

14 Sivan, 5766 (June 10, 2006) *The Vision and Calling of B'nai Chayim* J. M. Terrett

**Naso** **Elevate** **Separated For Service**

**Torah:** **Num. 4:21-7:89**

**(1) 6:22-27**- individual, corporate blessing; **(2) 8:89** – individual corporate contact

**Haftarah:** **Jud. 13:2-25**

**(3) 13:7** –from his mother's womb; **(4) 13:24, 25** – troubled by the Spirit

**Brit Chadashah:** **Acts 21:17-26 (I); Jn. 12:20-36 (F)**

**(5) Acts 21:20** (zealous), **24** (false rumours), **25** (four things)

**(6) John 12:25** (lose life), **31** (judged and thrown out), **32** (draw all men);

**(7) John 12:35** - Does not know where he is going

As we move into our summer schedule, I want to do a mini-series on our mission statement so that we understand where we are going and what it is that we do, and so that we can be vigilant (accountable) and be able to measure our progress and build and maintain momentum. As the summer progresses and we move towards our annual observance of the High Holy Days (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkoth), I will again preach my way through the Three Sabbaths of Affliction before Tisha B'Av and the Seven Shabbats of Consolation before Rosh Hashanah.

For you math geniuses in our midst, that means that we now have fifteen Shabbats left in 5766, as we move into our fourth annual congregational observance of the High Holy Days. One of the tensions I will be addressing through both series is one which will never go away and which is never intended to be fully resolved: structure and freedom, or routine habits and spontaneous renewal. At B'nai Chayim, we want a regular, constant biblical move of the Holy Spirit in a Messianic Jewish context, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

So you see, not only do we set high standards and have big expectations, but we want to be good at what we do and constantly grow in the knowledge and the grace of our blessed Messiah. But principles are only as good as their application and sometimes they can be used as a weapon by the enemy and by well meaning, judgmental brethren, if we do not understand that growth and integration mean that we are all on a learning curve. This means that once we set a standard, it does not mean we have reached it, any more than deciding to win the Stanley Cup means you are actually going to bring the cup home, unless you are both adequately prepared and stay focused and pumped.

We are not setting ourselves up for failure and frustration, nor are we making excuses in advance for our projected lack of performance, because, at B'nai Chayim we will always remain in deed as well as in vision: CHILDREN OF LIFE.

This morning I want to take you to **four** passages and the **five** principles upon which our unique community is built. We have an excellent constitution and a rich offering in our weekly cycle of services and in our annual cycle of festival and lifecycle observances, but unless we both know why we do what we do and own why we do what we do, we will just go round and round the mulberry bush and not really accomplish the particular spiritual agenda we believe G-d has called us to fulfill. IN the four weeks which follow, I will expand on each of the four aspects of our vision statement, but, briefly, today I want to establish a base upon which we can build our community spiritual vision – so each of you can see where you fit in (Eph. 4:11-16 in our local dynamic context)

**(1) Deut. 32:46, 47** *It is not a light thing, it is your life.* Our life we always centre around the Written Word, in order to put the Words of G-d's Law into practice in every area of our lives (the Ten, in application/jurisprudence in every area of our lives).

**(2) Mark 10:15 *Like a small child*** We have received a kingdom by faith, as little children and there will always be many aspects of our journey we will not fully understand. This will never be a problem if we continue to fully trust and learn to be good children – learning obedience not always trying to run things and bully each other.

**(3) John 14:6 *The Way, the Truth and the Life***. It is not a do it yourself endeavour where G-d needs our help to get history back on track. It is a nazirite separation/setting apart from a secular world system where we walk in an established, biblical way, and acknowledge G-d's cosmic truth and feed on His presence and power in our lives.

**(4) I John 5:11, 12 *Testimony, Life in the Son***. G-d has placed eternal life in His Son, once we have the Son, we have the life and our lives become a temporal living out of the indwelling, as we learn to live life backwards by keeping our eyes focused on the objective we have already obtained – which has already obtained us, and forgetting that which lies behind, we press ahead to seize that for which the L-rd has already seized us (Phil. 3:7-14; Eph., 2:10 and Phil. 2:13).

Now, let's move onto the **five** principles we will apply as we fulfill these verses and build the kind of mishpocah which is our unique calling as a corporate community of Messianic Jews and Gentiles.

**(1) Reach out to give the LIFE of Yeshua to those in need.** I P. 3:15 says that we will always be ready; no matter is going on in our lives (small, current picture/stage) to speak about what is really going on in our lives (bigger eternal/spiritual picture).

**(2) A response to a call.** John 3:15-21 says that those who come to the light, do so because their works are made in G-d – not that they are perfect and without flaws and darkness, but that they have heard the voice of the five "C"'s (cosmos, conscience, culture, circumstances and Canon) and know that B'nai Chayim is the place they need to be (or are exploring this option) and want to live life as a response.

**(3) A context for growth.** Not that anyone one of us has already made it, we have the choice to turn out like Samson, and finally get it together at the end of our lives, or be like John the Baptist, who spent his life growing and learning and walking in the light. I want to grow and let my life be an unfolding of what G-d has planted in the garden of my soul, sort of a spiritual/genetic imperative, life mission based on faith and obedience in whatever "whatevers" I wander through on my way home.

**(4) A coming together as a celebratory community.** I relish His presence when we come together and we want to celebrate his presence and grow in our ability to enter this presence, whether we leap and shout, or whether we are quiet and He whispers – and every other possible variety/combination of the same along the way.

**(5) Discovering healing together.** I have wounds and I have thorns (strengths and weaknesses, abilities and disabilities) and we need to find and experience healing together, corporately, because we will be wounded in the battle and we bring previous wounds with us. G-d wants healing and restoration, not infection and contagion (Heb. 12:13-15). He will not always remove the thorns but His grace will always be sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9, 10) and at B'nai Chayim we need to be individuals who are part of a team which takes all that we are and all that we encounter and let it become a redemptive response to life, based on the eternal Life we have received as children/vessels of that life.

A pretty tall order, isn't it? Yes and no. Our ability will be in Him and in the personal life choices we make (sometimes eventually) AND in the congregational life choices we make. As we get to know each other and as we grow in our knowledge of Him – individually and together, we will become and remain Children of Life, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. Nothing more, nothing less. Let's pray.