

The Hidden Secrets of Kabbalah-a Messianic Approach

by Michael L. Brown

Michael L. Brown explores the mystical tradition of Kabbalah from a Messianic perspective, highlighting its historical roots and spiritual implications.

Duration: 1:00:36

Scripture: Psalm 101:7, Proverbs 20:17, Matthew 9:12-13, Matthew 11:25, John 9:39-41, 1 Corinthians 2:6-7, Colossians 1:25-27

Topics: "Mystical Judaism", "Divine Presence"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses a mystical encounter in the garden of paradise involving four men: Ben-Azai, Ben-Zoma, An-Akhair, and Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva warns the others not to speak falsehood when they reach the stones of pure marble. Ben-Azai looks and dies, while Rabbi Eliezer questions Rabbi Akiva's decision to dismount from a donkey during their discussion of the divine presence. As Rabbi Eliezer begins to explain the work of the chariot, fire comes down from heaven and all present start to utter divine songs. The speaker also mentions the concept of the shattering of the vessels and the separation between humankind and God.

Transcript

I will present a lecture to you tonight, and I really have prayed, most of you that are here have some spiritual interest of some kind or another. I do have to say that this is the first talk I've ever given that was advertised in the Village Voice. So just out of curiosity, how many of you came here because you saw the ad in the Village Voice? A few raised your hands.

It's okay. Okay, wonderful. Welcome.

How many of you came because somebody gave you just a flyer and you just showed up for that? Okay. How many came because you received an email announcement from chosen people? All right. How many came just by word of mouth, a friend, someone invited you? Okay, now we get spiritual.

How many came because a light came to come to provide this light? All right. No? Oh, all right. Just one.

Thanks. One thing that we all have in common, even though there are diverse backgrounds, is that there's a seeking of spiritual truth or a desire to know God better or understand His purposes better. And I've

really prayed that God would give me something that would be eye-opening for you that would communicate important spiritual truth to each of your hearts.

And I've been a follower of Yeshua for 33 years now, but I remember in the early days, I became a believer when I was 16 in the midst of heavy drug use. And the late 60s, early 70s were a time of great spiritual seeking. Eastern religion had come into America.

Drug use had just expanded certain people's horizons. We felt that these things were mind-opening. And we would have endless discussions in my high school.

In fact, we had just gone on strike in my school because that was the thing to do at that time. We had gone on strike in my high school to change the whole curriculum and to have class in whatever we wanted to study and not have formal grades. We actually succeeded.

We called it SAFE School. SAFE stood for Student and Faculty Education because it would be a learning experience for everyone. And it was.

And in the midst of that time, I became a believer in Jesus and Yeshua. My life was radically transformed. And I remember we had a philosophy class in the school, in our little wing of the high school, SAFE School.

And one of the questions that was asked was, is there an absolute truth? And of course, I was convinced there was. My whole life had been changed. I was convinced that God had revealed himself to me in a definite way and that the scriptures were true.

And I wrote that there was, and I explained why. Interestingly, I was the only one in the class that said there was an absolute truth. So maybe you're a seeker in that same way and saying, I'm looking for different revelation.

I don't believe there's one absolute truth. I want to give you tonight a messianic perspective on Kabbalah. I'm going to give you some background to Kabbalah, or as it's popularly pronounced, Kabbalah.

May share with you some things that you don't know. And then maybe some spiritual insights. So I ask you to really listen carefully with open hearts and open minds.

And then at the end, there'll be time for interaction. We'll have some brief Q&A here, and then there'll be others that'll be able to interact tonight, or even afterwards further, if you're interested. Most of you would know that the word Kabbalah comes from a Hebrew root meaning to receive.

So this is the received tradition. And its origins really go back about 2,000 years. Gnosticism is something that probably had Jewish roots before it had Christian roots.

Gnosticism comes from the Greek word gnosis, which is knowledge. You know the word in English, agnostic, which is a denying of knowing. And Gnostics claim to have a certain special revelation.

And this concept of having a special revelation, a spiritual revelation that was behind the material world that we saw, was very popular in different religious circles. There were Jewish forms of it, and then there were Christian forms of it. In fact, just to give you an insight in terms of how it impacted the Christian world, let me just read you a short quote about Gnosticism from a dictionary of New Testament background.

Gnosticism taught that the material creation, including the body, was regarded as inherently evil. Sparks of divinity, however, had been encapsulated in the bodies of certain pneumatic or spiritual individuals who were ignorant of their celestial origins. The transcendent God sent down a Redeemer who brought them salvation in the form of secret gnosis.

Gnostics hoped to escape from the prison of their bodies at death and to traverse the planetary spheres of hostile demons to be reunited with God. So in the Gnostic mindset, and you'll see in a moment that this ties in with the whole world of Kabbalah. In the Gnostic mindset, salvation, if you want to call it that, was more a matter of receiving special illumination from God or from the deity than a matter of coming into right relationship with it.

Just remember those two concepts. One that just emphasizes illumination. By receiving special illumination, change can come.

The other that emphasizes that the illumination must lead to a relationship with God. Well, there are actually hints of Kabbalistic teachings and beliefs in the Talmud itself. So in the first few centuries of this era, something developed which is called Merkabah mysticism.

Merkabah means chariot. And many of you know in the first chapter of the book of Ezekiel, there's a vision that he had of God on a chariot and the chariots of fire being biblical images. And you look at these pictures and try to conceive them in your mind and they're mystical and deep.

And the rabbis would talk about them and speculate about them. And this became something called Merkabah mysticism. There's an account in the Talmud, for example, in Hagigah 14b.

