

## Matt. 14:25-29 "YOKE" AND "COME".."SYNAGOGUE TEACHING SYSTEM"

The words "yoke" and "come" have very special meanings in various scriptures in our Good Book because of their cultural meaning in days of old. Yoke and come, as you will see in the following explanation, were very special words for any disciple (talmidim) of the Torah. We need to understand them properly to grasp the fulness of the verses that are commonly used in Matthew, Galatians, Corinthians and Timothy, in teaching today.

### YOKE OF THE RABBI

The following verses are an example of what I'm talking about.

**Matt. 14:25-29** (see also John 6:19-20) *And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Yeshua spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to Him,*



**"Rabbi, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." "And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Yeshua"**

**Matt. 11:29-30** *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

The context of these words (yoke and come), as seen above, needs to be thoroughly explained in order to get the meaning of this passage. To help understand, I must explain the following about common Jewish teaching.

### SYNAGOGUE TEACHING SYSTEM



In biblical times the synagogue was not just a place to get together, but it was the focal point of the community. Today we call this idea the community hall. You might even say it was where the education system we

have today started from.

People would live very close to the Rabbi they were following so they could literally walk to synagogue service on shabbat and "Assemble" there to celebrate the Feasts.

From birth, the Jewish people used to send their children to the synagogue to learn. The educational system as we know it today was established many years ago in the way that the Jewish people taught their children Torah. The school system originated to teach students Torah long before the three "R's" as we know them, ever existed.

- 1) From age 0-10 they studied Torah under a system called "bet safar".
- 2) By the time they were 10 these kids could recite the entire Torah.
- 3) Then the best of these kids moved on to "bet talmude". These students 10-15, would be able to recite the entire Old Testament by the time they were 15.
- 4) At age 15 the boys would have to then decide whether or not they wanted to continue their fathers family business or move on to become a Rabbi.
- 5) The best of these best would be allowed to move on to become Rabbi's if they were accepted by a Rabbi for future study. These talmidim would then go out and choose what Rabbi they wanted to study under from age 15-20.

**NOTE:** In the Yeshiva's (torah schools), it was common for the Rabbi teaching the classes to give the students honey when they were studying torah. In this way they always associated the torah with sweetness. We see this referenced in: **Ps. 119:103 "How sweet to my tongue is your promise, truly sweeter than honey in my mouth!**

**The Rabbis would speak to the people and potential students what was called their "yoke".** This was their pitch to the public about what made them believe certain things different then other Rabbi's. Some Rabbi's added so much man made tradition to their yoke that their yoke became very burdensome. This describes Orthodox Judaism.

This is exactly what Yeshua taught against. Remember when Yeshua said His yoke was not burdensome. He said that because of what the Rabbis' commonly did.

**Matt. 11:29-30** "Take my **yoke** upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**"

The idea of the yoke being heavy, burdensome, or when we are unequally yoked, is also included in the following verses.

**2Cor. 6:14** "**Do not yoke yourselves together in a team with unbelievers.** For how can righteousness and lawlessness be partners? What fellowship does light have with darkness?"

**Gal. 5:1** "What the Messiah has freed us for is freedom! Therefore, stand firm, and **don't let yourselves be tied up again to a yoke of slavery.**"

**1Tim. 6:1** "Those who are under **the yoke of slavery** should regard their masters as worthy of full respect, so that the name of God and the teaching will not be brought into disrepute."

**Deut. 22:10** "**You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.**"

Rabbis had to be at least 30 years old. The students (talmidim), would then ask a specific Rabbi, according to his yoke, if they could study under him. The talmidim would then go under the Rabbis teaching for 3 years. These Rabbi's (mentors), would then choose only the cream of the crop as their protégé. We see an example of this idea when Yeshua spoke to His talmidim. **John 15:16** (written in red) "**You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.**"

These Rabbinical students would do everything the Rabbi did. They represented the Rabbi, as well as the Rabbi representing them as far as the world around them was concerned. Everything they did reflected on the other, so they were careful to only do what was right. Those individuals the Rabbi's did not accept, simply carried on their fathers business, whatever that would be. That was considered the norm. In Matthew 4:19 we see Yeshua choosing fisherman to be His students.

**Matt. 4:19** Yeshua said to them, "**Come after me, and I will make you fishers for men!**" When Peter (and the others on the boat who were rejected by Rabbi's), saw the Rabbi Yeshua walking towards them on water (Matt. 14:19-25) in the middle of the night, they were determined to follow this Rabbi. **Matt. 14:25** "And He said, "**Come!**" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Yeshua"

This was Peter asked if Rabbi Yeshua would accept him as a student, He was delighted to hear Him say "come". These fishermen would follow Rabbi Yeshua wherever He lead them. They saw His yoke (obedience to Torah), and it was made easy.

Many Rabbis made their own laws and attached them to the Torah laws, making them burdensome. This problem has been around for thousands of years in Orthodox Judaism. The Pharisees make up their own rules and regulations, or follow the man-made laws of the Talmud, and make things burdensome when they need not be. These oral laws were what Yeshua was scolding the Pharisees about in Matt. 23.

**DUST OF THE RABBIS FEET**

I believe it is important to know about the idiom connected to yoke and come. There was a cliché in Hebrew (idiom) that said; **"they ate the dust of their Rabbi"**. This idiom meant that the talmidim of the Rabbi listened so close and followed so close to the teaching of their Rabbis that they ate the dust stirred up by his feet as he taught. They were so anxious to learn that they hardly even gave him space to walk in front of them.



During the schmita/shemittah, (seventh year of the land, sabbath), young men would join with rabbinical teachers and spend the year learning the word. This was because young men were not required to work the land. They would dedicate the year to the study of the things of Yah. That is why the disciples were available to follow Yeshua, because they did not have to work that year. Yeshua was using the normal custom of gathering up students to follow Him and teach torah to them.

#### **YOKE OF AN OX** (2Cor.6:14)



The pictograph of the letter "chet" is that of a wall, fence. In gematria chet represents the number 8. If you picture two oxen with their heads in a yoke; remove the heads, what do you get, a figure 8. If you take the figure 8 and make it square what do you get? You get a fence, "chet". You get a fence that divides but connects. The yoke separates the oxen yet connects them as one (echad). With that said let's look at averse often misunderstood. **2Cor. 6:14** ***"Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?"*** Here we see another yoke in scripture. Most of the time people see reference to this verse they are taught it is in regards to people getting married. That a believer should not marry an unbeliever. There is nothing what-so-ever in this verse that is pointing to that idea. One can easily associate the bound together with the letter chet and the yoke of an oxen, but it has nothing to do with marriage.

Christians today always ask each other: "where do you go to church?". In fact they are saying: "who are you yoked to?", "what religious organization are you yoked to?".

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