

15 Adar 5774 (15/2/14) **Exploring our Potential in The Messiah** J. M. Terrett

It's Time to Renew Our Confidence: The Biggest Picture

Ki Tisa When You Elevate The Shame and the Glory

Torah: Exod. 31:11-34:35

(1) 31:16, 17: ***The children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath and celebrate, they and their descendants as a perpetual covenant It shall be a sign between me and the children of Israel forever that in six days the L-rd made the heavens and the earth and on the seventh day He ceased from work and rested.*** Here the people were at the pinnacle of their newly acquired spiritual freedom and were about to finalize their generational status as guardians of the truth about the One G-d who wanted to call all peoples to Himself. What follows is one of the saddest instances in the history of Israel and yet, given the hardness of the stubborn human heart it is not as surprising as it first appears.

(2). 32:14: ***And the L-RD repented of the evil which He declared that He wished to do to His people.*** If Moses had not followed in Abraham's footsteps and interceded for the people, he would have become the new Abraham and the L-rd would begin from scratch. Moses had to also know what he was up against and be willing to follow through and bring this motley crew successfully to the promised land.

(3) 32:35: ***And the L-rd struck the people because they had made the calf, manufactured by Aaron.*** The L-rd dealt the rebellious core a fatal blow and the people behaved until next time. Why did Aaron do it (stalling tactics?). Why did he not lose the priesthood (Moses intercession was for him too). G-d's forgiveness means the world can continue and not be annihilated, but His judgement means that we still reap what we sow – which is why I like to keep short accounts with G-d and avoid anything in my life which even resembles a gold calf.

(4) 34:28: ***Moses was with the L-rd forty days and forty nights. He neither ate any bread nor drank any water. And the L-rd wrote the words of thee covenant on the tablets, the ten words.*** He will always bring us back to the place we were at before we rebelled or before we blew it and He will keep on bringing us back until we learn to move on. His requirements never change, it is our job to change so that we move from the shame to the glory in every area of our lives. The people should have known better and H will not allow us to grow or to move on until we doggedly cling to that which we know is better, time and time again.

Haftarah: I K. 18:1-39

(5) 18:17: ***Ahab had barely laid eyes on Elijah when he said – is it you who throws trouble upon Israel?*** The power of this rhetorical question is about to blow up in Israel's face. They are going to be put to the test with their false gods, because truly it never the prophets who throw trouble on anyone, we leap in and throw it on ourselves.

(6) 18:36 ***At the moment of the presentation of the offering, Elijah the prophet came forward and said: YHVH, G-d of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel! Let it be known today if you are G-d in Israel and that I am your servant and that I have done all these things according to your Word.*** How much of what you do is according to His Word? G-d was not being tested, He was giving His people a chance to repent and leave behind their criminal idolatry and return to the power of the Torah. The demonstration was effective, but the people did not follow through on their promises. Sound familiar?

Brit Chadashah: 2 Corin. 3:1-18

(7) 3:17: ***Therefore, the L-rd is the Spirit and where there is the Spirit of the L-rd, there is liberty.*** Liberty of access and freedom from condemnation because we return to Him and contemplate the Law which He has engraved upon our hearts and let it become the light by which we walk and live. Our liberty is to like Moses and if needs be go outside the camp because we become shechinah (glory) junkies. And glory is only accessible to those who walk by the power of His Spirit according to His Word – accessible only to those who walk away from the shame and towards the glory. How about You?

(Sherri p. 149) **Ps. 75 Jewish hero: Elijah**

Who shall accuse the elect of G-d? It is G-d who justifies. Who shall condemn them? Messiah has died; even more He is resurrected, He is at the right hand of G-d and He intercedes for us. (Romans 8:33, 34)

In this series, I want us to understand both how extensive the resources are which we have access to in our beloved Messiah and how to apply them in the midst of a spiritually resistant, darkening world. We have been examining the later part of Romans chapter 8 where Paul is outlining how all the theology he has just been teaching applies to our lives practically and one of the keys to this application is understanding not just the bigger picture, but the biggest picture. We all know that the coming of the Kingdom is the biggest picture for us to consider, but as we wander through this life how does this picture apply to our lives?

