

Bo Enter The Rubber Hits the Fan  
Torah: Exod. 10:1-13:16

(1) **10:14:** *The grasshoppers came up upon the land of Egypt and landed throughout the all of Egypt and they were there in such quantity that there had never been anything like it nor will there ever be anything like it again.* G-d is not lacking in ideas when He brings judgement upon people. There is one common thread – all of our false gods will turn into a curse for us if we do not abandon them and they will devour our lives, in this life and for eternity.

(2) **10:23:** *People could not even see each other and no one left their place for three days. But there was light in the places where all the Children of Israel lived.* In our darkening world, we have the privilege of having light and being light, even if the darkness does not diminish around us or understand us. People ignore G-d and His Word to their own peril, even in the sophisticated, hip, modern Egypt in which we live.

(3) **12:38:** *And a multitude of people of every kind went out with them. They also had considerable flocks of sheep and herds of cattle.* Israel was always to be a blessing to all nations and here is the first recorded mass conversion to Judaism by people who wanted to abandon their false gods and walk with the living G-d, joined their destiny with the people of G-d. Whether people join themselves to Israel or join with Israel in walking with the living G-d, our call remains the same – to call everyone everywhere to abandon this sinking world and join us on our journey to the world which is to come.

(4) **13:16:** *It shall be as a sign upon your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for it was by a powerful hand that the L-RD brought us out of Egypt.* The experience of Egypt cannot be repeated, nor can the sacrifice of Calvary, but the effects of both deliverances can continue to impact our lives as we walk away from the Egypt of this world and bask in the forgiveness of the Lamb and leave the darkness of this world behind.

Haftarah: Jer. 46:13-28

(5) **46:25:** *The L-RD of Hosts, the G-d of Israel says: behold I am going to chastise Amon of No (Thebes), Pharaoh, Egypt, its gods and its kings, Pharaoh and all those who trust in him.* The mighty splendour of the developed world with all of its might and wealth is nothing more than a feeble reed which will break under the weight of eternity. This world and its glory will always pass away and we have to be careful not to invest our lives and hearts in things which will pass away when the rubber hits the fan.

(6) **46:28:** *You, my servant Jacob, do not be afraid, says the L-RD; for I am with you. I will exterminate all the nations among whom I have dispersed you; but you I will not exterminate; I will chastise you with equity, I cannot leave you unpunished.* All that the L-rd does in this world is to deliver His people, Jew and believing Gentile, while He prepares the final

destruction of this sorry excuse for a world. Us He chastises, them He rubs out when the rubber hits the road.

Brit Chadashah: Rom. 9:14-29

(7) **9:24: Thus He has called us not only from among the Jews, but also from among the pagans.** There is one calling which applies equally to two groups of people: Jews first and also Gentiles. This spiritual tension is one which should drive how all believers live. Jews are the example both of His compassion and His chastisement – the nations are examples of His judgement and yet they can participate in His mercy in the Gospel, because one day soon, the rubber is going to hit the fan.

(Bernie p. 137) **Ps. 77** Jewish Hero: Patti L-rd's Table

As we begin another year in our pilgrimage towards our Father's Home in the coming Kingdom, I wanted to begin this New Year with an exhortation about how we use our time and I want to base my meditation on a passage of Scripture, Eph. 5:15-21:

***Take heed that you conduct yourselves circumspectly and not foolishly, but with wisdom. Redeem the time for the days are evil. That is why do not be foolish (unintentional), but understand what the will of the L-rd is. Do not be drunk with wine, for it is debauchery, on the contrary be filled with the Spirit. Speak among yourselves with psalms and hymns and songs of the Spirit, singing and celebrating the praises of the L-rd with all your heart, continually giving thanks to G-d the Father for all things in the name of our L-rd Yeshua HaMashiach, submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of the Messiah.***

Many motivational speakers and time management specialists talk about being intentional in the way we use our time so that we do not just get caught up in what has been called the tyranny of the urgent, while we neglect that which is really important.

Paul liked to end his epistles with some practical spiritual advice so that what he taught would have an impact on the lives of the people he taught and wrote to; and while he would not agree with much that is taught by some of these speakers and specialists, he would agree with our need to be intentional so that we can redeem the time, especially as we begin 2014.

