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Messianic Renewal
4: 20-24

Messianic renewal DIG: Why did Sha'ul need to remind the Ephesians about their former lifestyle? How is salvation like putting on a new set of clothes. What was the message that the Ephesians had been taught by Messiah? How does speaking truthfully support and build up the Body of Messiah? How does telling lies and gossiping break it down?

REFLECT: How has your world view changed since accepting Messiah as your Lord and Savior? How would you describe the difference between your "old self" and your "new self." Is there anything that still needs to be changed? If you were to go on trial for being a believer, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Why? Why not?

As believers, we have not simply changed our minds, we have totally changed our citizenship.

Sha'ul reinforced **his** warning (**to see link click Bl – The Pagan Lifestyle**) with an argument from the spiritual experience of **his** readers. The emphasis is on the mind, or the outlook, of the believer. **But this [pagan lifestyle] is not the lesson you learned from the Messiah (4:20)! Rabbi Sha'ul** gives **the Ephesians** a short but powerful reminder that this is not the walk of redemption that they learned from **Messiah**. **He** emphasizes that this new life must be **learned**. It does not come naturally or without concerted effort. It means to have a personal relationship with **Messiah** so you get to know **Him** better each day. We must be students of **the Torah** (our blueprint for living) and all the Scriptures. Most importantly, we must consistently apply **the Word** in our daily lives, our fellowship with **God** is based on **it**.

The pressure of **the pagan** world will invariably press hard on all **believers** but we will stand strong as we actively grow in our spiritual lives. **The Talmud** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei – The Oral Law**) **gives a beautiful illustration of the relationship between rabbi and disciple when it says,**

“Let your house be a meeting place for the rabbis, and cover yourself in the dust of their feet, and drink their words thirstily (Pirke Avot 1:4). That means not getting too far behind **Yeshua** or too far ahead of **Him**! **Sha’ul** reminds **his** readers, including us, that we must continue to **learn** and apply our **Great Rabbi’s** words to guarantee our spiritual victory over this world.[178]

If you really have heard Him and have been taught in Him (4:21a NASB) could not possibly refer to hearing **Yeshua’s** physical voice on earth, because there is no way that could have been true of all the believers in Asia Minor to whom **Paul** was writing. It must refer to the hearing of **His** spiritual call to salvation **(John 8:47, 10:27; Acts 3:22-23; Hebrews 3:7-8)**. Many references in the B’rit Chadashah speak of this **hearing** being taught as the call of **God (Acts 2:39)**. **In Him** means **in union with Messiah** and further emphasizes the fact that at moment of conversion we received **the truth** embodied **in Messiah** because we can to be **in Him**. **Then you learned that what is in Yeshua is truth (4:21b).** The truth about **Yeshua** is that it leads to salvation and the fulness of life. Everything that has importance in this life. **John** summed up this relationship with **truth** when **he** wrote: **We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true. And we are in Him who is true by being in His Son Yeshua Messiah. He is the true God and eternal life (First John 5:20 NIV).**[179]

Then, so far as your former way of life is concerned, you must strip off your old nature, because your old nature is thoroughly rotted by its deceptive desires (4:22). The analogy here is that of changing clothes. The **old** way of life is compared to some old clothes that do not suit us anymore. In fact, they are called **thoroughly rotted!** It is also analogous to our old sin nature (see the commentary on **Romans Bm – The Consequences of Adam**), that has too much control over us. Once again, **the Rabbi** reminds **the** Messianic **believers** of **Ephesus** that there is great deception when we yield to our old **sin nature**. So many people are blissfully walking on the wide path to destruction (see **The Life of Christ Dw – The Narrow and Wide Gates**)! This is the way of **the pagans** and it used to be the way of many of the **Ephesian believers** (and us) in **their** (our) pasts. But **they** now have a new calling and purpose in **Yeshua**,[180] which necessitates a new spiritual attire.

And being renewed continually **in the spirit of your mind, put on the new self (4:23-24a ESV).** This makes it clear that such renewal is the result of

stripping off your old nature is the context in which we **put on the new self.** Salvation relates to the mind, which is the center of thought, understanding, and belief, as well as of motive and action. When a person accepts **Messiah** as their **Lord** and **Savior**, **ADONAI** initially renews their mind, giving it a completely new spiritual and moral capability – a capability that the most brilliant and educated mind apart from **Messiah** can never achieve (see the commentary on **First Corinthians Aq – The Maturity of the Spiritual Believer**). This **renewal** continues through the believer's life as he is obedient to **the Word** and will of **God (Romans 12:1-2)**. The process is not a one-time accomplishment, but the continual work of **the Spirit** in **the child of God (Titus 3:5)**. Our resources are **God's Word** and **prayer**. It is through these means that we live the life **in Messiah (Philippians 2:5; Colossians 3:16; Second Timothy 1:7).**[181]



