

28 Sivan, 5766 (June 24, 2006) *B'nai Chayim Vision Statement: (2) A Tree:* J. M. Terrett  
*Discipleship Function Ps. 1:1-3; John 15:1-5 (Luke 8:11-15)*

**Parasha Sh'Lach Lecha Send for Yourself To Walk or To Wander,  
 That is the Question**

**Torah:** **Num. 13:1-15:41**

(1) **13:18-29** (see for yourselves); (2) **14:12** (Generational Imperative); (3) **15:16** (same level and kind); (4) **15:39-41** (symbol and reality; tradition and truth)

**Haftarah:** **Josh. 2:1-24**

(5) **2:9** (Geographic Imperative); (6) **2:11** (Evangelistic Imperative) – scarlet thread (**18, 21**)

**Brit Chadashah:** **Heb. 13:7-19 (L); 3:7-4:11 (F)**

(7a) **Heb. 13:9** (Spirituality then theology) (L); (7b) **Heb. 4:11** (Faithful Rest not anxious doubt)

**Psalms:** **64**

### **A Tree (Psalm 1:1-3; John 15:1-5; Luke 8:11-15)**

B'nai Chayim is like a tree of life where the Gentiles have been grafted into the Tree and where the Jews are re-budding.

We are a community of Jewish and Gentile believers who practice authentic Judaic faith which exemplifies the best from both the Jewish and Christian sides of our faith.

Today's Torah portion speaks of a choice which cost Israel and entire generation, but which did not slow down or sidetrack the purposes of G-d. His call is to every generation and nation of mankind and this call is spiritual maturity. You cannot spend your life starting over, unless you want to go round and round the mountain, until you finally go down the drain with the rest of mankind, when your generational, genetic episode is over. If a person does not listen to G-d, He calls another (He called Terach, but Abraham listened), if a nation or a generation does not listen, He calls another people (Is. 28:9-13) and uses another generation.

When you have all of eternity to consider, G-d's timing is both precise and patient (to the third and fourth generation and to the thousandth). What happens to the faithful remnant in the midst of an evil and perverse generation, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile? Like Joshua and Caleb and the children, they may share the same temporal destiny with the perverse generation, but their spiritual destiny is woven like a scarlet thread into the ongoing purposes of G-d.

Listen to me carefully and beware how you quote me (my Lawyer is a Jewish Carpenter who has never lost a case) – the perverse, evil generations of mankind, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile are kept around, living their lives of senseless carnality and shame so that the descendants of the faithful remnant may give the descendants of the morally bankrupt another chance to repent and embrace spirituality, before they too, produce another generation, until the patience and the purposes of G-d are fulfilled (2 Pe. 3:5-10).

So Mishpocah, are you walking in the purposes of G-d or are you just holding the fort for the next generation, because if your life have no spiritual purpose, it has not purpose at all, either in this life or in the life to come. What does this mean for our vision as a congregation? Simply this, we are a community of Jews and Gentiles who firmly and stubbornly embrace biblical spirituality and who are determined to grow up into the fullness, which G-d has called each of us to, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

I want to briefly look at three Scriptures, then we shall rededicate ourselves to G-d's purposes in His Son, our Blessed Messiah, as we partake of our monthly dedication to renewal (Lunar Imperative). **(1) Ps. 1:1-3.** This introduction to the book of Psalms speaks of two spiritual destinies based on choices and lifestyle. What is the difference? A lifestyle is based on

choices, and choices will eventually either re-enforce or undermine our lifestyle – the language of the life always speaks more clearly than the language of the tongue (I John 3:18). There are five functions of a disciple, if he or she wishes to reap the spiritual fruit of authentic Judaic or authentic Christian faith, three are defensive, two are offensive (2 Cor. 6:7). (1) **Does not walk** according to the counsel of the wicked. (2) **Does not sit** in path of the sinners. (3) **Does not sit** in the company in the company of mockers. But, (4) **who finds his pleasure** in the Law of the L-rd and (5) **who mediates on it** day and night.

The second verse is found in the Gospel of John, **(2) John 15:1-5**. The L-rd is the tree and we are the branches, both natural and grafted in and our only purpose in this life is to bear fruit and the hand of G-d will accomplish (allow) only one of two spiritual interventions to occur in our lives: pruning and bearing.

