

17 Iyar, 5774 (17/514) **Biblical Preparedness and the Kingdom Exclusions** J. M. Terrett

B'chukotai In My Statutes

Torah: Lev. 26:3-27:34

(1) 26:6: ***I will bring peace to the land and no one will disturb your sleep; I will make the savage beasts disappear from your land and the sword shall never pass through your land.*** The power and the Majesty of faithful obedience will always exceed and overcome the power of any adversary or circumstance which rises up against us.

(2) 26:30: ***I will destroy your high places and I will strike down the statues you have consecrated to the sun, I will place you dead bodies on the dead bodies of you idols.*** Just as thoroughly and as completely as He will bless our obedience, so will He also thoroughly punish our disobedience until it has destroyed us. We have a double great potential – one for blessedness when we obey and the other for punishment when we disobey.

(3) 27:20, 21: ***If someone does not redeem the field and it is sold to another man, he can no longer redeem it and when the one who acquires it goes out at the Jubilee, this field shall be consecrated to the L-rd as a dedicated field; it shall become the property of the priest.*** The earth is the L-rd's and when we dedicate anything to Him, it remains His and He will hold us to our agreements, not because He is mean or even greedy, but He wants us to take our spirituality and our morality as seriously as He does.

(4) 27:30: ***All the tithe of the earth, whether it be harvests or the earth, or fruit of the trees belongs to the L-rd; it is a thing consecrated to the L-rd.*** Tithing is a principle which declares and upholds divine ownership over us as we wander through this life, travelling through the earth where everything ultimately does belong to Him and where we get to proclaim that ownership and reap the benefits of His land-lordship. The Queen Mother of blessed memory said that duty was the rent you paid for living – for believers part of this duty, part of this rent is our tithe, which belongs to Him in years of plenty and in years of want – when we have a lot of cash and when we are cash strapped – I never want to linger on the edge of spiritual foreclosure because I have fallen behind in my rent – either the part of my rent which involves duty or the part which involves my tithe. How good are you at demonstrating His ownership of you and your life (hello, it's called a tithe).

Haftarah: Jer. 16:19-17:14

(5) 17:9: ***The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?*** True self knowledge needs to rise up beyond just a heart knowledge and must be derived

from a more reliable, external source of enlightenment.

(6) 17:10: ***I the L-RD, I test the heart and I sound out the mind to render to each according to his ways, according to the fruit of his works.*** True self knowledge comes from the L-rd who explores our depths to find out who we really are and what is really hidden or treasured in the depths of our hearts, so that He work with us and bless us (or correct us) according to both the true truth of His Word and the true truth of our hearts and minds. Do you know who you really are? Do you really know that G-d really knows who you are?

Brit Chadashah: Matt.22:1-14

(7) 22:12: ***He said, my friend, why have you come here without wearing your wedding clothes? This man was speechless.*** In this parable of the Kingdom, when the Kingdom was ready and banquet invitations to the coronation (marriage) of the Son were sent out and refused, a universal call was sent out, but one who came did not have on wedding clothes (he was there for the food and the fun, but not for the L-rd – he did not want out of the world, he just wanted a better deal in the world – more about it in my sermon).

(Sharon, p. 27) **Ps. 105** Jewish hero: Franklin Graham (urging believers to stand with Israel)

Chazak, chazak, v'Nitchazek (be strong, be strong and may you be strengthened – a traditional blessing which is given by the rabbi to the shul and from the shul to the rabbi at the end of each book of the Torah)

I would like to begin my message on the Kingdom exclusions, first by reading the passage in question:

“Do you not know that the unrighteous shall never inherit the Kingdom of G-d? Do not be deceived, neither fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes (catamites), sodomites (homosexuals), thieves, the greedy, drunkards, slanderers, nor swindlers shall inherit the Kingdom of G-d. And this is what some of you used to be. But you have been washed, you have been sanctified, but you have been justified in the name of the L-rd Yeshua HaMashiach and by the Spirit of our G-d.”

The passage contains ten kingdom exclusions, but also says that none of those who practice these exclusions are in and of themselves excluded from the Kingdom because whosoever believes in the only begotten Son of G-d shall not perish, but everlasting life. It is the nature of belief which Paul is having to deal with here.

