

14 Tammuz, 5774 (12/7/14) **Solid Spiritual Stability: Community Stability** J. M. Terrett

Pinchas **Dark Skinned** **His Victory is Inevitable**

Torah: **Num. 25:10-29:40 (*30:1)**

(1) 25:13 covenant of perpetual priesthood because he made atonement for the children of Israel (Luke 1:36 -our L-rd belongs to both the House of David and to the House of Aaron and He made eternal atonement for both Israel and the nations)

(2) 26:64 None of the rebels were among the new census – there was a slight decrease in the general census and a slight increase in the levitical census. None of the rebels who sinned with the Moabites were counted and the people faced their first spiritual and military challenges and did not turn back or refuse to fight as the older generation did.

(3) 27:17. Joshua is appointed so that the people would not be like sheep without a shepherd. G-d will raise up leaders in every generation so that His generational flock will not be defeated by whatever challenges and problems we face. No matter what is going on in the world, He has things firmly in hand. Does He have you firmly in hand?

(4) Num. 28:1-30:1. In the midst of dealing with the last rebellion and just before the Moabites are punished and Sihon and Og are destroyed (they were the most powerful enemies in the region), the people were given the longest summary of the festivals of the L-rd – because a Jewish concept of time will always be festival driven and never problem centred.

Haftarah: **I Kings 18:46-19:21**

(5) 19:4. Kill me, I am no better than my fathers (because the idolatrous core was stronger than I thought and not wiped out by the execution of 800 of its leaders). We will never totally destroy this core, we just have to overcome it, generation by generation until our final victory comes.

(6) 19:18 the righteous core was intact (7,000) and will be right up to the end. The fire, the wind and the earthquake are not diminished or extinguished by the folly of the world in which we live. Do not let the sinfulness of our sophisticated world intimidate you. He will save our lives until His work is done.

Brit Chadashah: **John 2:13-25**

(7) 2:23-25 (out of sequence on purpose). The L-rd knows what we are made of and the fulfillment of His purposes depend on His faithfulness and not on ours.

(Sherri, pp. 101, 103) **Ps. 50** Jewish Hero: Operation Iron Dome (stopping the rockets)

Acts 20:28-30: Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has established you as overseers to shepherd the church of G-d which He acquired by His own blood. I know that after my departure that cruel wolves will be introduced among you who will not spare the flock and there shall rise up from among

you men who will teach pernicious things (who will distort the truth) in order to entice disciples to follow them.

One of the key ingredients of our faith and obedience which we need to realize if we are to grow strong and remain stable through all the ups and downs of life is that our salvation has to elements to it – we are both saved individually and corporately. In other words we are saved into the body (generational community) of our blessed Messiah and we need to maintain an active, dynamic participation in community spirituality if we want to become all that the L-rd wants us to become.

We are sheep who need to have a strong flock life if we want to avoid the cruel wolves and pernicious truth distorters who are lying in wait to weaken our spirituality and to destabilize us so that we wither and choke and become sterile and inactive spiritually. I have already spoken at length about the focused attack on both what we believe and on the spirituality and morality which we are called to practice and as our society continues its slide into carnal materialism a strong, healthy biblical spirituality is increasingly becoming an endangered species.

I know many believers who have been burned by their participation in religious communities, either because they have witnessed some of the spiritual abuse which wants to tear communities apart by infighting or they have been taken advantage of by ministries which are really after their resources (money, time and talents) and are not really interested in their spiritual welfare. Some have a strong dislike of any form of organized religion and the financial and sexual scandals which, in their eyes has destroyed any possibility of credibility with any form of community based spirituality.

I want to say several things about this lack of community stability, because until we have confronted the cruel wolves and the pernicious truth distorters and overcome their efforts to draw us away from our right and our calling to be involved in a healthy flock, we will never find our place in the body of our blessed Messiah, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

First of all, no community in this life will ever be perfect, and if it were, it would cease to be so when we joined it – learning to work with both our giftings and our flaws will help us to relate redemptively to the flaws and the giftings any group we become a part of.