Well what is really important for us to consider as we seek to be intentional and redeem our time? He first speaks of having wisdom and then of knowing what the will of the L-rd is and being filled with the Spirit in a lifestyle of praise and thanksgiving and he finishes his exhortation with a call for mutual submission.

Let me first talk about having wisdom and knowing what the will of the L-rd is. In the ancient world, many peoples tried to live their lives in response to oracles and special messages from the gods and many would not even leave their homes until they had a specific directive, kind of like what people today do with their horoscopes – but this is not what Paul is talking about.

The L-rd does not want us to be continuously looking for signs and indications as much as He wants us to make spiritual choices as we go about living our lives. This does not mean that we give up praying about what we should do or that we cease asking for His help in every area of our lives; as much as it means that we see everything in our lives as an opportunity to demonstrate our faith and our obedience through the choices we make and through the habits we establish.

I cannot promise you that we will always have advance notice for all the things which are going to come our way in 2014 and we may be in store for many surprises, some pleasant and others not so much. What Paul is saying to the Ephesians is that in all we do, we have know what the will of the L-rd is and it is not complicated because it involves being filled with the Spirit in a lifestyle of praise and thanksgiving and learning what it means to be submitted to one another.

In other words, instead of seeking the L-rd like our personal horoscope to give us a guided day where we will be directed in every little decision we make, we need to consider how to be filled with the Spirit and not with the world. And it may surprise you that redeeming the time by being filled with the Spirit involves three disciplined responses to the happenstances of our lives – and I would like to suggest that they become the intentional objectives we set for ourselves in 2014 at B'nai Chayim.

Being filled with the Spirit involves first a lifestyle of praise, both at home, at work and especially in shul. Praise is acknowledging the wonder and power and majesty of G-d as we see His hand in the world we live in.

David was fascinated by how he was put together and fascinated and a little scared about how much G-d knew about him. He realized that the L-rd is every believer's shepherd and that in His presence is fullness of joy as we wander through this life on our way home to His house in glory.

Praise does not mean always singing songs 24/7 as much as it means being constantly aware of the wonder and the power and joy which the L-rd has built into the fabric of the cosmos and that we should be constantly aware of Him as we go about our daily lives.

We can get upset, spill things over ourselves and get lost in traffic and not always be able to find things when we need to have as we get ready to go out, but instead of becoming frustrated and grumpy, we should not let the details of our lives define how we look at life or how we live our lives.

Praise is being aware of G-d in every detail of our lives – not so that we can have an edge and get the winning number and have everything turn out just the way we want it to in every detail of our lives, as much as it is turning everything in our lives over to Him and being constantly amazed at wonderful He is in the way He has put this universe together.

Closely related to praise is thanksgiving and the major difference between these wise reactions that will help us to redeem the time and not be foolish is that praise thanks Him for being who he is and thanksgiving praises Him for what he does. There have been many times when He has protected me and delivered me and helped me and He has always met my needs, but not my wants.

I could be richer, stronger and smarter and I could be famous and talented and have everybody who knows me look up to me and wish they could be me, but that is not the core of why we should be filling our lives with thanksgiving. People sometimes get a false idea of how Paul or our L-rd lived their lives when they walked the earth.

Paul is now a very famous person and there are not many people in our world who have not at least about our L-rd in some shape or form. But during their life on this planet they lived lives of relative obscurity and it was only in subsequent generations that their fame grew.

Thanksgiving is not the path to fame and fortune as much as it is a recognition that our lives are special and blessed and have an impact for the kingdom, even if the world does not recognize or acknowledge us or what we do.

I want to worship the L-rd for who He is and I want to be constantly aware of Him as I go about the business of living and I want to be grateful and thank Him for what he does in my life and how he looks after me- not so as to make me some kind of celebrity, but so that my life really matters in the realm which really matters – the coming Kingdom.

Praise is one way to redeem the time, for the days are evil and despite all the progress and technological advances, the days are getting more evil with our global society turning its back more and more on spiritual and moral values.

We are polluting the air and the water and poisonous chemicals are being used in so many products to a degree never seen before. Genetically modified foods are depriving people of basic nutrients and fostering obesity. Weapons of mass destruction are still out there and acts of terrorism and ethnic violence are on the rise worldwide.

