

29 Nisan, 5772 (21/04/12) *Heart Baggage, Pilgrim's Progress* J.

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Shmini Eighth Holy By Choice, Not By Default

Torah Lev. 9:1-11:47

- (1) 9:24 (the fire fell and the people fell down)
- (2) 10:10 (so you can discern the difference)
- (3) 11:44 (you shall be sanctified and shall be holy, for I am holy)
- (4) 11:47 (so you can learn to distinguish what is truly edible)

Haftarah 2 Sam. 6:1-7:17

- (5) 6:9 (David was afraid of the L-rd – how shall the ark come to my home)
- (6) 7:16 (throne and rule will be assured forever)

Brit Chadashah Heb. 7:1-19

- (7) 7:7 (without contradiction, the inferior is blessed by the superior)

Psalm 128 Jewish Hero: Election on Monday (pray for our politicians)

As we were going through the Passover cycle, I was really impressed by three things, like you are surprised. I was first impressed with our need to **only travel with what we need**, so we do not become bogged down with stuff we really do not need. Secondly, I was impressed to **take what we really need**, so we would not be missing anything we really need along our journey. Lastly I was impressed with our need to be flexible and alert, so we could **find what we need**, if we don't have it, or if we lose it or if it wears out along the way.

In this next series, I would like to look at the **heart baggage** we need to have, both if we want to have a successful pilgrimage and also if we do not want to suffer loss, once our journey is over – loss either because we **do not have** what we should have stored up in our hearts or because we have what we **shouldn't have** stored up in our hearts. We will all be surprised when we stand before the King. I want to make as many of mine as I can, pleasant surprises because I have got all my heart homework done!

I want to give you a variety of passages as we examine what it is we are supposed to **cherish in our hearts** (Lam. 3:19-25) as we make our pilgrimage through this life on our way home to our Father's home in glory. I am not a fan of the book whose title I lifted for this series: **Pilgrim's Progress** – just because I dislike allegory passionately. There is, however, a lot of good teaching in this devotional work of fiction.

However, instead of turning all the **positive attitudes** into friends we encounter along our way home and instead of turning all the **negative attitudes** into enemies we have to overcome, I want us to look at both of these kinds of **attitudes**, so that we do not waste our time getting upset with all that comes into our lives and with all that we wish would come into our lives (and indeed, get out of our lives).

Instead of this carnal, unwise and counterproductive dissatisfaction, we need to learn to see that He is in charge of all that comes into our lives – both the friends and the enemies and that the only **real, effective, spiritual charge** we can take of our lives is **how we relate to both of them** – the friends and the enemies – what comes into our lives and what we should not be holding our breath and hoping would come into our lives (and which we wish would get out of our lives).

Ahoy, my fellow pilgrims, what are you cherishing in your lives (in your hearts)? Your friends or your enemies?

I want us to learn a bit of **spiritual realism**, so that it is the spiritual realities of our lives that we learn to see and live by in this world. The enemy will try and use the things of this life to **distract us**, to **sidetrack us** and to **stall our progress**, and to **burden us with useless baggage**, but we need to learn to plod along **patiently** and **steadily** and **stubbornly** see our lives as only a journey towards a greater reality, towards a greater destination.

Whenever we **lose sight** of our lives as a pilgrimage, we will get into trouble.

Whenever ever we lose sight of which **attitudes** and which **habits** are our friends and which ones are our enemies, we will waste what little time we are given in this life to **get all of our spiritual homework done** before we stand before Our Saviour and Judge, and **sort through our hearts** to see how much of our lives we will be allowed to take with us as we prepare to enter our Father's home in glory (Phil. 2:13 and Eph. 2:10).

Whenever we **lose control over the contents of our hearts**, we either end up cherishing things we ought to be kicking out of our hearts, or end up not cherishing things that we should be cherishing in our hearts. When this happens, we will either struggle along on our pilgrimage under an **unnecessary load**, or we will miss out on the **good, rich spiritual things in this life** during our pilgrimage because we do not have the **attitudes** and **habits** which we need to successfully pass through the various stages of our life.

I've said it before, but it is worth repeating – the L-rd's way is the highway (Jer. 6:16). It is the only straight and narrow path through the crooked paths of this life.

The L-rd's way is the only one which will deliver us from the wide, **broad roads of destruction** which will be calling out to us from the darkness which lurks in the corners of our hearts.

The L-rd's way is the only one which will deliver us from the **false light** which the things of this life can give out, only to fizzle and burst when we give in to them.

The L-rd's way is the only path which sees through the **disguises of false spirituality** which our flesh will try to adopt to try and say and do things which may appear spiritual, but which are only carnal disguises (2 Corin. 7:1).

Let me conclude by briefly reading through some of the passages I will be using in this series:

Matt. 13:52; 2 Corin. 3:10-15; 2 Corin. 5:16, 17; 2 Tim. 2:20, 21; Phil. 3:15, 16; Prov. 4:23; Gal. 5:22, 23

The contents of your heart is the **only thing** you can take with you out of this life and it is only thing for which we will be **judged** as believers, when we stand before the L-rd of Glory.

We will not be allowed to take all the contents of our hearts with us into glory. All the **pain** and all the **sorrow** and all the **joy** and of the **success** we encounter in this life are only the **raw materials** He provides us with and brings into our lives so that we can turn them into the **heart treasure** He has brought them into our lives in order for them to become. This is the **spiritual homework** He wants us to finish during our brief pilgrimage through this life and it is this homework we are going to concentrate on in this next series.

How is your **spiritual homework** doing?

How is your **heart baggage** doing?

Pilgrim, are you **making progress**?

Do you see all the pain and all the joy and all the success and all the failure as **raw materials** for the heart treasures He wants you to store up as you pass through this life?

How much of what you cherish in the **depths of your heart** will you be allowed to take with you into glory?

What do the depths of your heart look like?

What **habits** and what **attitudes** are lurking in the only treasure house which will survive your death with you – which is the only true **spiritual portfolio** the L-rd will be looking at on the Day of Judgment?

I do not want you to look at this day as a day when He judges or condemns us, but as one where He **removes all and any judgment and condemnation** which has infected our hearts and which we have not been able or willing to deal with.

What are you **dealing** with? What are you **cherishing**? Are you **fully equipped** for the **spiritual challenges** of this life? Are you **overburdened with spiritually useless things** in this life? Are you living a life of **spiritual poverty** in this life instead of filling your heart with **spiritual wealth**?

May the King continue to work on our heart baggage until we walk as good pilgrims, through the whatever's which we all encounter at every stage of our temporary lives, as we all move together at the same speed towards our eternal homes.

Let's pray.