

1 Nisan, 5772 (24/03/12) *Counting Down to Passover. Shabbat HaChodesh* J.M. Terrett

Vayikra And He Called Symbol and Reality

Torah: Lev. 1:1-6:7 (7)

(1) 1:9. A pleasing odor unto the L-RD (covers the stench of sin)

(2) 2:13. Salt is the sign of the covenant with the L-rd. You shall put salt on all your offerings.

(3) 3:17. You shall eat neither fat nor blood in all your dwellings (that part of the offering belongs to G-d)

(4) 5:26 (6:7). You shall be forgiven for any of the things whereby you have incurred guilt.

Haftarah: Ez. 45:16-46:16 (Is. 43:21-44:23)

(5) 43:25 I have blotted out your transgressions and will remember them no more.

(6) 44:22. I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like a mist.

Brit Chadashah: Heb. 10:1-18

(7) We are sanctified by the offering of Yeshua's body once for all time.

Shabbat HaChodesh: Ex.12:1-20 (He did the impossible and smashed the gods of Egypt and smashed the armies of Egypt, while we sat down to eat, protected by the blood which still speaks to day – are you sitting down to dine with Him and are you letting the blood speak or have other, lesser voices, got your attention and your allegiance? More about this in the message)

Ps. 50

Jewish Hero: the Prophet Ezekiel

The L-rd's Table

This is the first day of the New Year in the L-rd. It can be confusing until you understand a Jewish concept of time. There actually five New Year's in Judaism – each for a different function. Passover is the New Year's for the L-rd and Rosh Hashanah is the New Year's for the year. Passover is also the New Year's for the kings. In mid winter there is also Tu B'Shvat (New Year's for the trees) and part way between Passover and Shavuot, there is the New Year's for the scholars (33rd day of the count of the Omer).

But as we count down to Passover (only two weeks left), it is not just marking off another year and proclaiming that we are closer the coming kingdom, **it is also a time for us to make sure that our vision of Him has survived intact over the last year** and that we have a renewed (**repaired and unimpaired**) vision with which to face the New year. We begin the new festival cycle by looking at the single act of deliverance which allowed us to begin our generational pilgrimage back to our Father's home in glory. As Messianic believers, we also look at the single act which allows all of us and each of us to begin our personal pilgrimage back to our Father's home in glory. We will be talking more about this during the Seder.

Today I want to talk to you about the fact that **truth only remains meaningful** if it remains part of the vision we have as we face life at every stage of our lives and in every circumstance in which we find ourselves, year by year, and situation by situation. How is your vision doing?

Romans 12:1, 2: ***"I exhort you therefore brethren by the mercies of G-d to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to G-d, which is your reasonable service (or act of worship). Do not be conformed to this present age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind in order that you can discern what the will of G-d is – that which is good, agreeable and perfect."***

You offer your bodies to G-d as a living sacrifice by the renewing of your mind, which you need in order to discover what His will is and in order to accomplish what you have discovered and whenever we lose sight of this renewing or of this discovery, **we need to regain this sight** – and this is what Shabbat HaChodesh is all about – renewing your vision.

This morning, I want to briefly discuss the kinds of vision we can have as we prepare for Passover and for another year in the L-rd. **Four** of them need work and the **fifth** will do the work.

There is first a **little vision**, where we live for things that are too small for us to give our lives to (Jer. 9:23, 24 and Ps. 19:11 (10 English – more precious than much fine gold and sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb)).

There is also an **infected vision**, where the works of the flesh become what we live for (Gal. 5:19-22) be it wrath, lust, booze, food, envy, jealousy – any time a vendetta or a chip or an appetite becomes the focus of our lives.

There is also a **broken vision**, when how we walk with the L-rd has been broken by personal loss or by all the folly of the world and of believers who should have known better but who trod goodness under foot with apparent impunity (Phil. 3:18, 19).

