



## To Whom Are You Yoked?

*(We are Always Under Authority: The Question is Which One?)*

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Undershepherd


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
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The Biblical meaning of the Rod continues to be the most popular article on our website. There is an addendum to it some time ago when I realized the connection between a staff and yoke, both symbols of authority. A staff is merely a yoke laid across the neck and shoulders which provides either bondage or a positive guidance. In these days of increasing darkness and confusion, it seems wise once again for us to be aware of what constitutes the correct authority we are to honor, our Mighty One, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and His Son, our Redeemer, Messiah Yeshua!

The crucial point is *with whom* one is yoked, both in the human sense and in regard to our God, our Authority. Now I have another perspective to expand on this. The staff and yoke are also related to the snake. I offer considerations based on word study and thematic study of the Scriptures, both Old and New. It has been surprising to see how often staffs, (*Strong's #4294-mattah*) yokes, (*Strong's #5923-ol*) and snakes (*Strong's #5175-nahash*) figure throughout the Word, and how much they are related.

### Word Study

*Mattah* is one of several words for "staff" that has to do with tribe and authority. In the ancient script it may have looked like this:  The waters, a basket and the figure for behold! Together, they would seem to indicate a branch that contains waters, so one that is green, alive and flexible; as a good leader should well be. A great deal of detail on this has been provided in a previous piece on the rod as mentioned above. The Shepherd's staff acts both in defense of the sheep, and to guide/direct the sheep under the authority of the shepherd. In Exodus 8, Aaron's rod with which he turned dirt into lice is from the word *mattah* so we see a clear connection to supernatural use of the rod as well as the straightforward shepherding sense of it.

The word "ol" refers to a yoke, which is a staff laid across the neck/shoulders for guidance. The Hebrew meaning in the pictographic form,  has to do with the eye and the shepherd's staff being connected with the peg. It confirms that a yoke is like the shepherd's rod laid across the shoulders of two oxen/cattle. Generally one is older, stronger, wiser, more experienced. This one is yoked with a young one who needs to learn. Thus, Yeshua is our older, stronger, wiser, more experienced teacher, and thus our burden from His yoke IS light! And as always, there is an opposite picture in the brutal weight and restriction of a yoke put on by an oppressor.

Here is one of many observations on the matter of a master, a disciple and a yoke, though I have not yet been able to locate a primary source. This one is from Penei Adonai, a fellowship that is apparently no longer in existence.

*Because of a passage in Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus), the Jews of first century Judea called a system of teaching -- how a sage studied of Torah and interpreted of Torah, the parables and sayings he shared, and his practical lifestyle -- a "yoke". This is what Yeshua spoke of about himself in Matthew 11:28-30:*

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.  
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

**נחש** in the pictographic form; a seed, a wall and front teeth; I might say it refers to a seed of destruction that can divide. It has the same consonants as its root word with only one different vowel pointing. It is through the association of the root word for "snake" that we see the association with a hissing sound which is also associated with divination and whispering of incantations or magic spells. It is also related to copper or bronze, either as a common color for the snake or perhaps simply coincidental. Vine's entry also added an observation that the living snake has to do with evil but the bronze snake, mentioned below, is a confirmation of God's righteous judgment simply by the type of metal.

### **Thematic Pictures**

Eve accepted false teaching/unwise counsel from a snake pretending to be an authority.

Moses was told to take the staff and turn it into a snake and then back to the staff. This was part of proving the authority of YHWH in which he spoke. The magicians in Pharaoh's court could appear to duplicate this. Yet the snake from the Rod of Aaron/Moses devoured theirs. There is only ONE true authority and He WILL overcome the "fakes."

There is also a connection to the snake/serpent on a pole that brought healing into the camp. The pole/staff of authority held THE serpent/shining one lifted up so that when one turned one's eyes upward, healing would come! (The Greek word translated "cross" is "stauros" which is more accurately translated as "pole." (Strong's 4716) The TWOT observed:

*as the object of faith resembled the curse in the case of the "snakes,"  
so Jesus resembled the cursed in that he took the form of a servant  
and was made in the likeness of man (Phil 2:7)*

This bronze or copper serpent on the pole stayed until it became an idol and had to be destroyed in Hezekiah's day. His being lifted up on a pole is our salvation. But misunderstanding Him and Who He is, or applying a legalistic bent to it becomes death instead of life. And, mistaking a false one for THE correct One will also lead to death instead of life.

**Snakes and staffs are connected thematically.**

**Staffs, yokes and authority are connected thematically.**

The yoke of Yeshua Messiah is good, easy and right. The other kind of staff/yoke, the fakes are not so light and bring one into bondage/idolatry, appealing to a false god.

So Eve made a tactical error and Adam did nothing to correct it. Both came under unwise authority and counsel...which led to death and is still doing so today...until each person comes under the correct authority and

accepts the correct yoke/staff. (The absence of leadership or authority is called anarchy and there is certainly no peace or rest there.)

The Egyptians Pharaoh's headpiece features a snake, a symbol of their authority; clearly an opposite authority to that of Yeshua! The authority they listened to led them to destruction in the Red Sea, never to rise as a dominant nation again, yet playing a prominent part in attacking Israel as we see still today.

They listened to the wrong authority...as so many are at risk and are in fact already doing today. Listening to the wrong authority and thinking they HAVE to run harder and faster to make more money and to comply with hiding personal faith to avoid being pushed off the cliff...thinking that they only need believe without also obeying and being in the yoke with Messiah... listening to the wrong authority and becoming enslaved to idolatry and false teaching.

My mental picture came in loud and clear:

A snake draped across the shoulders whispering in your ear ... the wrong authority.

*Abba, YHWH, please increase in us true knowledge of You, Your character and Your plan. May our discernment be such that we do not fall under the influence of the wrong authority. May we accept the yoke of Your lifestyle and teachings as our desired path and goal. Please give us wise and discerning shepherds so that we can learn in the company of one more experienced and stronger than we are, until we are face to face with You! May it be so!*

## Resources

[E Sword Live Online](#)

[The Blue Letter Bible](#)

*Strong's Concordance*

*The Complete Word Study Series* by Spiros Zodhiates

*The Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible* by Jeff A. Benner, VBW Publishing

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Moody Press

*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testaments*, W.E. Vine et al

[www.penei.org](http://www.penei.org) P'nei Adonai Congregation site

Please contact us at [info@set-apart-ministries.org](mailto:info@set-apart-ministries.org) for any further information on this matter or check out our other articles regarding shepherding needs at [www.set-apart-ministries.org](http://www.set-apart-ministries.org) Shalom in Messiah!