I'll just share this with you briefly. Most of you probably have not heard this. Once, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachar was riding on a donkey when going on a journey.

Rabbi Eliezer ben Arach was driving the donkey from behind and Rabbi Eliezer said to him, Master, teach me a chapter of the work of the chariot. This is this divine teaching, this revelation of the nature and person of God through the chariots. He answers, Have I not taught you thus? Not the work of the chariot, the presence of one unless he is a sage and understands of his own knowledge.

In other words, you don't talk about these things. It actually became a Jewish teaching that you would not get into Jewish mysticism, this special received tradition, this enlightened tradition. You couldn't study it until you were male, grounded in Jewish studies and were at least 40 years old.

The exact opposite of the popularized, say, Madonna-type style, because you might notice she's neither Jewish nor male nor steeped in Jewish learning, although I imagine she's more than 40 at this point. So Rabbi Eliezer then said to him, Master, permit me to say before you something which you have taught me. He answered, Say on.

Forthwith Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachar dismounted from the donkey, wrapped himself up and sat upon a stone beneath an olive tree. Said Rabbi Eliezer to him, Master, why did you dismount from the donkey? He answered, It is proper that while you were expounding the work of the chariot and the divine presence is with us and the ministering angels accompany us, should I ride on a donkey at that time? Then Rabbi Eliezer ben Arach began his exposition of the work of the chariot and fire came down from heaven and encompassed all the trees in the field. And thereupon they all began to utter divine song.

What was the song they uttered? Praise the Lord from the earth, et cetera, et cetera. It goes on with this whole account of this revelation that comes when they would, when they would expound these truths. It's also taught a little further in the same passage.

Our rabbis taught four men entered the garden, gone Aden, paradise, which means entered into mystical teaching and had this mystical encounter. Four men entered the garden, namely Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, and Acher, and Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva said to them, When you arrive at the stones of pure marble, say not water, water, for it is said he that speaks falsehood shall not be established before my eyes.

Ben Azzai cast a look and died. In other words, four men go in there and this is what happens to them. They have this mystical experience.

They get this special revelation. They have this deeper encounter with God somehow, and they look at something they're not supposed to look at. So, Ben Azzai cast a look and died.

Of him scripture says, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Ben Zoma looked and became demented, loses his mind. Of him scripture says, Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith with vomit.

Acher mutilated the shoots. In other words, he actually apostatized completely from Judaism. Only Rabbi Akiva departed unhurt.

So this was the view. This is very dangerous. This is only for an inner circle.

It is not to be shared with the popular world. It's certainly not to be shared with the non-Jew. It's this only elite knowledge that you can gain if you're part of the inner circle.

We lived right outside of D.C. for nine years, and I was just there a little over a week ago, and we were driving with some friends around the beltway, 495 over there. We were driving with these friends, and they said, What in the world is that? Two beautiful towers going up in the sky. This is gorgeous, white building with gold and thing on top.

You get closer and see it's an angel with a trumpet. What's that? I said, It's a Mormon temple. Ooh.

What goes on in there? I don't know. I can't get in. You have to be a Mormon, and you have to reach a certain level, and then the higher level you reach.

Kind of like the Masons, as I understand it. The more elite, the inner knowledge, the inner circle. I'm not comparing Masonry and Mormonry, or Mormonism, excuse me, and Kabbalah, and this is the big insight.

This is the revelation. They're all one. I'm not saying that.

I'm just saying there's this inner, this elite thing. What's going on in there? What goes on behind those doors, behind that? How come he got the revelation and I didn't? How do I get it? There's this appeal for deeper knowledge that draws people in, and you can understand it. And then when you have it, ooh, I have it.

What is it? I can't tell you. You have to come in the same way I can. Well, as time goes on, mystical teaching develops in many different forms in Judaism, and by the 13th century, there was either a book compiled or finalized in its edited form or according to the tradition released, which is the Zohar, the Book

of Splendor, what's considered to be one of the holiest books in Judaism.

It was a rabbi, Moshe Deleon, who published it and said that it came from around the first century, this Yohanan ben Zekan, when he was hidden in a cave, that he actually composed it. Other scholars said that it was composed over a thousand years later. But either way, it becomes a foundation mark of Kabbalah, and then it's supplemented with other writings.

And there's some of the key concepts, which are that the narratives of Torah, narratives of Scripture, contain a deeper spiritual meaning. This is one of the concepts of Jewish mysticism. And for example, even the plain meaning of the text and the obvious meaning of the words is only the outer surface of the thing.

That's kind of the superficial level. And many of you have heard of Gematria, which has become increasingly popular through various Bible code ideas and different things, that if you count the letters and look at that each letter, of course, has a numerical value. You can add this up and see that this actually means this.

And it's quite fascinating. And on a certain level, the sky's the limit. Because you can add up and figure out whatever you want to add up and figure out.

And that is also part of the draw. And then a couple hundred years later, one of the famous rabbis, Isaac Luria, moved to Safed, modern day Safat, in Israel, which remains a center of Jewish mysticism. He died at the age of 38.

He was only there two years. But he took some of the Kabbalistic views even deeper and developed what's called the Lurianic Kabbalah. And some of his followers would dress in white and go out to meet the Sabbath.

After his death, some even considered him to have been a messianic figure in his day and era. And then out of that, the Lurianic Kabbalah, the next major move, birthed what we know as Hasidic Judaism today. Some of the major Hasidic movements based right here in New York and Brooklyn.