Whatever may be actually going on in our lives in terms of plot, the theme of G-d in allowing it (I Cor. 10:13 and Heb. 12:13) is to teach us to fill our hearts with praise and our lives with fruit (to see life through His symbols and to develop the character changes He wants us to undergo – round dynamic, never flat, nor static). What is growing on the branch of your heart and life? What is G-d pruning from your heart and life, until you stop letting it come back? Change is inevitable, spiritual growth is optional – essential, but optional – not automatic.

The third group of verse is in Luke, **(3) Luke 8:11-15** and deals with the success or the failure of all that G-d has planted, or is planting in our lives (Phil. 2:13 and Eph. 2:10) and this is described as four kinds of soil: the wayside (doubt), rocky ground (temptation), among the weeds (choking) and good soil.

You see, the kind of soil we become for the seed of the Word of G-d depends on our reactions to it in our lives, and **this is the essence of the discipleship function of B'nai Chayim and will determine both our long and short term congregational destinies and our long and short term personal destinies, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.** In our Yeshiva, I am going through my series of Bible studies which have named 5-5-5 (with a generational 5) and these categories parallel the categories of soil in Luke 8:11-15.

**Wayside Soil (doubt)** – Our spirituality is based on a biblical faith which has five essential non-negotiables: The Bible is the Word of G-d, Yeshua is the Son of G-d, He was born of a virgin, He died on the cross for the sins of the world and He rose, ascended and is going to one day return. If you doubt any of these fundamentals, your spiritual growth among us will be stunted because we believe BOTH nothing less and nothing more.

**Rocky Soil (temptation)** – Our spirituality is also based on the personal conquest of all the inner kingdoms of our hearts and lives. This does not mean total control, but it does mean total commitment to the principles of G-d's Word, which involve both faithful repentance and obedience. And here there are five functions/assurances: of salvation, of answered prayer, of victory, or forgiveness, and of guidance. We are focused deliberately and stubbornly on our inner life, both as a congregation and as individuals.

Whatever trials we go through, what ever challenges we encounter, we want to respond with faithful obedience, which means repentance until we change into the people and into the congregation which G-d has both called and equipped us to become. We will not change into cyborgs who lose all individuality, nor into supermen who are endowed with special abilities to do battle with the scum of the universe.

We will become a redemptive community which both cherishes spiritual maturity and provides a way for healing and growth to occur for all who wish to discover their place in G-d's purposes

(individual and corporate), to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. Are you winning or are you losing the battle for the spiritual peace and integrity of your life and soul?

**Weedy soil (choked)** This function is a continuation of the previous one and moves into how we succeed or fail to integrate G-d's purposes into our lives and there are five constant disciplines which must be present and functioning in our lives, if we are not to be choked by the cares, the riches and the pleasure of this life, to the Rebbe first and also to the mishpocah.

We must be practicing Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship, Sharing and Worship, if we wish to rise above the doubts, the temptations and the choking of this life. We cannot work on one in isolation to any of the others – we must have balance as we cycle through the annual seasons of the L-rd, both in the festivals and in the stages of our lives, from the cradle to the grave. This is a tall order, but it is also a growth process, which we will either accomplish, or we will be passed over, the wander, to wither and to wallow while G-d both calls another group (person[s]) and another generation to fulfill His celestial purposes in mankind, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

This leads me to my conclusion and to the fourth category of five, which is the Generational Imperative of Judaism, and of the Gentile church in application. Here are the five covenant groups (categories) around which we will build our community: circumcision, Sabbath, kosher, Torah and Messiah/Israel. We are called to be a permanent community of generational volunteers who both rest in the power and the promises of G-d and who make spiritually healthy, holy choices based on the Torah of G-d and on His generational purposes with Israel, through her Messiah, Who is the King of Israel and of all nations and generations of mankind.

Are you a Talmudim? Are you a faithful follower of the King? How is your head? How is your heart? How is your life? How connected are you to the generational purposes of G-d? We are a growing concern, sometimes pruned back to the quick and frequently beaten back to our roots, but we want to remain dead centre in the purposes of G-d, so that when this life is over, the spiritual reality of our hearts and lives may reap what our hearts and lives have sown. For some of us that might not be very pretty, but honestly, mishpocah, I would rather try and fail, until I get it right, than fail to try and get pruned away, trodden, withered and choked.

Next week, we will look at the third aspect (image) of our congregational vision statement -our celebratory function. Let's pray and observe our commitment to the renewal of both faith and of obedience.