In these two verses, he outlines three spiritual realities which will help us maintain a kingdom focus, no matter what else is going on in our lives. Firstly, in a world where our faith is often mocked and where we may face increasing legal sanctions against what we believe and against the lifestyle which those beliefs require, we cannot really be accused or found guilty of any real offence because of what we believe, because it is G-d who justifies us. We may face sanctions, imprisonments and even martyrdom, but in light of eternity and in the final analysis we shall not be accused with this world, because it is G-d has the final say.

Next he takes it one step further and talks about the ultimate punishment which we may have to face in this life – condemnation, which means the death penalty and it was this penalty he might be facing if his case did not go well. He says that condemnation cannot really come our way because of the death and resurrection of the Messiah. Our Saviour has paid the ultimate price and whether we live or die, we shall always be alive in Him.

He winds up this portion of his discussion by pointing out an amazing spiritual reality which should be the focus of our understanding of what is really going on behind the scenes in this life, generation by generation until the Kingdom finally comes. Our resurrected Messiah stands at the right hand of G-d and He intercedes for us. So in a very real sense, it is never us who are on trial, because our defence counsel continually pleads our case before the highest court in the universe.

This morning, I would like to examine these three realities so that we learn to always see the biggest picture when we evaluate what is really going on in our lives.

It is important to remember the context in which this passage was written. Paul was in prison awaiting transport to Rome so that his case could be heard before the emperor himself. He would be held in custody until his case was heard and there were only two possible outcomes for his case – he would either be found not guilty and set free or he would be executed since he had been accused of a capital offence – acknowledging a sovereign overlord other than the emperor.

He is not trying to tell believers that if they have enough faith that they will escape from trials and troubles and live a life of easy and plenty, because we need to understand that the Messiah did not die on the cross to give us lives or ease and plenty – He died on the cross to give us life everlasting and it is that which matters in the final analysis.

Signs and wonders and healing miracles and all manner of divine providence are focused on the coming kingdom and His intervention in our lives will always be focused on this wonderful reality.

He will meet our needs and He will protect us from all kinds of danger and we will live lives of great spiritual abundance, but not despite any trials we may encounter, but because our faith enables us to walk right through them and rise above them to see the glory of eternity, which is our final home.

Let us look at accusation and justification. Because the One did not spare His only Son, but delivered Him up for us all, we shall be given all things that really matter. Our world is increasingly materialistic and if focused on pain relief and status and pleasure as if how we look and where we go on vacation and what we have planned for our retirement are the most important things in our lives – and indeed are the most important things in life.

What we own and how we live and our temporary status in the world in which we live are really of so little eternal importance in light of the biggest that Paul encourages us not to worry about things that are spiritually inconsequential because we have found that which really matters.

All and every accusation which could be levelled against us disappears in light of the L-rd's justification.

Now this does not mean that whatever we do and however we live, we will be spiritually exonerated by G-d no matter how we live or how we conduct our affairs as if we possessed an eternal “get out of jail for free” card which we could play over and over again and which would always get us out of all and any trouble we encountered or even made for ourselves on our pilgrimage through this life.

There is a very real sense in which our spiritual accountability needs to be of the highest quality because of the excellence of what the L-rd has accomplished for us and because of what He has in store for us.

We may be accused of spiritual folly and even of political and social error because of what we believe and because of the spiritual values which we uphold, but in the final analysis, in the biggest picture, we are justified over and above anything which mere a human tribunal can try and saddle us with.

Paul, the prisoner of the L-rd is rejoicing that every accusation made against him by the rulers of this world is false and that he already has his pardon – his positive verdict because of his standing before G-d – forgiven and in full possession of the assurance of life everlasting. We need to be careful not to allow the feeble verdicts of this life to cause us to view ourselves or our lives by any lesser standard than by the measure of G-d's everlasting Kingdom in His Son's coming Kingdom.

Is the world, the flesh or the enemy accusing you? Are your beliefs on trial? Are your values no longer considered politically correct? Are you considered to be out of step with the enlightened direction our society claims to be moving along? Yes we have been judged fools by the world and yes both our beliefs and our values are increasingly less popular and less acceptable in a world which is sinking lower and lower into the spiritual darkness from which we have been liberated from.

But as long as we realize that in the biggest picture, we are justified, then in the temporary picture, secular, temporary judgements are the real illusions we must avoid being hoodwinked by.