One of their origins is Jewish mysticism. One of the things that set them apart from traditional Judaism was the mystical teaching, which I'm about to go into in a moment. The most modern version of it, which kind of puts together Kabbalah and Zen, maybe a little astrology and tarot cards and every other kind of way to get revelation and hidden knowledge and secretive information.

This is something very different from that which existed in Jewish history, but it takes some of the same concepts and popularizes that. Because after all, people know there's got to be more. People get caught up in this material world and then they say, you know, there's got to be more.

There's got to be deeper truth. There's got to be something hidden. And then they look for explanations to suffering and explanations to the nature of God.

And out of that, this desire for deeper knowledge gets fed and lures many people into this looking for deeper secrets. One of the most interesting chapters, though, takes place in the 17th century. There had been tremendous persecution of the Jews.

There had been massacre of well over 100,000 Jews, the Chmielnicki persecutions, and terrible suffering and great poverty for many of the people. And Jewish mysticism began to rise in the hearts of much of the populace. And a man was born in 1626, according to tradition, on Tisha B'Av, the ninth day of Av, which in Jewish tradition is the day of the destruction of the first and second temples and the day of great suffering in Jewish history.

And according to some traditions, the day on which the Messiah would be born. So that's his birthday. And this man is quite unusual.

He's been analyzed by later scholars as a manic depressant. So he has these extraordinary heights of ecstasy and these terrible, terrible spells of being cast down in deep depression. Shabbatai Zvi was his name, born in Smyrna.

And people began to hail him as a wise man. When he was only 20 years old, he was looked to. And shortly after that, they began to look at him and recognize him as someone of a special holy man.

And there became a view that he was actually the Messiah. He had a prophet that proclaimed him as Messiah. And it ended up being a massive false messianic movement.

Many of the leading rabbis of the day rejected him, but some actually followed him. And leading businessmen sold their possessions to follow him and be part of this messianic movement. And he went into the Sultan of Turkey, and he was now going to reveal himself as Messiah with a large following.

And what happened was the Sultan basically gave him an ultimatum. Either you basically bow down before me or die. So he converted to Islam.

Well, when he converted to Islam, many of his followers also converted to Islam because they believed that somehow that there was a tradition that the world had to be either entirely righteous or entirely wicked for the Messiah to reveal himself. So he was trying to bring people to God and righteousness, and because that failed, now he was initiating the final end-time apostasy so everyone would become totally wicked, and then the Messiah could be revealed. And amazingly, many of his followers went the way of converting to Islam.

And as late as last century, the middle of last century, there were still these secret followers of Shabbatai Zvi who were living as Muslims. They were called the Donmeh. And they still incorporate in their Islamic prayers references to Shabbatai Zvi as Messiah.

And Gershom Scholem, in his masterful work on Shabbatai Zvi, the Mystical Messiah, opens up the book to say the only way you can understand what actually happened in his day and how people actually believed in him as Messiah is to understand the mysticism of the day. And you open it up, and it gets from strange to almost bizarre to wild if you have no background in it. And as a result of that, it paved the way for a massive false messianic movement.

And many of the Kabbalists in his day were then persecuted by mainstream Judaism, if you call it that, or the Orthodox Judaism of its day, because of what happened with Shabbatai Zvi. Even today with the Lubavitchers, many of whom still believe that their late deceased Rebbe Menachem Schneerson, who died in June of 1994, many of whom still believe that he is the Messiah, or he was the Messiah, potential Messiah of the last generation. Some of the beliefs that they have were strengthened by the fact that they have mystical teaching indicated that he was the seventh Rebbe in this line, and there were certain

mystical times of redemption, and that fuels the fire for their messianic speculation.

It's just interesting how whole movements can be birthed out of this when it's so obscure to most. Let me just mention a couple of the better known Kabbalistic teachings in Jewish tradition, and then having said that, I want to give you a completely different take on these things. And I want you to hear me out when I do.

I do appreciate your being here for that very reason. So I want to just talk a couple more minutes about some of these actual Kabbalistic principles and views, and then give you a whole different take, a whole different perspective. Again, like I said, it is not that Kabbalah equals Mormonism and Masonry, and there is a world conspiracy between Masons, Mormons, and Madonna, because it all starts with the letter M. I'm not going to give you any theory like that, sorry.

If you want to work on that, you can write your own book on it. I hope it will sell. But I do want to come at this from a completely different angle in a moment.

One of the Kabbalistic views spoke of God as the Ein Sof, as the One without limit. That's what it literally is in Hebrew. No end.

Here's just a simple dictionary definition, but I'll show you how complex it gets. Before He gave any shape to the world, before He produced any form, He was alone. Without form and without resemblance to anything else, speaking of God, who then can comprehend how He was before the creation? Hence it is forbidden to lend Him any form or similitude, or even to call Him by His sacred name, or to indicate Him by a single letter or a single point.

But after He created the form of the heavenly man, He used Him as a chariot wherein to descend, and He wishes to be called after His form, which is the sacred name Yahweh. One of the things in Jewish mysticism is the use of sacred names, and even sacred amulets, and things that ward off evil eyes. There's a recognition often of the reality of the spiritual realm, the demonic and the heavenly.

And so how does this Ein Sof, who fills the universe, make room for humanity and earthly creation? It's what is called Sim Su, which is contraction. The same root from which we get the word for fasting on Yom Kippur. It's a diminishing, it's a contraction.

And so God somehow contracts Himself so that there's room for the earthly material creation. I'm just putting these in the simplest possible forms. But that also means that everything in creation on some level is filled with divinity.

