their reaction was, "Isn't this Yusef's son? Isn't this the craftsman, Miriam's son, the brother of Yaqub, Yusef, Y'hudha, and Simeon? Aren't his sisters present, here?" They were angry and outraged at his apparent audacity.

At about thirty years of age, he began to travel around, teaching and healing. Curious crowds would throng him, so much so that his friends found it embarrassing. As for his faith healing, his own brothers rejected it, saying sarcastically "Go down South and show your fans there what you can do."

The opinion of the southern religious elite had of him was even worse. They said: "This man is possessed by the Devil himself" and "It is the demons' ruler who enables him to exorcize demons". However the intelligentsia could not deny the miracles he did. They were too well publicized. They could not be explained away. A dead girl brought back to life. A man raised after being dead for four days. The religious elite despaired of stopping his influence. In frustration they blamed each other saying "See! Your efforts to stop him are not having the slightest effect. Everyone is under his spell." Yashua challenged them openly:- "Believe me because of my achievements". How could they counter that?

Yashua cured a man who had been blind from birth. They said to the man "Give GOD the glory. We know this fellow is bad." He answered "I don't know if he is bad, but I do know one thing. I was blind and now I see." The cure was conclusive evidence! Then came a snide remark about Yashua's humble background. "We know that God spoke to Mosah (one of their highly venerated prophets). But as for this fellow, we don't even

know where he is from." The man's amusing response to these religious sages was "Now isn't that amazing. You don't know where he is from, and yet he has opened my eyes. Did anyone ever heal a man born blind? Never since the beginning of the world has anyone heard of any man opening the eyes of someone born blind. If this man wasn't from God, he couldn't do anything."

An active supporter, Yohanan, had been thrown into prison whilst championing Yashua's cause. Yohanan's prospects were bleak. He sent his friends to ask Yashua if he was really what he claimed to be. Yashua said ... "Tell Yohanan what you have seen and heard. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, encouraging news is being preached to the poor. Anyone who is not put-off by me is blest".

Despite all this evidence, what did the elitist Jews do to the craftsman's hands: the hands of compassion. They had nails driven through them.! Spiking him to a gibbet. The shame of degrading public execution.

Granted, he wasn't the type of prestigious religious society Messiah the Jews expected, but the miracles should have made them think. They had caused a prominent Jew, a Sanhedrin councillor, to think. And that was right at the beginning, when Yashua first began to teach and heal. "Rabbi," the councillor said to him, "We know you must be a teacher from God, for no-one can do these miracles unless God is with him."

Shortly after Yashua's execution, one of his close companions, Kefas, made a spirited public speech in the forecourt of their national temple. He amazed the gathered crowd with these words: "You men of Israel" he said, "Yashua of Nazareth, was a man whom God approved to you, by the miracles, wonders and signs, as you yourselves know. You had him spiked to death, but God has raised him up."

The humble compassionate craftsman was disparaged, maligned, and vengefully executed by MAN. But GOD powerfully vindicated him, raising him from the dead. The Lord Jesus (as we know him in the west) is not in a tomb. The tomb was empty! Because the Messiah is risen! Jesus the Messiah is now at the right hand of God! Praise the Lord!

But why did he have to die? Seven hundred years before these events, the prophet Yesh'aya made this prediction about him:-

"He was despised and rejected by men; ... and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, ... by God, ... But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; ... and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. ... as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? ... although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, ... he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

You see, he was God's sacrifice for us. The innocent for the guilty. "All WE like sheep have gone astray; WE have turned every one TO HIS OWN WAY; and the LORD has laid ON HIM the

iniquity of us all." He sacrificed his life for our sins, was buried in the heart of the earth and rose in triumph. So we must REPENT of our sins, BURY our old life with him in the waters of baptism and rise with him to live A NEW LIFE ; WITH HIM. [Acts 2.37-38, Romans 6.1-4]

Some folk might be inclined to reject these things because they seem foolish to them. The LORD God said "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9

The Lord Jesus said:-
"Whoever is not put-off by me is blest."

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

I. WATTS

If you want more information, please write, stating your request, to:-

We will not try to contact you unless you ask us to.

Copyright © 1996 Simply Christians - Longford Reg.charity no.1056418]

www.muqaddas.info

#a1yashua

Yashua the Craftsman