

28 Kislev, 5772 (24/12/11) *For Unto Us A Child Is Born: Is. 9:6* J. M. Terrett

Miketz At The End Of Delicately Handling Explosives

Torah: Gen. 41:1-44:17

(1) **41:16.** “It is not me; it is G-d who will give a favourable response to Pharaoh” Joseph had no expectations going into this situation. He had already been let down three times, but he never gave up serving G-d. Whether you are betrayed, falsely accused or forgotten by foul weather friends, only you can decide whether you will still walk with G-d – **because it was this walking with G-d which meant that G-d was with Joseph in everything he did.**

(2) **41:32.** “If Pharaoh has seen the dream repeated a second time, it is because the thing is fixed by G-d and He will hasten to bring it to pass.” Other interpreters may have been afraid to give Pharaoh a negative interpretation (remember the baker). Not everyone is willing to hear an unpleasant truth. Joseph came up with a solution not found in the dream, but which provided a means for using the dream to prevent damage, instead of just predicting that damage would come. **Our G-d is reality solution oriented.**

(3) **42:9.** “Joseph remembered the dreams that he had had concerning them and He said to them: ‘you are spies, and you have come to observe the weak places of the country’”. Joseph is not playing pranks on his brothers. If he told them everything, they might just have run away and told their father another lie. He had to get them to invest enough in submitting to him that his father would consent to come. He wasn’t in a position to use force and if the story got out, his family might have been at risk.

(4) **44:17.** “And Joseph said:” G-d keep me from doing that, the man upon whom the cup was found shall be my slave; but you, return in peace to your father.” His betrayal of his brothers was not based on jealousy or really on punishment, but on bringing them to a place of recognizing the hand of G-d in all that happened.

They could have lied about Simeon and they could have lied about Benjamin. Joseph was manoeuvring them into a **complete submission where running away or lying were not longer options** – where they had to plead for their younger brother in a way they he had pled to them and they had to offer their lives up in a way that they had offered his up. He also made sure that his father was in full possession of the facts so they would eventually have to come clean and it is not recorded, but **they must have gotten such a tongue lashing.**

It was only their evident distress and finally themselves being willing to go and place themselves and their families under Joseph’s authority which convinced Jacob **they were finally telling the whole truth.**

G-d does not want our lives to blow up or fall apart. He wants us to come to the place of recognizing our situation in a reality solution way so that He can keep on blessing His people and all peoples through the way He blesses us – in captivity, prison or in exultation.

He will work in our lives until we come to the place where we have no other options and people believe us **when we finally tell the whole truth**, even at the cost of Gal. 4:16

Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

Haftarah: I Kings 3:15-4:1

(5) **3:28.** All Israel learned of the judgment which the King had rendered and the King was feared because it was seen that the wisdom of G-d was with him to direct him in his judgments.” Solomon had a whole gang of older brothers – some seventy or more and he needed to prove that he deserved the leadership – **he could not ride on his father’s accomplishments or his father’s choice of him to succeed.**

He had to prove himself. G-d will give us wisdom to deal with challenges to His ways in our lives and we shall succeed in walking in these ways, to His advantage, because **this is the only advantage worth having in this life.**

(6) **4:1.** King Solomon was king over all Israel. There are two ways of being king: de jure (by right) and de facto (in fact). G-d wants us to begin with the right (de jure) and move towards the fact (de facto). We have rights in Him and in His purposes, He wants to move in our lives so that these rights (this right) of the Kingdom become facts in our lives and both His **righteousness** and His **wisdom** become the place where we live on our pilgrimage from the cradle to the grave.

Brit Chadashah: Matt. 27:15-46

(7) **27:19.** Herod’s wife had a dream where the L-rd was confirmed as a righteous man that Pilate should have nothing to do in condemning, even if it were to his political advantage. He still carried out that sentence, **but he never gave credence to the accusation.**

Verse 25 – let His blood fall upon us and on our children refers to a specific group of people who did not speak for the entire generational nation of Israel and the guilt of this betrayal was upon those who betrayed the L-rd, **never upon all the Jewish people.** Pilate had wisdom enough not to give imperial sanction to a politically driven betrayal which he could not stop, but which he refused to dignify. **Be careful not to dignify what you cannot stop.**

In this portion we see three delicate handlings of explosive situations. Part of what it means to walk with the L-rd means to be **wiser than serpents and harmless as doves and not the other way round.** Things will always be complicated, especially for those who want to walk with the L-rd in this dicey world, but **His wisdom will always guide us creatively and delicately so that whatever happens to us, our spirituality never explodes.**

I’ve got three thoughts to leave with you on the fourth day of Chanukah, which is also Christmas Eve. First of all, we serve the baby who was born in a manger, not because He was a **great man** or even a **great prophet** of righteousness, but because He is G-d incarnate who was born to die and to resurrect and open the way back to the Father for all mankind.

