

# *Dynamic Spiritual Martial Arts*

## *Girded With the Belt of Truth*

Matot-Masei

Tribes-Journeys of Fight the Good Fight, Not the Bad One

Torah:

Nu. 30:1(2)-32:42 – 33:1- 36:13

(1) 30:14. *Her husband can ratify or can annul every vow and every oath by which she binds herself to afflict herself.* Not removing power from ladies, but preventing them from over committing themselves.

(2) 31:8. *They killed the kings of Moab with all the others, Evi, Rekem, Tsur, Hur and Reba, five kings of Midian. They also killed with the sword, Balaam, son of Beor (cf vs. 16).* This was a punitive action against a people who fought against Israel without cause. They killed Balaam for his good bad advice (can't destroy believers, they can only self destruct) and hobbled Moab without completely destroying it.

(3) 31:39. *And they said to him, your servants have made the count of the soldiers under their orders and there is not missing one man from among us.* The Moabites wanted to demolish Israel by cursing them, so not one of them was hurt as they punished those who cursed them.

(4) 35:31. *You will accept no ransom for the life of a murderer who is subject to the death penalty, for he shall be punished with death.* There was a fair and complete process of law to undertake in Israel to determine guilt, and once the guilt of murder was established, it could not be side stepped.

Haftarah:

Jer. 1:1-2:3; 2:4-28; 3:4

(5) 1:10. *Behold I establish you today over the nations and over the kingdoms in order that you rip up and that you knock down and that you ruin and that you destroy and so that you would build and you would plant.* Gen. 12:2, 3. What happens to Israel impacts the nations, for the same principles of judgment and righteousness are active in the nations, to pull down (cave in) or to build up.

(6) 2:19,. *Your wickedness shall punish you and you shall know and you shall see that it is an evil and a bitter thing to abandon YHVH your G-d and to have no fear of Me, says Adonai, YHVH of Hosts.*

2: 22, *Though you wash yourself with lye (nitrate) and you use lots of soap (potassium), your iniquity is still marked before me, says Adonai, YHVH.*

2:28. *Where are the gods you have made for yourself? Let them rise up, if they can save you in a time of distress, for you have as many gods and you have cities, o Judah.* Repentance and obedience is the only way to deal with sin – especially with the sin of false spiritual allegiance – no matter what we say, it is always our true spiritual allegiance that matters.

Brit Chadashah:

Acts 9:1-22; James 4:1-12

(7) Acts 9:18. *In the moment, there fell from his eyes, as if they were scales and he recovered his sight.* What will it take for the scales to fall of our eyes and off the eyes of the ones we are praying for?

James 4:12 *Only One is legislator and Judge, and is capable of saving or condemning. But you, who are you who judges his neighbour? We have to be careful not to be too swift to pass final judgment on fellow believers who have not committed capital offenses, because when we stop forgiving, we stop being forgiven, sigh.*

Ps. 111 – 49

Jewish Hero: Paul – who knew how to repent

Chazak, Chazak, V’Nitchazek

As we examine our spiritual armour and our need to become effective in spiritual combat through the use of dynamic spiritual martial arts, we begin with two important features of fighting: the belt of truth and our loins – or the way we are dressed.

Let me first say that we cannot always parade around on red alert, but we need to recognize danger and be prepared at the drop of a hat to gather ourselves together and firmly attach ourselves to the truth of G-d’s Word through the Gospel. How is your belt doing? How good are you at girding yourself up with the truth?

In a subsequent message, I will talk more about the sword of the Spirit and how to use the Bible defensively and offensively, but this morning I want to briefly talk to you about what it means to have our loins gird with the belt of truth.

There are certain key, bedrock truths that we need to hold onto and that we also need to let hold on to us. I am not talking about the pursuit of philosophical certainty where we can baffle atheists and other people who are walling in various kinds of spiritual deceit and moral bankruptcy. I feel that Paul is not talking about the kind of knowledge we would use to share our faith and to confound our opponents. I believe that he is talking about the kinds of truth and knowledge which we use to hold our own faith together and which we need to grasp onto firmly in order to be in good fighting shape.