But there is something called the Shirat HaKelim, the shattering of the vessels, the breaking of the vessels. There's been a severing of humankind from God. There's been what Christians would call the fall.

There's something went terribly wrong, and the vessels are shattered. And there are these husks, these demonic husks that are standing in the way. Again, I'm just putting things in the simplest possible terms, because it would take an expert in Kabbalah years to open up all of these things, and I'm just sharing a few simple, basic things in a popular form tonight.

But what happens is, what do you do? Everything's broken. Everything's in a shattered form, and yet there's a spark of divinity, especially within a Jew. So the whole goal is what is called Tikkun, Tikkun HaOlam, the reparation or the restoration of the world.

So a Hasidic Jew will actually believe that even in his daily actions, by keeping the commandments, that he is part of this Tikkun, that by observing Shabbat and getting other Jews to do the same, it is this process of Tikkun. And since everybody on a certain level wants to make the world a better place, and if it really doesn't cost me anything to help make the world a better place, hey, fill me in on this secret knowledge. Sounds good.

So Tikkun becomes this very popular concept, name of magazines, popularized even among non-Jews, etc. The concept of Tikkun HaOlam. How does this aim self, this infinite God, reveal himself to earthly man? I mean, he's spirit.

Remember how the Gnostics felt that God is spirit and the creation is fleshly, earthly, and therefore there's this gap between the two? The Gnostics said that out of the one creator God came this lower God, the Demiurge. So out of the eternal God, I should say, came this lower God, the Demiurge, who created then the earthly sphere and who's somehow a lesser deity. And in a parallel way, the Jewish mystics taught that there were these ten spherotes.

We could call them spheres in English, but emanations from God. Some said it was the aim self, the eternal God himself, beginning with crown and coming down until it touches earth. Some said there was God and then these ten spherotes.

And then they applied them. Just to give you an example of how far it goes, man is created after his prototype, the primordial man, and whom are combined all the ten spherotes. And the latter are represented in his own body by the ten following members, head, brain, heart, right arm, etc.

So everything has this parallel. You see all these diagrams of the spherote and how they're linked together. Some of you say, well, it's either complex or boring or interesting, but just sounds out there.

Well, once you buy into it, wow, I didn't know that. How? So this is linked to this, and this works with this, and this connects with this. But they're asking a simple question.

How does the infinite eternal God touch man? And how do we have a greater illumination and revelation of him? Now, these are just a few basic facts, history, and some of the key teachings in Kabbalah. But I want to step back and ask a few questions and present a few things to you. And if this rocks your world at all, I'll be glad.

If it leaves you completely indifferent, then perhaps I haven't given you anything really useful. But if what I'm about to say presents some profound challenges for you, or causes you to think, or maybe you hit a brick wall in the direction that you're going and this causes some reevaluation, I'll be happy because ultimately it will put you on a path of real truth. There's a warning in the New Testament where Yeshua is speaking prophetically.

He's speaking to one of his servants, Yohanan, John, with a message from one of the congregations in Asia Minor. These were followers of Yeshua, and in this case, many Gentile followers among them. And he warned them about the lure of Satan's so-called deep secrets.

Isn't this an interesting concept? There's a warning about these so-called deep secrets. Notice, you have the truth, but you don't really have it. You have the light, but you only have the partial light.

Everything you're doing is superficial and outward, and we have the real revelation. Nobody that's a spiritual person wants to feel carnal. No one that's a spiritual person wants to be absorbed with earthly things, material things, fleshly things.

They want to know God somehow. And here are these Gnostics and other teachers. They actually said Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, didn't actually come in the flesh.

He existed in the flesh for a time, but he was spirit only, and then he left the earth and someone else was crucified. That was just a physical human being, because you cannot associate God with the material realm. That's why it's actually taught.

Yohanan taught in 1 John 4 that anyone that claims that Jesus, the Messiah, did not come in the flesh, in a human body, is a false prophet, because these people were claiming deeper knowledge, deeper revelation, deeper insight. There's a proverb in the book of Proverbs that simply says this, stolen water is sweet, and food eaten in secret is delicious. If you have a Bible, when you go home, look in Proverbs, the ninth chapter.

There, wisdom, lady wisdom, cries out. It's public. When God gives an invitation, he gives it publicly.

He gives it that everyone can hear. He doesn't do it in such a way that it's discriminatory. He gives it in such a way that it's open to everyone who will humble themselves and listen to him.

So lady wisdom stands and says, you're foolish, you're lacking knowledge, come this way. But folly, which claims to have the truth but doesn't, uses similar words but then says stolen water is sweet, food eaten in secret is delicious. I don't know if you can think back, any of you, maybe when you were young, were not particularly honest, maybe you stole something, maybe you stole a candy bar one time.

At the end, we're going to have a confession for anyone that stole a candy bar or something. Maybe you did something like that. It was always more exciting.

Someone had just robbed a bank and is spending the money. Someone had stole something. It's more exciting, because you broke the law.

You crossed a barrier to get it. Here, there may be married men here, and you love your wife, you go home tonight, and it's just normal, because you've been married for a number of years, it's just normal relationship. Oh, but if there was something, oh, the lady you work with, and this one that you can't have, there's the appeal of what's forbidden.

The appeal of what's hidden. The appeal of, it's somehow behind the curtain, behind the veil. I remember, I think it was in fifth grade, Mr. Daly's English class.

A package came in the room for the instructor, Mr. Daly. A package came in, sitting on his desk. We could just go on with the class, but there was one young lady in joy.

She just had her eyes fixed on it, and finally she couldn't take it anymore. She said, what's in the package? What's in the package? It had nothing to do with her, but because it was there in a package, she had to know what it was. Food eaten in secret is delicious.

