

**Eikev                      As a Result                      He is What Really Matters in Our Lives****Torah:**                      Dt. 7:12-11:25

(1) 8:17: **Do not say to yourself, my strength and the power of my own hand has gotten me this wealth.** We have to realize how dependant we are and how much even the world depends on G-d, if we are to see things the way they really are. Do you realize how powerfully the hand of G-d is at work in your life to lead you to Himself and to guide you towards His path?

(2) 10:20: **You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.** We should never think of ourselves as entitled or somehow better, we are just those whom G-d found and blessed.

(3) 10:21: **He is your glory, He is your G-d, and it is He who has done the great and terrible things which your eyes have seen.** The ends of the universe declare His majesty and even in a secular world hostile to spirituality and where so many false versions of spirituality frequently muddy the waters He is our glory and He has indeed done incredible things, if only we had eyes to see.

(4) 11:18. **Put these words which I command you into your heart and into your soul. Bind them as a sign on your hands and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.** A heavenly direction and a heavenly pace are the only guideposts worthy of our attention as we wander through this life. We choose to have a specific, narrow focus because we know how all things will eventually turn out.

**Haftarah:**                      Is. 49:14-51:3

(5) 49:16: **Behold I have engraved you upon my hands and your walls are always before my eyes.** G-d never forgets His people, no matter what is going on in our lives or where we are. He never misplaces us or abandons His care and concern for us.

(6) 51:1: **Listen to me, you who pursue justice and who seek the L-RD! Look towards the rock from which you have been hewn and to the quarry from which you were taken.** In a very real sense, our origins are in G-d and despite sin and the follies of this life, we bear His image and He is calling us back to Him in our blessed Messiah – His is the deeper magic before the dawn of time, which not only undergirds the cosmos, but also the foundations of who we really are.

**Brit Chadashah:**                      Heb. 11:8-13

(7) 11:10: **For he was waiting for the city which has solid foundations, the one for which G-d is the architect and the builder.** Abraham received the promise as the solid foundation of his transitory life and he was always wandering towards his permanent home, and was never lost or aimless because he had confidence in his calling and in the promises – how about you? How about us?

**Psalms 75                      Jewish Hero: volunteers for Torah Kids Club next week**

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I am often surprised at the funny ideas people have about G-d and about the purpose of life – and this also applies to believers who seem to personalize their faith to come up with attitudes and habits which bear little resemblance to the express purposes of G-d in His Word. We all have to live and make choices and we all have to keep moving and all of us are growing older at the same pace, but our lives need to be driven by a spiritual momentum if they are not to become stalled or sidetracked the way Israel was too often and is too often in our world today.

Who we are in Him and where we are in Him need to be the central features of our lives through all the stages and transitions we are always faced with in our changing world. Some of these changes are positive, some of them are unfortunate, but if we ever lose track of the realization that our life is only a journey to our final destination, we will become spiritually stalled and live distracted by the journey as if it is only in this life that we have hope and meaning and purpose.

Today I want to talk with you briefly about three features of spiritual momentum and challenge you to examine how strongly you are being driven by His purposes in the ups and downs of your life. I could talk to you about the need to be in prayer and about the need to be in the Word, but that is obvious and it is something that I will keep coming back to again and again, because the basics never change and if we ever wander far from them, we cannot grow spiritually or be strong in the L-rd.

I want to talk to you today about our lives as the context where spiritual truth and the wonder of the Gospel need to grow and take root. Everything and anything in our lives has to be brought to the L-rd and examined from the perspective of His coming Kingdom because how we look at things is important if we want our lives to have a spiritual impact and not just be lived for things which do not really matter. You see, our personal vision or our personal mandate will either keep us on track or cause us to wander away from what really matters in life and for eternity.

Context, perspective and vision are the product of choices we need to make and maintain because who we are in the L-rd will always be more important than what is going on in our lives, whether we are having a good time or struggling. Some people want to wait until things settle down before they consider the Gospel and before they build the spiritual momentum which we are all called to maintain and some people lose touch with eternal values as they go about the business of living in their lives.

Next week we are hosting Torah Kids Club and we are reaching out to the community and to our children and our families so that we do not lose ourselves amidst the choices we can make in life and we are examining the life of Noah, without whom, none of us would be here.

Do you realize that you and your life are the context where the truths of G-d need to be planted and need to grow, if you are not going to miss the boat spiritually – to the Jew first and also to the Gentile – to the young as much as to the old.

We matter to G-d, not because we are special, but because we are called and He wants us to keep responding and to keep living conscious of the world to come as we wander through this life which is passing away. We may do great things and experience great things, but unless we remain focused on the Messiah through His Word, our lives will have no final meaning and that would be the greatest tragedy when it is our turn to sleep with the fathers when our episode is over.

Do you realize that your life is called to matter and is called to revolve around the coming Kingdom, or are you letting the cares and concerns of life blind you to the world which is coming, whether we are ready or not? G-d is not waiting around for us to get it together; we are called to live with our spirituality together.