He was dealing with an extremely spiritually corrupt city in an extremely compromised ancient world where spirituality and morality were not considered to be part of the same equation. Many felt that they could be saved or released from sin and death and evil in their spirit, and yet practice any kind of evil or immorality in their body because the two worlds were somehow not connected and what you did in the one was irrelevant to the other. Big mistake.

Paul has just had to deal with a community which allowed someone to marry their mother and Paul had to get rough with them and say that they were even more corrupt than the secular world where such an abomination would never be permitted. He said that part of what it means to come to faith is to separate ourselves from all and any forms of evil.

He said that we were not even to eat with someone who called themselves a believer, but who practices immorality – and he gives a shorter sixfold list. Now a little word about lists in the Bible – they are usually descriptive and focused, not exhaustive or even always comprehensive. When listing sins or the works of the flesh, Paul especially wanted to touch base with all the major categories and the biggest listing of sins in the New testament is found in Gal. 5:17-21 where Paul mentions 17 categories of carnality/sinfulness.

It is never the purpose of the Bible to go into great depth about every little kind of sin as if we were unconsciously fascinated by its darkness. It is our duty to be aware of sinfulness, whenever it rears its ugly head and to have nothing to do with it. Just to get the point across, Paul ends his litany of sinfulness with the last category: “and things like this”, just in case another version or clone of the serpent's lies were to present its negative credentials as it crouches at the door.

The Bible defines sin as a violation or transgression of the Law of G-d (I John 3:4) and the Law of G-d has as its foundation the Ten Commandments, so whatever violates the Ten commandments is sin unequivocally (without exception). Is this cruel and judgemental. Never and not at all.

I would like to pause here a moment and read to you a post which I put on Facebook concerning this false accusation of being judgemental when we encounter those who wish to practice any form of sinfulness and thus separate their spirituality from their morality:

Our society is becoming more and more morally compromised and spiritually impotent. Belief in the Bible is being marginalized as well as characterized as fanatical anti-intellectualism.

Political correctness has moved sexual ethics out of the realm of faith and made them

hot political issues.

Sexual immorality of all kinds is now considered normal (acceptable) behaviour and the issue of the rightness or the wrongness of abortion has been decided in the popular mind in favour of indiscriminately killing babies in the womb.

Those who speak out for biblical morality and for the truth of what the Bible teaches are maligned and ridiculed as increasing pressure is being placed on believers to abandon both what the Bible teaches and the morality it upholds or be labelled nut cases and atavistic (those who irrationally hold to out-dated and disproved notions).

At the risk of being labelled a Tolkien geek - Mordor is upon us and yet we are to just wring our hands, smile and avoid confronting the rising tide of darkness which is sweeping over the globe.

Not this old hippy. I am a convinced creationist. I uphold the core morality which the Bible teaches and I am a law abiding citizen who will lift his voice to protest the erosion of my religious freedom, and which freedom requires that I speak up for the unborn babies and that I reach out to the sexually deviant and call all and any who practice any stripe of immorality to do something absolutely radical and awesome - repent and come to faith in the resurrected Messiah and His Word.

Even if I get unfriended in the process, nu!

We need to see our lives as vehicles of outreach, both in how we live and how we communicate as we live. May the L-rd grant all of us wisdom and grace so that our outreach could always be dynamic and effective as we proclaim the truth of G-d's holy Word to a dying, confused and conflicted world.

The Kingdom exclusions are there to guide us away from that which would shipwreck our souls and compromise our faith, and our spirituality, to the point where our lifestyle (our morality) and our choices exclude us from the Kingdom. And it is not because we are not welcome, it is because immorality and unrighteousness of any kind is never welcome.

Our Messiah died to free us from the power of cancelled sin and He does not want us to bring the practice of the sin from which we have been delivered into the Kingdom and thus bring the Kingdom back under the subjection of that from which it was delivered.

Said another way, we were delivered from the slavery of Egypt and the L-rd refuses to let us bring any of the slavery with us into His promised land – and it was because of that slavery that our people went into captivity – their current wandering among the nations is another issue and one which I would love to explore with you more at Yeshiva on Thursday nights.