Secondly, we live in a world which struggles to find the **true spirit of Christmas** every year because our society **spends the rest of the year sacrificing pigs on pagan altars.** We should never look to our world for spiritual direction, only for openings for us to communicate the truth of the Saviour, amidst the glitz and schplitz of the season.

You see our society does an amazing job of making Christmas the most exciting time of the year **for every reason but the right one**. We need all the delicate wisdom I spoke of in my Torah Meditation to not get distracted or sidetracked by the false spirits of Christmas which would have us celebrate the season or any other reason than Is. 9:6

“For unto us a child is given, unto us son is born and the authority shall rest upon His shoulders. He shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty G-d, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.”

This verse presents us with five affirmations of His divinity which we cannot ignore. He came into our midst as a child and died for our sins as a Saviour and will be returning one day as the victorious King. **No part of this message is optional or negotiable**. This is the only true message of Christmas, and having this faith gives you access to the only true spirit of Christmas.

Finally, here is a thought I am mulling over as my strength returns and as we regroup around our renewed vision of the kind of Messianic Jewish community the L-rd is calling us to build in our community. We need to learn to take refuge in the **biggest bigger picture** in every area of our lives.

There are lots of big deals in our lives and in our world today, just as there have been big deals in the past and will continue to be until the L-rd finally returns to set up our eternal home, which home is the biggest bigger picture.

We will not understand everything in our lives or in our world and we will run into walls, snares, heart breaks and side tracks which will try and pull us away from the biggest bigger picture into things which may have great importance, **but which to do not have the greatest or biggest importance**.

Here is as far as I have gotten with this insight.

No matter what, **G-d is and always will be the biggest bigger picture** (above our faith in Him and above all the other concerns in life, be they every so pressing or ever so noble).

Next **our faith in G-d is the next biggest picture**. Who we are in Him at each and every moment of our lives is the most important, biggest issue in our lives – whether we are languishing in a prison, or have been crowned king of the whole household of faith – or are standing trial for our lives when we know that the false guilty verdict is about to be pronounced.

Things happen and things come into our lives and go out of our lives, situation by situation and generation by generation, our faith (our standing) in Him is always **the only worthwhile personal biggest bigger picture** and always needs to be our biggest focus – the one around which everything else revolves.

Finally our confidence in His superintendence over the affairs of all the nations and generations of mankind – including how He handles our own families, friends and other detractors, needs to be the next biggest bigger focus of our lives. We need to realize that He will always be in final charge over what happens and **not lose sight of His control, not matter how good or bad things get**.

If the global economy crashes (again), if another super bug surfaces and strikes down millions around our world, or if our right to hold our faith keeps on being eroded to the point that we have to go underground and suffer imprisonment or death for what we believe – **He is, He was and He shall forever be King**.

And though the heathens rage (yes I am talking about hordes plundering through the stores at this season) and the mountains are thrown into the sea and even though our parents and our loved ones forget and betray us, He will never leave nor forsake us, as long **as we hold onto the biggest bigger picture.**

Let me review it for you as I close:

God is the biggest bigger picture.

Our faith in G-d is the next biggest bigger picture.

Our trust in G-d's control over all the affairs of the world is the next biggest bigger picture.

In the midst of all the holiday cheer, the crowds and everything else which is going on in your life and in the life of the whole world, we need to live for the biggest bigger picture and **not be distracted by anything less.**

We serve the Saviour who is G-d incarnate – who became a man and dwelt in our midst.

He is the reason for the season and we should never let anything or everything distract us from this truth, though the world, the enemy and our own flesh will keep trying to do their best **to help us to get everything and do everything, except acknowledge Him and live for Him.**

Finally, we need to learn to live for the biggest bigger picture, for it is the only one which will never change and which will always make sense.

Here it is again in three parts:

G-d is real.

Our faith in Him hooks us up with this reality.

And

Our confidence in His superintendence (control), means we let Him and His control over the world determine how we respond to a world **we should never expect to make sense.**

May the biggest bigger picture, who is also the reason for the season, Immanuel, G-d with us, bless you and give you the best Chanukah and the best Christmas ever, no matter how much you get, or whatever else is going on in your lives.

Chag Samaech, twice!

Let's pray.