But G-d has not changed and the first step to being able to do something about our sorry world is to be aware of Him and His power and wonder and to thank Him for how He manages to keep us going and look after us in a world that is quickly sinking into moral decay and spiritual bankruptcy.

Praise sets us free from worrying and from being fascinated by the gadget rich world where more and more apps are being developed so that we can entertain ourselves to death, while we smell good, look good and drive the best cars and take the best vacations with sweet smelling breath as we move up the corporate ladder and secure the best financial portfolio on the planet.

You see there is no single objective in this world worth our full attention and our best energy outside of acknowledging our marvellous Creator and outside of being grateful for the way He looks after us and cares for us so that we do not lose our way in the darkness which surrounds us - for what shall it profit anyone to gain the whole world if we lose our soul in the process?

Praise and thanksgiving are two keys to knowing and doing the will of G-d, but Paul outlines a third one and I want to close with this. Mutual submission in the fear of our Messiah could be a very ticklish subject – a veritable minefield of possibilities which is used by any number of pernicious cults to control and oppress their members – and that is not what we are going to aim for at B'nai Chayim in 2014.

Mutual submission needs to be derived from a fear or a reverence for the Messiah. We are all members of His body – we are all part of His heavenly harem and who we are together in the bonds and relationships we develop and maintain among ourselves should be the most important relationships in our lives.

Family bonds and kinship bonds are assumed to be part of this equation because our faith always need to be generational, but why should we be afraid of the Messiah? Paul does not say terrified, but he does say we should have fear – and that fear should be because we know the end of the story and that come what may in this life, there is a life coming which is ultimately more real and more important than the one we are currently living.

So if the life which is to come does not remain more important to us in how we relate to each other we should be afraid. Too many believers are going to see what they gave their lives to crumble and burn under the final scrutiny of the L-rd and unless we form a cohesive community of people who are mutually submitted, we are a flock at risk of being torn apart and scattered by the world, the enemy and even by our own flesh.

In my marriage preparation courses, I teach people how to communicate and how to resolve difficulties and how to grow in a mature intimacy which both accepts the weaknesses we all possess and which also believes in the potential which we also all possess. Mutual submission is learning how to work together and to resolve our disputes and misunderstandings so that we develop a community which is held together by bonds of mutual appreciation because we have grown to know and to appreciate each other and we both inspire and cherish one another and do not fall into fighting and biting and grumbling and manipulating and do not want control as much as we want harmony and team work.

I am terribly afraid of the Day of Judgement, not because I am afraid of the flames, I know my soul has been saved and will enter glory forever after all the messes have been dealt with and all the foolishness has been removed. However, there are areas of my life where the control of the kingdom is pretty shaky and where the hand of the flesh and the world still have too strong a grip. There are also areas of my life where the influence of the enemy has too easy an access and I want to work on these before it is too late.

Our spiritual condition is the most important thing in our lives and being submitted to one another is a practical recognition of the priority of the kingdom in our community. We want to be a community which redeems the time in these evil days.

We want to be a community which understands that the will of G-d for us is to be filled with the Spirit and that understands that both the will of the L-rd and being filled with the Spirit are not mysteries we have to search for painfully and at great length.

Paul outlines three characteristics of a Spirit filled life that acknowledges and fulfils the will of G-d. It is my prayer that our community will be guided by these three essentials and they are: praise and thanksgiving and mutual submission.

I want to praise Him for who He is and the wonder of all that He has built into the cosmos.

I want to thank Him for the way He protects and guides us and helps us not to lose our ways in the darkening world around us.

I want to learn the fear of the L-rd and make my relationships with believers to be based on mutual submission because the day of reckoning is coming and I want to live for maximum spiritual gain and minimal spiritual loss – and today as we observe the L-rd's table we can continue to keep our lives in line with the priorities of the kingdom as we prepare for the life which is coming and which shall never end.

How about you?

May 2014 be a year of spiritual renewal as we redeem the time and fill our hearts and lives with His will in all wisdom, making sure to be constantly and stubbornly filled with His Spirit and not with the things of this life – especially as we relate to one another and learn to be mutually submitted because we know the L-rd and the judgement which will eventually set us free from all the folly of this life.

Let us pray and prepare to do a little folly management in our hearts and lives as we celebrate the L-rd's Table.