What are these truths? How do we grasp them? Let answer the second question first. At the age of 19, I was a spiritually dubious hippy with a puppy’s breakfast understanding of life and of spirituality and religion. I had been on a pilgrimage to find meaning and purpose and was wallowing in the toxic mixture of fact and fiction which pretends to be higher learning on the campuses of universities around the globe, unhappy with myself and with life because there were no answers big enough to honestly answer all my questions.

But boy did I have fun tormenting all and any who dared share their faith with me – the pain and confusion would well up in me and I would go on the attack, until one day, I was flattened by two encounters with G-d in a single night and found myself throwing my miserable soul on His mercy.

That was 40 years ago and I still have a miserable soul (I heard that) that is still throwing itself on His mercy. I had so many questions and so much baggage that it took several years for me to stabilize and the process is still going on.

You need to first gird your loins with the truths G-d used to get your attention – those key personal questions and life priorities which He used to reel you in. You then need to unpack those secondary questions and all the baggage you bring with you and encounter along the way. I led many of my hippy dippy friends to faith and disgusted many of my former drug associates, but not too many of them learned

how to gird up their loins and they lost touch with the belt of truth and wandered back into the world.

Not me. Prov. 27:7 says that a full soul loathes a honey comb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. I had had enough of bitter things pretending to be sweet and I have never loathed the honeycomb of His Word and of His truth.

If you ever lose your personal grip of G-d's truth, you are really in trouble, whether you in the midst of great conflict or whether it is the silliest of issues that trips you up. Hang onto your personal grip of His truth with all you might and let Him answer those other questions and all the baggage you will encounter along the way.

Now let's look at those truths and you may be surprised.

First of all, reality is objective and does not depend on me to define it – we just have to relate to it. In other words people need to quit trying to tell G-d who He is and let Him tell them who He is. Yes that will be from His Word, eventually, but He may use anything and everything to get their attention and to answer their questions. What is He using to get and to hold your attention and are you letting Him answer your questions?

Next, how willing are you to admit the truth and to tell the truth, instead of covering it up, side stepping it and either pretending we live in the best of all possible worlds or that the whole world is on its way to hell in a very ugly milk can? What kind of spin do you put on life? What kind of spin to you put on your life? We all hit the ground running and have to take the way we were raised and all the majesty and the folly of life which has come our way and make personal sense of it.

Too many people ignore this stage and are just along for the ride, filled with the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life and they have an agenda which does not revolve around finding the truth and unpacking it into their lives. How seriously do you take personal spiritual truth – is it your main focus or just the window dressing you put on as you go about your business, doing whatever you do without bringing it all to the scrutiny of His Kingdom?

Lastly, how are you handling the major transitions, the major relationships, and all the wonder and folly of life when it comes your way?

Are you thrilled by other people's success or are you discouraged by where you are in life? At every juncture, we need to keep our hands on the belt and gird up our loins whenever it is time to run or to fight, or even to stand, as our first and last line of defense.

Unless you have worked through your faith until it is the source of inspiration and truth which powers your life, your loins will not be girded up and your belt may slip and life may trip you up.

I am not saying that we have to have all the answers to everything, but we have to come to terms with all the issues in our life from a spiritual, biblical point of view, if we want to win and not to be defended, dragged back into the world kicking and screaming that G-d, the faith or believers have let us down – when, if the truth be told, we have let ourselves down.

How? By not distinguishing the truth which we will only grasp partially as we look through the glass darkly, and the belt of truth, which is our personal grasp which we have of G-d and which He has of us.

I am not talking about any particular doctrine this morning or about any particular issue, other than those which the L-rd used to get your attention and which He is using to keep your attention and which the world, the enemy and the flesh are trying to use to get you to lose your grip of the truth He used to bring you to faith in Him and His beloved Messiah.

Has G-d got your attention (have you got His)?

Are you letting Him show you the truth, or are you living in a personal spiritual mess of your own making, because you are messing with your own mind?

Lastly, once you have come to faith, how are you letting Him help you digest your life and the experiences which come your way? Is how you are relating to your life keeping His attention and keeping your attention on Him, or are you eking so distracted that you can no longer effectively gird up your loins with the truths He used to get through to you and which He keeps bringing you back to?

May we keep our loins able to be girded and keep our grasp on the belt of truth He has girded us with. As long as this is the case, we are ready to learn more about subsequent spiritual armour and subsequent spiritual warfare.

Hold onto Him and let Him hold on to you.

Shabbat shalom.