Secondly, learning how to resolve conflicts and how to work together with flawed people in community will give us a strength we can never find on our own. People in our society have become picky spiritual consumers, looking for the best deal, and the best fit, the best spiritual bargain.

What that means practically has been called the circulation of the saints, where believers are constantly migrating from one congregation to another, in permanent transition and never settling down anywhere for very long.

Now there are valid and necessary reasons for changing congregational allegiance and participation, but they do not all have to be negative or based on unfortunate experiences with the dynamics of group spirituality, because being part of a flock is a requirement the L-rd places on all believers who really want to walk with Him.

However, we need to see that our enemy is always trying to panic and divide the flock so that he can hunt us down and defeat us and even cause us to turn against one another instead of pooling our resources together.

Well, lets talk about the sad discovery we make when we realize that our community is not perfect and never will be. It is related to another sad discovery about ourselves which we need to make if we are to succeed spiritually – we are not perfect and never will be. It is what we do with this revelation, this let down which will affect whether or not we are able to understand what authentic community stability is all about.

The apostle Paul was both a gifted leader and teacher and also someone who had difficulty relating to people who did not see things his way and he sometimes forgot that his perspective was not always right or the whole picture. He learned and did not become a bitter old man whom no one could reason with because he always had to be right. When a group of believers join in a discussion and share perspectives, we pull together as a flock and neither cruel wolves or pernicious truth distorters can make much headway in our midst.

We are not always trying to be perfect, we are learning to pool our resources and build a team that is based on the bond of peace in love which gathers around the truth of His Word and deals with the challenges we face as a unit linked together around our King and not defeated by the imperfections we discover and which should be used to enrich us and not pull us apart.

Any community will encounter conflicts and challenges, be they doctrinal or practical or personal and learning to really get to know people in our midst means that we will no longer be tossed too and fro by the circulation of the saints who are never satisfied for very long.

I have known believers who are very adept at telling you what is wrong with various ministries and communities and yet they are not ready to come to grips with what is wrong with themselves.

Once people discover who you are and who you are not how do you handle the let down? Some people are just waiting for the leader or the community to mess up and they use this realization of weakness or imperfection as an excuse to move on in search of greener pastures.

Our community is not perfect. We have some pretty strong personalities and our mandate is quite unique and we are often misunderstood by both the synagogues and the churches. We have people who seem to feel called to come and show us what is wrong with the way we do things and what is wrong with what we believe because they do not understand that our flaws and weaknesses can actually become strengths because standing together in unity in a safe environment is a high priority in our midst.

We want to continue to build a safe community of incredibly talented, flawed people who have learned to work together by exercising mature team work that protects and compensates for our weaknesses as much as it gives us to context to explore and express our gifting.

We will continue to have migratory people come and go as they test the water in our particular pond and will only hang around until they discover our flaws and weaknesses. They will then

move on to other flocks and ponds repeatedly instead of learning that mature group spirituality requires a high degree of personal knowledge where both flaws and giftings are accepted and cherished.

Our congregation will always be a flock where this level of honesty and reality is how we function as a redemptive community of flawed people who have learned to work together. We will also continue to stand together in a negotiated unity against the cruel wolves and truth distorters who will keep prowling around trying to pick off the stragglers and divide us.

Our passage talked about the tensions involved with any spiritual community which wants to stand together against all attempts to isolate believers and cause us to give up on community spirituality because it will always be flawed. We want to welcome new people into our midst and help them discover that part of what it means to join a spiritual community is to embrace both its strengths and its flaws as we draw together and protect and cherish one another.

There are pernicious wolves out there and twisted truth distorters who preach falsehoods and who are out to destroy believers and believing communities. But their greatest weapon against us is not pointing out our flaws and shortcomings – it is trying to get us to use these weaknesses to divide us, instead of being used to pull together.

We acknowledge and accept giftedness in our midst. We also accept that this giftedness is also flawed and we will pull together and work together, because building and maintaining community stability based both on giftedness and our flaws is a high priority in our community and always will be.

Let's pray.