There is also a **tired vision** (Gal. 6:9, 10). Sometimes when we see that there is so much to do and when we see the immensity of the task (and the number and the power of our adversaries or competitors, we get tired of explaining ourselves, of excluding ourselves and just want to retreat from the vision and of live on a hill by ourselves and forget the troubles of this burdensome world.

Finally there is also a **renewed vision** (Col. 3:16, 17), where we take the time to rest and to renew and let Him show us how to live – when He takes us aside to rest and feeds us with ravens or helps us to float when the world is flooding – or teaches us to run when we are being pursued and even hide in a cave.

You see there is a ***rainy day will of G-d*** for us as well as a ***sunny harvest day will of G-d*** for us. We need to learn the art of learning to let the seasons of our lives revolve around the seasons of the Spirit, which will ***make our vision weatherproof***.

There are times when my vision shrinks and I need to let Him cause it to grow back. There are political causes, health programs and financial endeavours I could be basing my life on. But, like James Bond, we have to come to the place when we realize that ***this life is not enough*** and lift up our eyes beyond the hills to the One from whence cometh our strength. None of these is wrong, they are just not enough.

There are times when ***my vision fights with infections***, driven both by the cussedness of others and by my own cussedness and I need to let His Word and His Spirit identify and work to cleanse my heart and life from the infection (a dose of spiritual antibiotics – antifungals and even antivirals) every time it happens and for however long that it takes. Untreated spiritual sickness can destroy our faith from the inside, sigh.

There are also times when ***my vision breaks*** (it was crumbling when I was really sick for so long) and when the healing comfort of the L-rd needs to do its work to help me regain confidence in His working in the issues of my life, over and above what He is doing in the world at large and in the lives of others.

There are also times when ***my vision grows tired*** when I hear all the junk people believe and do and when I just don't seem to feel I have the strength to keep on going and I just want to lie down or run away, like Moses, ***when it just seems to be too much and I am overwhelmed***.

However, this year once again, it is time for me and for each of us to allow our vision to be renewed, whether it has become too small, or even infected, broken or tired.

How do we do this? Basically we need to come to Him and admit that it is really His show and ***just as the heavens above continue to function flawlessly above the folly and the mess of life***, He will help us to discover how to let His purposes continue to flourish amidst all that is going on in our lives – for at least one more year again.

And what is the worst that could happen? ***Death would be a release*** Rom. 8:35-39 is hard to hang onto at times, but we have to understand Prov. 4:23 and let Him show us how to find the time and the energy and the resources ***to sit at His feet and soak it up like Mary, before we run ourselves into the ground trying to do it all like Martha***.

How is your vision doing? It really doesn't matter what condition it is in, it really matters that ***we know both what condition that it should be in and that He will intervene in our lives***, once again to bring it back to where it should be – despite the folly of others and despite our own folly.

Today, let us bring our vision back to Him and allow the healing and the renewing to start, because He is still in charge, when we are in the ***belly of the whale***, or ***building the golden temple***, whether we are ***fainting from fatigue in the wilderness*** of just ***sitting peacefully under our olive tree picking our teeth***.

Two visions from Narnia as well conclude today. In the movie about C. S. Lewis' life his adopted son tries to escape through an actual wardrobe when his mother dies. May the L-rd help us to ***live escaped***, not through the wardrobe, but through the cross and the empty grave ***which will pull us out of this world and into eternity, no matter what else is going on in our lives or in this crazy world***.

In The Silver Chair, the witch has thrown poison onto the fire which overcomes their minds and proves to them that nothing exists outside of their little room (like the materialists, and the evolutionists of this world), but the marsh wiggles sticks his foot into the fire and puts out the poison ***saying that he knows that something exists beyond that room and he was going to spend the rest of his life looking for it***.

May the determination of the marsh wiggles and the vision of the cross renew your vision, again and again, whenever it begins to shrink, to become infected, or is breaking or growing tired! Let's pray.