*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for the wonderful **union** that you promise to those who love **You (Ephesians 1:10, John 17:21-23)**. **The union** is so much greater than even a friend whom we see daily. **Union** means that you are with me all the time and never leave. **For God Himself has** said: **I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5c).** Because **You** are a living and eternal **God**, **union** with **You** will never wear out nor get old, but will endure forever and ever! **For He is the living God, enduring forever! His Kingdom will never be destroyed, His dominion will never end (Dani'el 6:26)**.*

*Many are the times of trials on earth, but always **You** are there to guide and to comfort. Praise **You** for being omniscient, knowing all including what will happen in the future **(Daniel 2, 7).** That means that when we need to know what path to take, **You** not only know the hearts of all those involved in the situation, **You** also know what will happen in the future. When we listen and follow **Your** advice we are following the wisest path. There will still be problems and pains, but as we focus on spending all eternity with **You** – that is the wisest path that will bring joy for the all*

eternity! ***For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).***

How special it is to have ***You*** *with me always. When things go well,* ***You*** *are right there guiding and I can give* ***You*** *praise for how things worked out. Making time to praise* ***You*** *is such a wise use of time for praising both pleases* ***You*** *and encourages my own heart. Praise to* ***You*** *for* ***You*** *are Holy, Almighty, All-powerful, All-wise, our Forgiving* ***Savior*** *and Loving* ***Father****! I love* ***You*** *and rejoice in following* ***You*** *in all we do. In* ***Messiah Yeshua's*** *holy Name and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*

And clothe yourselves with the new nature created to be godly, which expresses itself in the righteousness and holiness that flow from the truth (4:24). As believers, we have not simply changed our minds; we have totally changed our **citizenship**, which **is** now **in heaven** (see the commentary on **Philippians Bj – A Tale of Two Citizenships**). We belong to **God's new creation in Messiah** (see the commentary on **Second Corinthians Bd – A New Creation**), and therefore, the ideas and desires of our **old sin nature** should no longer control our lives. The simplest illustration of this great **truth** is given in the Gospel of **John 11** with the resurrection of **Lazarus**. Our **Lord's** friend, **Lazarus**, have been **in the grave four days**, when **Yeshua** and **His apostles** arrived at **Bethany**, and even **his sister Martha** admitted that, by then, **his** decaying body would **smell (John 11:39)**. However, **Yeshua** spoke the word and **Lazarus came forth** alive, an illustration of **John 5:24**. Notice our **Lord's** next words: **Take off the grave clothes, and let him go (John 11:44 NIV). Take off the grave clothes! Lazarus** no longer belonged to the old dominion of death, for **he** was now alive. Why go about wearing **grave clothes**? Take off the old and put on the new!

But, how do we do this? **The inspired writer** gives us the answer? **You must let your spirits and minds keep being renewed (4:23).** Conversion is a crisis that leads to a process. Through **Messiah**, once-and-for-all-time, we have been given a new position in **His new creation**, but day-by-day, we must use what **He** has given us by **faith**. **The Word of God** renews the mind as we surrender our all to **Him (Romans 12:1-2). Make them holy by Your truth; teach them Your Word, which is truth (John 17:17).** As the mind understands the truth of **God's Word**, it is gradually transformed by **the Ruach**, and this **renewal** leads to a changed life. Physically, you are what you eat, but spiritually, you **are** what you **think**. **For as a person thinks in his heart, so he is (Proverbs 23:7).** This is why it is so important as believers to spend time daily meditating on **the Word**, praying, and fellowshipping with **God**.[182]

The **renewed** clothing includes a **renewed** mind and **spirit**. It is not merely washing the old clothes, as it were. The Messianic **faith** is not just a self-help or self-improvement program. It is, in fact, just the opposite. **Yeshua** did not call **His disciples** to merely **improve themselves**, but to **die to themselves (Matthew 10:38-39)**. The new clothes referred to, actually represent an entirely new nature. This new **spirit** and new heart are predicted in the TaNaKh as a benefit that **God** will provide in the days of **Messiah** (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Eo – The Days are Coming, declares the LORD, When I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el**). **The believers** of **Ephesus** had experienced this renewal when **they** trusted in **Yeshua** as **their Messiah** which, in turn, produced fruit that is opposite of **the pagan** world. In contrast to **the old sin nature**, they were then producing fruit consistent with **the Spirit of Truth**. **Sha'ul** notes that it is righteousness and holiness that flow from **the truth** of **Yeshua**.[183]