And it is really not that complicated to have a spiritual focus if we understand that we are on the same journey everyone else is, from conception to the grave and how we journey will always be up to us – how we choose and how we respond as we travel through things will always be more important than the things we travel through and how we live and what we believe will always be more important to G-d than the meagre events and transitions of our lives.

We do not have to wait for big things to happen and we do not have to wait to be at a particular moment in our lives, at every stage and in every event of our lives, who we are in the Messiah is the only context which matters to G-d and which should matter to us, which leads me to the importance of our perspective.

Little kids fascinate me because of the way they are learning to see the world and during the Torah Kids Club we want to have a strong influence on the way they view the world and the way they view what is important in life.

Let me ask you about your perspective, about the way you view the world and what is important to you in this world. How you see things is very important because you will either grip in the L-rd or, like all those who lived in the time of Noah, you will miss the boat – quite literally.

You see your motivation and what keeps you going is more important than any of the details of your life. You all know that I like to read and that a good movie fascinates me – not because of all the glamour and the special effects or big world, but because of the motivation which drives the characters and which the authors are trying to talk to us about.

I am fascinated about what drives people and in our politically correct world, we are told that our perspective is sacred and we should respect our differences and learn to live and let live ( learn to sin and let others sin is more like it).

That is not our calling because everyone who has ever lived will be called upon to give an account to G-d, through our blessed Messiah about the perspective we adopted in the context of our lives and He will not accept any excuses, because, as believers, we should know better. How is your motivation doing? Are you building and loading your ark or are you waiting for the rain to start falling before you consider the coming Kingdom?

I am re-reading a book about growing up in Africa and in one passage I underlined a reminder of a vision I had as a non believer, which gave me a mandate I am still following. I was working as a pizza cook and as we were sitting around, I suddenly felt like I was lifted into the air (it was pretty cool) and a voice spoke to me and said: They are like sheep without a shepherd; I want to be their shepherd.

Once I was put down, I shook my head and thought I was having a drug related flashback, but only a few months later, I accepted the L-rd and began to see that vision become a reality in my life – I received my call to ministry before I became a believer.

What is your vision in the L-rd? What is your mandate? What does the L-rd want you to do with your life? How does He want you to live your life? It does not have to be a Hollywood calling like mine, but in the context of your life, and from your perspective, do you know what the L-rd is calling you to do?

It may not be a call to ministry and it may not be a specific career or even a specific place, as much as it is a personal invitation to use the time you have left to live for His Kingdom. Often it is so much more important to consider the way we live our lives, more than the actual details of our lives.

My parents lived through World War II and my grandparents lived through World War I, but who they became and the way they lived their lives always had more to do with the choices they made along the way, than it did with the big events they witnessed or that brought so many changes to their lives and to the world they lived in.

Noah did not set out to build the ark as a way to make his life better. He was minding his own business when his spirituality became the context and his lifestyle became the perspective which G-d wanted to use in order to save our rotten race from extinction. His name means rest and it is in the spiritual rest which he lived that he was able to find grace with the L-rd.

He was not really somebody special and we are not told that he had any boat building skills that qualified him for his monumental task. It was his spirituality and his understanding about what was important in life that was the context that G-d was looking for. It was his perspective on how he should live his life which saved his life – and also which ensured that we would have life.

His vision and his mandate drove him in a world nearly totally darkened by sin and equipped him to not just build the ark and gather the animals, but also to preserve a lifestyle and a spirituality which was nearly extinct on the planet.

How is your spirituality doing? Is your life the context where G-d can speak to our dark and dying world? What is your perspective on what is really important in life? Would you be selected to build the ark or would you be washed away and drowned with the world which ignored G-d and violated His purposes?

Some believers become stalled and distracted, even though they know that this kind of spiritual deficiency caused our people to wander for forty years in the wilderness and to be lead captive to Babylon – and to wander for generations far from the Promised Land.

Unless we see ourselves as strangers and pilgrims wandering through this life to our eternal home, then our lives will have no final meaning, no matter how many great things we do or how many great things we witness along the way.

Join us this week as we host the Torah Kids Club. Send snacks and pray for us if you cannot physically be there. Learn from the life of Noah and make your life count. Your life can count for the kingdom and is the context G-d wants to use to invite other passengers onto the ark of His kingdom.

The way you live your life is the perspective He wants to use so others will see how a kingdom focused life should be lived. His personal call and the mandate He has given you and us, is the means He wants to use to call others to Himself and extend them a personal kingdom mandate.

Your life matters and the way you see your life and the way you live your life matter to G-d and are the invitations He wants to use so that as many people as are willing can escape from the darkness and folly of this world and embark on a journey to the only better place available to us in the next life.

What our wild and lost and crazy world believes only matters if we can get their attention and help them to come to the Saviour before it is too late – before they become so distracted and sinful that they are washed away by the final flood which is getting ready to be unleashed on this sorry excuse for a world.

You are the context. You have the perspective. You have the mandate and the vision.

What are you going to keep on doing with it?

Become a sailor and an ark builder with the materials He brings into your life, because His coming kingdom is the only show that matters and is the only eventuality we should be concerned with.

Let's pray.