

Re'e **See! G-d's Spiritual Menu for Our Souls**
Torah: Deut. 11:26- 16:17
Haftarah: Is. 54:11-55:5
Brit Chadashah: Jn. 7:37-52 (F), I Jn. 4:1-6 (L)

Summer time is a time for **renewal**, a time for **rest**, before the business of the fall sets in. During the summer, on the Jewish calendar, we remember the disasters which have befallen our people and then we spend seven Shabbats renewing our understanding of the **purposes of G-d** in our lives, before those awesome High Holy Days which come every fall. Especially as Messianic Jews and Gentiles, we understand that *a life which is lived from the perspective of G-d's eternal purposes is never a disaster*, no matter what may be occurring in our particular episode of the story of the purposes of G-d. **The only disasters which really matter are spiritual disasters.**

As we prepare to observe our great annual spiritual housekeeping, we need to examine our hearts and lives and see if we truly understand that as believers we are really **strangers** and **pilgrims** passing through this life with an **eternal destiny** (an eternal destination), which we are to fulfill by our **generational mandate** in the Gospel, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. If we ever lose sight of this purpose in our lives, if ever this focus becomes fuzzy in our lives, then we are in real danger of spiritual disaster in our lives. Our real, true purpose in life is not to acquire wealth or status; it is to live in our hearts and to fill them with the treasures of G-d's Word.

The brief circumstances of our lives from the cradle to the grave are merely **fodder**, are merely **fuel**, for us to respond to as we gather **heart treasure** for the life which is to come – as we take charge of our **eternal investment portfolio** in a market where neither thief can steal, nor moth infect. How's your spiritual portfolio doing? Today's haftarah passage speaks to this.

Some people, Jews and Gentiles neglect the **spiritual condition of their hearts** and loose touch with the bigger picture of the purposes of G-d, as they stumble through this life. They are **spiritually dormant**, not merely just "in touch" with their society, not just "with it" concerning all that is cool and trendy, but in fact they have become so plugged into our society's **secular values** and **carnal purposes** (which is what it really means to be assimilated) that the wonder of the coming Kingdom and the return of our glorious Messiah have ceased to have any real impact or significant importance for their lives. They have become too busy to be involved with G-d.

This wandering away from **spiritual reality** has been the **generational disaster** of each generation of Jews from the time of Jacob onwards. You see, as Messianic Jews and Gentiles, **we understand that the temporary circumstances of our lives have no real meaning, except as the context where we express our faith and learn to deepen our commitment to the eternal life which has taken up residence in the tabernacle of our hearts,** and which we are called to let shine through every aspect of our lives. Yet we expend so much time and effort on useless things

You see, our task has never been easy, and in each new generation, it does not get any less complicated. If doubt, or temptation do not ravage our faith, then the intrusive impact of the riches, the pleasures and the worries of this life may choke our faith into a spiritual comma and our lives, and sadly, our hearts may become unfruitful and overcrowded with carnal, secular, temporary junk which is of no eternal value, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. **Each summer and fall, we have the opportunity to examine our hearts and our lives, so that the generational disasters of our people do not make victims of us and take us into spiritual captivity in the modern day Babylon where we live.** Have you forgotten Jerusalem?

The annual Torah reading cycle was initially set up during the Babylonian captivity and is designed to keep us focused on the **purposes of G-d, so that we do not allow our hearts and lives to become pagan during our episode of the generational story of the greater purposes of G-d.**

Today's haftarah passage, Number Three of Consolation is a call to lift up our eyes and see beyond the boundaries of our lives, so that our faith and our obedience, our observance remains sweet, fresh and real. Let's look at the passage: Is. 54:11-55:1-5

It was written to console the captives who survived the first destruction of Jerusalem and speaks of their spiritual heritage in two sections. **Chapter 54** is a call to stop **fretting** and **worrying**, because G-d will take care of restoring His people and caring for their children. Yes there will always be **plots** against the Jewish people, but verse 15 says it will never come from G-d and the plotters will eventually fall under the power of the House of Jacob they have plotted against.

Where are the Babylonians who took Israel captive? Where are the Greeks and the Persians whose mighty cultures the Jewish people had to survive in? They have fallen into ruins, and have crumbled into dust, and only exist as memories which archaeologists are trying to reconstruct. Where are the Jewish people? Where is the Torah which so many have tried to destroy? We're still here and we're still in business, and the Torah will always be our business. Is it still yours?