We are citizens of the coming Kingdom and we are stewards of its truths and the L-rd of all has justified us forever and we have escaped from the snare of the enemy, the world and even of our own flesh and we are on our way to our forever home where the reality of the all things which He will give us will become not just the reality we believe in, but will be the place where our resurrected soul shall live forever.

We need to avoid judging the worth of the destination by how bumpy the journey is and it is because we know where we are headed that the trials and tribulations which we encounter in this life are put in their place and we can face them as temporary stations we encounter along the way to our real home where the truth shall finally one day be fully revealed. Lets move on to freedom from condemnation.

I find it too easy to get on my own case when I examine my performance in light of the Scriptures and I often struggle with the feeling that I am a serial failure or a bumbler who doesn't often get things right as I try and live the best life which I can.

When is enough enough? What does ultimate success look like? Are the Olympics really all about the medals which only a few shall win? Is the world really divided between a select elite of winners and the run of the mill losers who will never do anything which will make a difference or attract the attention of the people who really matter?

The condemnation of this world wants us to measure ourselves by the size of our portfolio and teaches us that being the king of the castle is the only thing worth applying our energies towards. The L-rd and the faith is seen as a cross between a hyper judgemental motivational speaker and an unforgiving personal trainer who constantly tries to remake and reinvent us to be stronger, richer, smarter and more effective in all that we do.

This is a very subtle form of carnal condemnation which will chain us to mammon and to the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and to the pride of life until we come to the place of really understanding what life is all about and what it is we were placed in this crazy world to accomplish.

Life is all about the cross, where we are set free from the power of sin and deception and are able to be salt and light and even the scent of the life to come. We were born into a cosmic struggle for the souls of mankind where the choices we make and the reactions we adopt are called to be our greatest witness to a world which strives for that which is unimportant and which is following so many wrong and twisted agendas.

We may be condemned by any number of human tribunals, but when we come back to the cross and remember what the L-rd has done for us, we can be set free from the treadmill of this life and we can begin walking steadily towards the Kingdom which is calling us home.

Our L-rd has beaten the odds and has overcome this age and opened the way for us to enter life everlasting. Once this assurance is solidly fixed in your heart and in your life, then you will be progressively set free from the things of this world which are growing strangely dim and will be able to concentrate on His glory and grace.

We are not condemned with this world and so we should not let the condemnation of this world mean anything more to us than static or bumps that we encounter and which we overcome on our way home, which brings us to our last consideration, His exalted and continual intercession for each of us and for all of us.

In the days of the tabernacle and the temple, access to G-d was only granted by the performance of intricate rituals which all spoke of the grater glory (the greater reality) which was to come. Now, our heart becomes the tabernacle and we have direct access to the true, everlasting High Priest who is now intimate involved in our lives.

We do not have to wait to appear before Pharaoh or any of his deputies in order to be heard or to be exonerated.. Our requests appear directly before the L-rd of the cosmos who wants to help us to rigorously and stubbornly hold fast to the biggest picture and to make our lives turn around the coming kingdom, because despite all of its glory and gadgets, this world is neither our home, nor is it worthy of our first attention.

When we know who He is and what He has done for us and when we understand what life is all about and what is waiting for us once this life is finally over, then we are neither accused nor condemned by this world of shadows.

And our daily link with the King of Eternity prevents us from losing spiritual ground to this age of deceit, especially in light of the intercession which is being offered for us by the true King of glory and by the L-rd of the coming Kingdom.

How much of your life reflects this biggest picture?

May He set us free from evaluating the worth and value of our lives by carnal standards that have no eternal validity.

And whether we are in jail waiting for our case to be heard or whether we are wallowing in a lap of luxury or even when we are struggling to find where our next meal is going to come from, we are not lost, or out of control, because He will see us free to the end, time and time again, until the end finally sets us free forever in the glorious kingdom of our resurrected L-rd.

How much of your life revolves around the biggest picture?

Have you dealt with all the accusations?

Are you letting Him continually set you free from all and any condemnations and false pretences which this world, the enemy and your flesh can try and throw at you?

How conscious are you that He does indeed stand at the right hand of G-d and that He intercedes for you?

May the wonder of walking with Him through the pathway of this life be stubbornly guided by the biggest picture, by only that which matters in the long run.

Let's pray.