Oh, no, no, no. I have the deeper way. I have the hidden way.

Cross this line. Come over to the forbidden, and I can reveal something to you. There's always that lure.

There's an interesting account in 2 Kings chapter 6. There was a Syrian, an Aramean general named Naman, and he was a leper. He had this severe skin condition, and he hears from his servant girl, who's an Israelite, that there's a prophet in Israel, Elisha, Elisha the prophet, who can certainly heal, certainly cure him. So he decides, all right, he's going to go to Elisha, and he comes with chariots and all of this, and all right, the general is here, and Elisha doesn't even come out.

Elisha sends somebody and says, tell him to go wash the river Jordan seven times, and he'll be healed. And he's outraged. He's very upset.

He says, I thought he was going to come and raise his staff and heal me, and dah, dah, dah, and maybe kind of lightning comes, whoosh, this whole thing. That part's not in the scripture. I'm just explaining what he was thinking.

It would be this big dramatic moment honoring me as the general. He says, go wash in the Jordan. I could go wash anywhere.

Why did I come all the way from my country? I can wash in my home country. There are plenty of rivers better than the stinky Jordan here. And you know what the servant girl says? If he asked you to do a difficult thing, would you do it? If he said, all right, you must climb the highest mountain, swim the deepest sea, you must go 30 days without food, and then walk through a desert, and then come back here, if she, by the way, that's my paraphrase, that part, in case you go read it and say, boy, I don't remember reading that part.

If he asked you to do a difficult thing, wouldn't you have done it? And he realizes, okay, I've just got to humble myself. It's not the big thing. It's not the exalted thing.

It's not the hidden thing. And so many times we miss it because all those things appeal to pride. I know.

I have. This is now in me. Look at my background.

Look at my knowledge. Some of us were at a meeting yesterday discussing some school-related things, and pretty much everyone in the room had a Ph.D., and one of the men had made the comment, I used to respect degrees, I used to respect Ph.D.s until I earned one myself. I said, oh, yeah, I said, the reason I have no concern or interest in degrees is having earned them, you realize it doesn't really mean anything.

I'm convinced that the best of any of us, the most brilliant, the most learned, with the greatest traditions, with the most years of study, who know the most languages, who know the most everything, that the best we can say is I'm slightly less ignorant than the next person, at best. This appeal that says just get low and receive it as a gift is very difficult. If I can pay for it, if I can earn it, if I can attain to this deeper life, just the simple humble yourself and receive it as a gift often messes with us.

Now, here's what's so interesting. I'm going to come back to Kabbalah in a couple of minutes. Very interesting that when you get to the writings of the New Covenant, and most of the books were written in Greek, or all were written in Greek originally, perhaps a couple may have been written in Hebrew originally, but they're all preserved for us in Greek because that was the language of the people.

That was the way to get to the most people. So it's written in Greek, and then there's a verb, crypto, from which we get words like cryptic, et cetera, which means to hide, and the verb occurs in several different forms. And if you'll study, if you know Greek at all, and you'll go through the New Testament, you'll see it talks a lot about stuff being hidden.

On the one hand, almost everything that's hidden now is going to be revealed on that day. You know, somebody's a serial killer and they hide the body in the side of the road, later it's discovered, well, every secret thing, every wrong word, every thought, it's all going to be revealed and uncovered on that day. And there's also the fact that Yeshua taught in parables.

And one reason that he taught in parables was because those that weren't really serious wouldn't get what he was saying. I, I knew that stuff from before he was born. I heard this for years.

Nothing. But those that were humble would say, hey, explain this to us, and he would open the meeting. It was hidden from some and revealed to others.

There's even a consistent teaching in the New Testament, and I'll give you some references. Consistent teaching in the New Testament that said that this, this revelation of the Messiah, this, this son of God coming into the world to save us, Jew and Gentile alike, had been hidden for centuries. It was, it was now revealed.

And the prophet, the prophetic book suddenly opened up. There it is. There it is written.

It was there, it was written, but it had been hidden and is now revealed in the coming of the Messiah. But here's what's interesting. Let me, let me give you some references.

Romans 16, 25 and 26. Paul speaks of this. He speaks of the mystery kept secret for so long, but now an open book through the prophetic scriptures.

Or 1 Corinthians 2, 6 and 7. He said, we do speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. You can also jot down Colossians 1, 25 to 27.

Colossians 1, 25 to 27. But look at what Yeshua says. This is in his lifetime, before he dies and rises from the cross.

A lot of the religious leaders, some of whom were sincere people, but, but not willing to humble themselves before him. A lot of the religious leaders rejected him. Some even said when he's driving out demons and healing the sick, they recognized there was power at work, but they said it's demonic power.

Those who are the most learned, instead of humbling themselves and recognizing what was being taught, missed it. And others who recognized their own need, came to him. I spoke about that theme this morning, that Yeshua addressed that, that he didn't come for the, for the righteous, but for sinners.

And it's not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. So, so the first key to receiving God's help is to recognize our sickness, recognize our need, recognize our sin, and then we can be healed and restored. So what does Yeshua say? Matthew 11, 25.

He said, I praise you father, Matthew 11, 25, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children. Yes, father, for this was your good pleasure. And you see on a certain level, the only way that God can be fair is not only to reveal himself to the brilliant, to the learned, not only reveal himself to the super privileged and elite, but to reveal himself to whoever will recognize their need.