Verse 17 says two things which relate to the durability of believers, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. There will be powerful weapons fabricated for our destruction and there will be great ideologies put together to condemn us and our faith. **But neither the weapons nor the ideologies will succeed.** The question for us this morning, on this the third Shabbat of Consolation is whether we will succeed, and will our children succeed? Spiritually that is.

The keys to our spiritual survival are outlined in the second section of the portion, Isaiah 55:1-5. There is a fountain of **living water** flowing to satisfy the thirsting of our soul and there is a land of **milk and honey** which offers us food beyond price to bring complete satisfaction to our souls. But we still have to **come** and we still have to **buy, but not with money, with** faith (I Peter 1:9) ***and with study and prayer and worship and all the activities which feed our inner man who dwells in the depths of our being.***

How is your inner man doing? Is he starving to death or is he drinking and eating and growing as you feast on the spiritual treasures of G-d's Word? Verse 55:2 issues this very challenge by asking the captives, the pilgrims and sojourners why they are wasting their time and their resources on things that neither nourish nor satisfy. How about you? What is your heart and life feeding on? How spiritually satisfied are you?

There is a spiritual menu for gourmets of the soul with which G-d wants to delight your inner pallet – my translation calls it a succulent, delectable dish which will keep you coming back for more – for more of the real good stuff, the soul food, the manna of the soul, the milk and honey and meat of the His Word, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

In whatever circumstances our lives currently find themselves in, and at whatever stage our lives are being lived at for the moment, **there is a personal spiritual banquet which G-d wishes to continue to serve us in our blessed Messiah, daily and constantly** until the realities of verse 3-5 finish breaking out on the generations of mankind and the eternal kingdom of David's Greater Son is forever established over all the generations and nations of mankind. **There will never be anything else, or anything less on G-d's menu, both for us and for all mankind, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.** What are you letting Him serve your plate with?

Is. 55:4 speaks especially of Yeshua of Nazareth, David's Greater Son, who is a witness, and a leader and a commander of the peoples. My question for you today is how is His witness, His presence in your heart? Are you following His lead through His Word? Are you following His commands? The Gospel of His love is the eternal covenant He wants to enact, to activate in us. How activated is it in you? Are you letting it slip into sleep mode?

Beginning in Babylon, Jewish people began to call nations to the faith of the House of Jacob, to the hope of the Kingdom of David's Greater Son and they did come running and they are still coming. Even after the disasters which have regularly slaughtered so many of our people and scattered them through the ghettos of Europe and the Middle East, there is still a call, there is still a feast for the soul to which we are still called, and to which we are to call all people. This call to this feast refers to the coming Kingdom when Messiah returns and is a challenge for us not to let our hearts and our lives fill up with the junk and the despair our lives may try to get us to swallow.

Plots and weapons will continue to haunt us as believers, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile, but the true condition of our lives and our souls is not measured by these temporary episodes. **The true condition of our lives and souls is measured by what we are feeding on in the depths of our hearts.** How's your spiritual diet doing? What are you filling your heart with?

Let me close with a series of verses which extend the call of this Haftarah of Consolation, **so you can measure the diet you are imposing on your inner soul:** Jer. 9:23, 24; Matt. 6:33; Matt. 16:26; and 2 Cor. 4:16-18.

As we go through the remaining Shabbats until the High Holy Days, **our annual spiritual house cleaning,** we need to consider what we are feeding our souls on, and whether we are filling our hearts with junk or with the durable treasures of His Word. Our **greatest treasure** and the only one which really matters is **the spiritual reality of our lives**, that Great Story of which our lives are called to an episode – **practically speaking our spirituality needs to be the reality which both under girds our lives and also supersedes the changing circumstances of our lives.**

As strangers and pilgrims, are we allowing our lives to become spiritual disasters, or are we feeding on the wonders of His promises and making the bigger picture of His kingdom the focus of our inner life and of our outer lives? Sometimes we try and impose our personal temporary agenda on G-d's eternal purposes and get so busy with our lives that we become strangers to the life of G-d and we slip into a spiritual comma.

We fall into the traps our modern secular, technological age sets for us. We are so busy with our gadgets, with our grandiose schemes and all the goods of this modern Babylon, this new age Harlot that, like so many Esaus, **we end up selling our spiritual birth rite for trivial secular soup.** And we don't even notice how captive we have become, swallowing all the spiritual junk food of stimulation and entertainment, until we have no room for the succulent delicacies of G-d.

How's your heart? What are you feeding on? May He show each of us what is really going on in our lives and what should be really going on in our hearts and souls, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

Let's pray.