

Messianic Rabbi: What If Tevye Was Wrong?

In the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*, there is a scene where two men are arguing and Tevye tells two men on different sides of an issue that they are right, then someone challenges Tevye with the following words: “He’s right, and he’s right? They can’t both be right.”

Tevye replies: “You know, you are also right.” It is a funny moment in the movie; however, was Tevye’s answer correct?

I am often amazed by the dogmatic way some Bible believers argue about what they consider a biblical position as if their view of that position is the only possible position. I have painfully watched people end relationships over arguments of interpretation of Scripture.

But before I go on, please note I said interpretation of Scripture. There are those things that are plain text statements in Scripture that we must remain true to because they are foundational to our faith. However, there are many scriptural texts that can only be understood when we understand that, contrary to Tevye’s statement, both views not only *can* be right, but both views *are* right.

This is the difference between those who believe a glass must be either half full or half empty, when the truth is the glass is both half full *and* half empty. Let me provide an example of a biblical concept people argue about when, in truth, both views are correct. Let’s compare the following two statements from the writings of Paul:

“Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Yeshua died and rose again, so with Him God will also bring

those who have fallen asleep in Yeshua. For this we tell you, by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede those who are asleep" (1 Thess. 4:13-15).

"Therefore we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6-8).

First, we must note that Paul wrote both of these verses and both are speaking of what happens after we die. The Thessalonians verse says after death we sleep, and the Corinthians verse says after death we are at home with the Lord, or said another way, after we die, we go to heaven to be with Yeshua.

These verses, and others like them, have caused great debates and arguments. But, the truth is that Paul's words in Thessalonians are right and Paul's words in Corinthians are right. And yes, unlike Tevye's challenger's statement that both sides cannot be right, the truth is that both are correct.

To understand how both statements are accurate is to understand that in heaven there is no time. Time was created by G-D for us when He created the world. G-D dwells outside of time, and when we die and leave this world, we will also dwell outside of time.

In other words, when we die, the next thing we will know is that we will be with Yeshua. On a side note: this happens to every saved person all at once. No one is waiting for us in heaven and no one gets to heaven before us. You cannot get somewhere earlier than someone else if time doesn't exist.

However, on this planet, within time, faithful people died thousands of years ago and, within the confines of time, they

sleep waiting for the Resurrection. So, in Thessalonians, Paul was right, and in Corinthians, Paul was right. Two biblical passages can appear to disagree, even when written by the same author.

But, the appearance of disagreement doesn't mean that disagreement exists or that either verse is incorrect. It simply means that we need to understand what viewpoint is being presented by the writer at the time.

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