The Kingdom of our L-rd has a charter of rights and those who violate it, forfeit their membership in the Kingdom – again, not because they are not welcome, not because they are not loved and certainly not because the L-rd did not die for them as they wallowed in their sin, but because they choose to wallow in their sin, rather than to come to the light and be set free by His love.

In our society, it has now considered evil to call evil, evil. People are being given rights over their bodies which their bodies were never intended to have – and the ten kingdom exclusions clearly outline behaviours which citizens of the Kingdom need to be protected from and also from which some of us have been delivered. It is not an accident that ten exclusions are mentioned in our passage and six in the previous chapter. Ten refers to the Ten Commandments and six refers to the abominations which the Canaanites and Egyptians practised. So we are to be delivered from abomination and we are called not to violate the commandments of our L-rd.

The Kingdom is offered freely to all who will believe and part of that believing means to repent and to be set free from sinfulness in any form. The passage contains a threefold liberation: being washed, sanctified and justified and this is our marvellous renewable inheritance as we wander through this life on our way home to our Father's Heavenly House.

Washed means that every stain and all the pain and penalty are removed and we are cleansed completely and thoroughly – and repeatedly (I John 1:9).

Sanctified means that the damage is removed and that we are returned to a state of acquired restored innocence and holiness (separateness) which allows us to live as if our former defilement had no further impact on our lives. We may still struggle with the old wounding and the negative desires (Gen. 4:7), but it becomes a struggle to hold onto what we have and not to endlessly seek for that which we do not yet have. We are cleansed and repaired when we first come to Him and the process is renewed every time we come to Him, whenever we fall into the mud and the darkness on our way home.

Justified means that the entire penalty of our actions has been declared null and void by the Heavenly tribunal and it will never be held against us or thrown back in our faces when we

stand before the King in glory. This is what happens the minute we come to faith and this is the wonder or renewal which our faith comes with – every time we come to Him, our judgement is again declared null and void.

Now having said this, we have to look at the context in which it was given. Our faith delivers us from unrighteousness, it does not give us the right or the mandate to practice unrighteousness of any kind. In our modern society sexual immorality of many kinds is now considered right and proper and even beautiful – when did adultery and fornication (sex outside of marriage) become acceptable? Before Him it never did and it never will – any more than all and any of the other forms of immorality which violate the righteous requirements of His Word.

This passage has ten Kingdom exclusions, but not one of those who practice these exclusions needs to be excluded from the Kingdom because of the power and the wonder of the blood of the Lamb and of the Spirit of G-d and of His Holy Word. There is a triple solution freely offered to all and any who come and who desire freedom and new life.

Never let anyone trick you into separating your spirituality from your morality. You are never delivered from your need to choose and to fight against the darkness from which you have been delivered. Never let the enemy of your souls convince you that darkness is light or that sourness is sweet (Is. 5:20-23). The popular mind is only a measure of where our society is currently at and it is never a measure of what is either finally true or absolutely right.

As we prepare to celebrate the giving our the Torah at Shavuot and the descent of the Spirit who empowers us to practice Torah righteousness, let us remember that we are a delivered people – delivered both from the land of Egypt and from the power of Egypt – and from the negative serpent inspired propaganda of the corrupt world system which would want to say that it is evil to call evil, evil in whatever form it takes.

The ten exclusions are a package deal, just as the Ten Commandments are a package deal and not a pick and choose buffet. Unrighteousness in any form is wrong, evil and the practice of it will shipwreck our faith and cause us to become excluded from the Kingdom by our choices, not because we are no longer welcome.

Faith and morality (obedience, righteousness) are inseparable, intrinsically linked so that if you attack the one, you attack the other. May we constantly and stubbornly refuse to be pulled into a system of recycled Egyptian and Canaanite spiritual slavery, no matter how nice and sweet the politically correct nonsense makes it sound. Are the unrighteous evil people? No they are people who practice evil and who are infected with it and who need to be delivered from it. I want to live under the power of the three kingdom inclusions and not be dragged back into the ten kingdom exclusions.