To reveal himself to whoever will recognize their own spiritual bankruptcy. Those who said we can see, he said you're blind. Those who say we're blind, help us, he opened their eyes.

Now, what's the point of this? The point is, there is hidden treasure and hidden wisdom. There absolutely is. The mysteries of God.

How an infinite and eternal God touches man. How he brings healing and restoration to the world. How he transforms the human race.

How he comes and dwells on the inside of human beings and transforms our nature so that we share in his goodness and his love and his character. And that we share in his eternal life. There is hidden wisdom.

I'll tell you where it's found in a moment. Oh, out of time, sorry. No, that was just for dramatic effect.

Make sure you're listening. Okay, listen. Some years ago, there was a lot of talk among astronomers about certain scientific developments in their community that indicated that at a certain point in time, it seemed like there was something that could be called an act of creation.

That if you were explaining it in religious terms, you would call it creation. They still believed in everything they believed in evolution and these various other things. But somehow, in their own scientific study, they began to conclude that it was not just these gases over a period of time morphing into this and that.

And somehow, amazingly, they have to believe in the eternity of the gases. They can't believe in the eternity of a God, who by definition is eternal. But they have to believe in the eternity of matter, which by definition is not eternal.

But what can I say? I'm not a scientist. And for some of the scientific community, I read an article by an astronomer. It was called An Astronomer Finds God.

For some of the scientific community, it shattered a lot of what they believed. And the analogy he gave was this. He said, it's as if we've been climbing this mountain for decades and decades and decades, and we finally get to the top of the mountain and get to the pinnacle of truth.

And there we find a theologian sitting there with his Bible. No, it can't possibly be. In the same way, I want to present something to you that at first glance, for some of you, is the very thing that you'll reject and the very place where you will not look for the hidden wisdom.

And I tell you, that's why you miss it. God is a lot more wise than we could possibly imagine. And he is so wise that through his foolishness, he manifests his wisdom so that we have to get on our faces.

We become wise when we recognize our ignorance. We become wise when we recognize the depth of our need. We become wise when we recognize that we are lost in our way.

So listen to this. Listen to what Paul saw of Tarsus, one of the most influential Jews in world history. Listen to what he said, Colossians 2, 2 and 3. He's explaining why he does what he does.

He said, My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding. If you read the New Testament, you'll see a lot of prayers for full understanding, for revelation, for insight, for the opening of our eyes to see what's really there. That they may have the full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Messiah, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Hear me. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All of the divine deposit, you could say.

Everything there is to know about him and to experience in him is hidden in Yeshua. And it's hidden, in particular, in his death on the cross. It's hidden, in particular, in his being rejected and despised.

The one place we wouldn't look. I mean, God does it for the whole world to see, because he wants the whole world to know. And because he loves the whole world.

But the one place that people will just systematically say, well, look, the place I know I won't receive any insight, revelation, deeper truth, the stuff I'm getting from Kabbalah and all these new revelations and the infinite spirit of insights. The one place I know doesn't have it is there. This Jewish carpenter hanging on a cross and dying a criminal's death.

And God says, it's all hidden there. And the power is released and revealed there. And Paul wrote, listen, Greeks are always looking for wisdom.

Show me a new argument. Show me a new understanding. I'll get caught up in the beauty of the rhetoric and the argument.

That's what will impress me. And he said, Jews are looking for a sign. What's the sign that you read in the Messiah? Show us.

Demonstrate it in power. Work a miracle that we can know, especially in the first century. He said, you know, we preach.

We preach the Messiah crucified. He said, to the Greeks, foolishness. There's no wisdom in that.

Criminal dying on a cross. What if I said, the great revelation of God is found in that man who was just electrocuted. We criminals get electrocuted.

He said, we preach this to Jews, and it's a stumbling block. Well, the one thing we know is that the Messiah couldn't possibly die. Confounds our wisdom.

Confounds our way of thinking. But to those who believe, Messiah, wisdom of God, and Messiah, the power of God, it's all hidden there. And the incredible beauty of this is that everybody has to go the same way.

Everybody has to humble themselves and recognize their need and recognize the one many of us despised, rejected, mocked, wrote off as just the founder of some dead religion, that the wisdom of God is found in him. And you know what goes even further? When you humble yourself and walk through that door, you come into the life of God. You know, Paul spoke of another mystery? And I'll just go back a little

bit.

Almost 100 years ago, there was an American Christian leader who went over to South Africa and began to establish a work there and reach out to many black and white people there and bring them together in the Lord. And because many different people from different nations had been coming in to do work and labor there, he began to have discussions. He met Buddhist leaders and Hindu leaders.

There was a rabbi there who later became chief rabbi of England, actually. And he got these folks together and he said, hey, let's have a talk. We'll stay up late at night and we'll talk each week.

Each of you bring the revelation of God that you have, the revelation of spiritual truth that you have, and let's learn from one another. He was so curious to see how much light can someone have? What does someone have? What kind of insight? And each week someone presented. It was excellent.

And then the rabbi did, Rabbi Herzen, he said it was incredible. This revelation of God he brought through the scriptures, through the Hebrew Bible, in the light of Jewish tradition. Very powerful and wonderful.

And he said, God, what can I possibly say that will open anyone's eyes the next week to the truth, the revelation we have? And God brought his attention to Colossians 1. I'll read this, verses 25 to 27. He says, this good news I have become a servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God that's fullest. The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles. That's the thing that got everybody upset. You mean the riches of the God of Israel are going to the Gentiles and they get it for free? Uh-huh.

People don't want to accept that. It's just, it's too easy in that sense. But then the reflex is it costs you absolutely everything to receive it.

You have to die to your pride. You have to die to your will. You have to die to the ownership of your life.

And you have to surrender to receive the gift. Many don't like that. Don't tell me to go dip in the Jordan.

Give me some accomplishment. That'll do it. This is the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints, to the believers.

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Messiah in you, the hope of glory. John Lake said that he opened up to these people that what happened when Jesus, Yeshua, came into the world and died and rose from the dead. He not only opened the way for all men to know God and receive forgiveness of sins, but he came and lived within them and transformed their nature so that the divine nature now lived in them.

He said no other religion had that truth. No other religion had that revelation. And it even says in Colossians 3 that when we believe in Messiah, we die and our lives are now hidden with him and God.

I mean this stuff gets very deep. I quote you from Revelation 2.17 that Yeshua says whoever overcomes that will give him some of the hidden manna. I mean there's all this hidden stuff in there, but it only comes to the humble.

Let me point out a few things to you. Today's Kabbalah teaching, offering insight, revelation, spiritual meaning, really doesn't deal with human sin. We always like to add something to us.

We always like to have some kind of an addition or some information, but when it actually convicts my life and says guilty, nobody likes that word. Nobody likes to go to the doctor and the doctor says that little pain you're having is cancer. We have to cut you open.

We'd rather that he gave us a new hat or a scarf. You know sometimes before I'll do some TV show, you know you have to be made up. It's not so you look made up, but because of the TV lights without the make up you look like a ghost.

And you know often I have rings under my eyes, bands under my eyes, whatever. Just a little tired or getting older, both. Start to feel tired even talking about it.

And I'll sit there and suddenly the bands are gone. They just do a little bit here, there and there. Suddenly I actually feel healthier and stronger sitting there and younger and nothing actually happens.

Just make up. Just cosmetics. A lot of what Kabbalah is offering people today in the name of truth is just spiritual cosmetics.

It does not bring about a change of heart, a change of life. It does not deal with the issue of sin. It does not deal with the issue of human responsibility.

Not just oh if I do this good or put on this bracelet or wear this red thing or this and that, it will bring about something. I'm talking about transformation of life. Of life taking responsibility.

True repentance. Where does it offer forgiveness of sin and right relationship with God? It doesn't. It offers illumination.

And some of it is just outright dabbling into the demonic realm. When you start fishing in the spiritual realm, you don't know what you're going to catch or what's going to catch you. I happen to spot, just before coming over here, did a search on the internet for the term Tzimtzum, contraction.

So I spotted a decent definition. Tzimtzum is essentially a Kabbalistic term. The omnipotent God generated the void in which to create a universe by withdrawing from a certain space.

A space that might then be filled by God's creation. Tzimtzum is the act of that withdrawal, contraction or concentration of energy into a primordial point. Well, this is, the next definition after Tzimtzum is Zen.

This is just kind of a philosophical, spiritual site and now Tzimtzum psychologically relates to the shrinking of the self and the understanding that power does not make an individual infallible or the same as God and so on. It's just all types of human philosophy. There's that appeal.

When you start playing around with sacred names and codes and this and that, you know what happens? The plain truth of scripture can't speak to anyone. It's as if I say to you, hello, and you say, hello. That stands for happy.

E, that stands for ecstatic. L, that stands for lethargic lying. O, that stands for optimist.

So he has a multi-faced personality. No, hello means hello. When God speaks in scripture, he's speaking plainly and wants me to play games with him.

Here's what happens. There's no longer the authority of God. We bypass that looking for mystical truth and imagery.

Kabbalah fails, especially in its popularized form, to deal with these issues. We must go through the open door, but in order to do that, we humble ourselves and then we go into the depths of God. This whole concept of the shattering of the vessels, I hear that and I say, absolutely.

I was speaking to a gentleman the other day whose sexual preference was different than mine. And he said to me, so you say that I'm sinning because I have feelings for other men. And I said, no, I'm not saying you're sinning because of that.

Certain actions you can commit based on that are a sin. I said, but that's just the fact that we're a flawed human race. We're all flawed in different ways because the whole world is messed up.

If the whole world wasn't messed up, we wouldn't be spending billions of dollars on arms just to protect each other from each other. I mean, just think for a minute. What if your neighbor comes home with a knife? You look at that and boom, you get a gun, pistol.

Next thing he sees you walking with a pistol, boom, comes in with a shotgun. Next thing you see him come in with a shotgun, you get yourself a machine gun. He sees you coming in with a machine gun.

Next thing he sells his car and he comes in with some bazooka or some kind of thing. You see him walk in with that. Next thing, you know, you sell your car and you're selling, put steel around your house and now you buy some arsenal.

Next thing you see he's, you know, he's coming and he's got some Russian looking guy with some dirty bomb or something that's just come in, you know, or some Iranian, not to stereotype everyone, but just where some of these dirty bombs are supposed to be in. Next thing you think, what kind of world is this? But you realize that's just common knowledge that multiplied billions that we spent. All the world is because we know if we don't have it, someone will bomb us and destroy us and take over.

It's just human nature. We're flawed. And the same way, there may be someone who's a heterosexual but he may have desires for a woman he's not married to or she for a man that doesn't belong to him.

And this one can do good but the moment they do good they're filled with pride because we're a messed up human race. It's not some mystical way that things are going to be repaired. It's by recognizing God we're flawed and because of it we do wrong things.

This gentleman said to me, I believe we're made perfectly by God. But he couldn't quite explain all of our sin and flaws and I said, you believe we're a perfect five-story building? I believe we're a flawed skyscraper. That is, we're made in the image of God but fell dramatically and terribly messed everything up and we must recognize it until we humble ourselves.

If we just want some cosmetic answer, you won't get it. You'll deceive yourself and you'll die without God and realize the revelation you thought you had didn't make it over the grave. But if you realize, yeah, I see, I see wrong things because the things that I say are okay in me.

I condemn what other people do. I mean, it happens a hundred times a day, a thousand times a day, a million times a day in New York City. It happens to some of us.

You know, somebody cuts in front of you, you lay on the horn, jerk. You're restraining the anger. How could he cut in front? You ever have, you're getting on the parkway somewhere and you're supposed to cut in, mine here but that lane's open, the exit lane's open.

So you go driving all the way down to the end of the exit lane and then wait for a truck or something like that and cut in front. That's okay. I mean, that's fully justifiable.

We all do it. Oh, but somebody tries to cut in front of you. What are they doing? How dare they cut in line? Oh, we do the same thing.

You see some guy looking at some magazines, you know, some porno magazines somewhere and you see him glancing at them and man, he's like, I want it unclean. It's a predator, it's a sexual predator. And in the next window, you look at the same thing and you say, God, you know my heart, you know I don't want to do this anymore.

How is it we so readily identify sin in the lives of others? Because it's what we see in our own lives. The real tycoon comes when we recognize we can't possibly fix ourselves. That's why Yeshua was completely broken for us.

There it is for everyone to see, but it's completely hidden until you humble yourself, until you realize, God, I need your help to the point of complete transformation of life. Even the idea of what Christians call the incarnation, that God made himself known and lived among us through Jesus while remaining God Almighty in heaven. He comes in the sun and lives among us.

That's considered idolatrous by many Jews. And if you need more info on this, the second volume of the Jewish Objection series deals with this at some length. But let me just read something to you and then I'm going to bring things to a close pretty quickly.

But I started to think about, okay, this whole idea of Spirot and these other ways that Judaism tries to explain how the infinite unseen God can touch man. But instead of having a Christian tell us about it, let's have an Orthodox rabbi preach it to us. So I just kind of paraphrased some things from some Jewish writings and put it like this.

It's page 8 of volume 2. So here's an old Jewish rabbi unfolding the mysteries of God. So he strokes his long gray beard and says, I don't talk to everyone about this. These things are really quite deep, but you seem sincere, so I'll open up some mystical concepts to you.

So he begins to tell you about the ten Spirot, the so-called divine emanations that act as intermediaries or graded links between the completely spiritual unknowable creator and the material sublunar world. When you say, but doesn't that contradict our belief in the unity of God? He replies, God is an organic whole. I mean, these are actually quotes from various Hasidic and Jewish writings.

God is an organic whole, but with different manifestations of power. Just as the life of the soul is one, though manifested variously in the eyes, hands, and other limbs, God and his Spirot are just like a man and his body. His limbs are many, but he is one.

Or to put it another way, think of a tree which has a central trunk and yet many branches. There is unity and there is multiplicity in the tree and the human body and in God too. Do you understand? Now think of the same rabbi saying to you, consider that in our scriptures God was pictured as enthroned in heaven, yet at the same time he manifested himself in the cloud and the fire of the tabernacle, while also putting his Spirit on his prophets.

And all the while the Bible tells us that his glory was filling the universe. Do you see that God's unity is complex? What if this rabbi began to touch on other mystical concepts of God, such as the mystery of the three, in Aramaic, Rasa Diltata, explaining that in the Zohar there are five different expressions relating to various aspects of the threefold nature of the Lord. What would you make of the references to, quote, three heads, three spirits, three forms of revelation, three names, and three shades of interpretation? This is all Zohar, this is all Jewish mysticism that relates to the divine nature.

The Zohar even asks, how can these three be one? Are they only one because we call them one? How they are one we can only know by the urging of the Holy Spirit, and then even with closed eyes. And we hear that. Those that are followers of Yeshua, we have the answer.

Very deep, but actually very simple. It's Jesus actually. He's actually the one through whom God is known, and he walks among us, and he says, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father.

Remember when he said you have to humble yourself like a child to see him? And when you see him, the light goes on. Here there are, quoting again from a Hasidic dictionary, a dictionary of Hasidism, some Hasidim teach that the performance of the mitzvot, the commandments, is to help the Shekhinah to unite with Tiferet, the sphere of glory or beauty, the male principle. The sins of Israel hinder this union and prevent the reunification of worlds, which is a necessary prerequisite for the coming of God's kingdom.

The Hasidim, in accordance with this belief, adopted the formula, much deplored by their opponents, since when they would pray, they would say, for the sake of the unification of the Holy One, thus be he a Shekhinah, as they recited before the performance of mitzvot. So God, on some level, is in disunity, and they are praying for his reunification. This is some Hasidic thought.

We say, well, this whole thing we can explain to you. God comes down in the sun because somehow we have to be able to touch him and know him, yet he remains gone and thrown into heaven because God is not a man. And when we humble ourselves and come to him, we find the hidden treasures of wisdom.

So let me bring this to a close and say these last things. The Kabbalistic appeal in many ways, again, especially in its popularized form, in many ways is an appeal to the flesh, to human nature, to pride, to elitism, to being part of the enlightened group. And you introduce others to this, and it adds something to them, theoretically.

The real call of God is the exact opposite. It's not stolen water. It's not food eaten in secret.

It's open for the world to see Messiah hanging naked on a cross, bleeding for our sins. The very thing we stumble over and call foolish and devoid of power, that's where all the power is.

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