

# From Rabble to Righteousness, From Chaos to the Kingdom

## A Messianic Jewish Approach to Community 1 Peter 2:9, 10

6 Cheshvan (Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003) **Community: The Biblical Imperative** J. M. Terrett

Noach                      Noah (rest)  
Torah:                      **Gen. 6:9-11:32**  
Haftarah:                 **Is. 42:5-43:10**  
Brit Chadashah:        **Rev. 22:6-21**

As we begin our time in this wonderful facility, I want us to consider the meaning of community from a Messianic Jewish perspective. So from now until Shabbat Chanukah, we will consider how we can best respond as individuals and as a congregation to our *unique collective calling*.

Let me remind you first of the five stages of adjustment which occur in transitions of this kind:

- (1) WOW (beautiful, new, exciting, lots to discover).
- (2) OH OH (wait a minute, this is not what I expected, not how we do things, I'm not so sure any more).
- (3) NO WAY (this is not going to work, I want out, it can't be done, I'm outta here)
- (4) MAYBE (well, with lots of work, it might work, give me time to get used to it, lets wait and see)
- (5) OK (took a while, but it fits, there is a way, feels right, we're home)

Our friends at Laurier Heights will go through the same kinds of settling in with us, until we have established a *mutually acceptable working relationship*. So we need to pray, be patient, forgive and not forget to clean up and put things away. We need to establish friendships within Laurier Heights and discover that they are just as weird and wonderful as we are - **I John 4:7** (Beloved let us love one another, for love is of G-d and he who loves is born of G-d and knows G-d) and **Eph. 4:32** (Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as Messiah in G-d forgave you). **Ps. 133:1** (Hine ma tov umma'nayim oh how good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity).

Sermon: I Cor. 13; Matt. 7:24-27; Deut. 29:29

I chose I Cor. 13 as the first theme passage for our biblical imperative, even though it is usually used at weddings. It appears between two chapters which give instructions about the proper use of gifts in the congregational life of a growing assembly of Jews and Gentiles, men and women, rich and poor, spiritually healthy and spiritually wounded. I understand all the giftings are only tools, but only the redeeming love of chapter 13 gives the blueprint – the mandate for the proper functioning of a community of faith.

After putting giftedness in perspective (verses 1-3), Rav Sh'aul gives us eighteen practical characteristics of love (chaj -verses 4-10). He ends his exhortation of love with a surprising threefold statement: grow up (vs.11), we ain't home yet (vs.12), all ya need is love (vs.13).

Love is the first biblical imperative of community from a Messianic Jewish perspective. If we are nothing *without love*, and if nothing is profitable *without love*, and if all we do in the L-rd is useless *without love*, then everything that we are and that we do with love is extremely profitable and useful – don't go broke in the L-rd, lets make a deal and be profitable.

Matt. 7:24-27 talks about the storms of life from which none of us are exempt – some times I feel like a motherless child – but Your rod and Your staff they comfort me, if and only if, I hear the Word and put it into practice. Sure G-d makes His sun to shine upon the wicked and upon the righteous, but He keeps His greatest treasures for those who walk with Him – I Tim. 6:6 godliness with contentment is of great gain, a pearl of great price, more to be desired than much fine gold, sweeter also than the honey comb, a river of life which never runs dry, a leaf that will never wither.

Walking according to His Word gives inner life so charged with His presence, so charged with an eternal weight of glory, that nothing less than Heavenly realities touches it for very long. Great sadness, and pain, success and prosperity, the most amazing grandchildren in the world, are all kept in perspective when we walk according to His Word. When we stay strong from the inside out, our lives are never really turned inside out.

Which brings me to my third and final passage: Deut. 29:29. Sometimes and far too often, I just don't get it. Sure I know deep down that things are undoubtedly unfolding as they should, but ***there seems to be an awful lot of alligators in this here swamp, and she ain't draining too quick neither!*** Nothing that happens to me in this life is G-d's will for my life, it is only when I respond to it according to His revealed Word (commandments) that it becomes His will for my life. His will for me life is to respond according to His Word in every situation of my life.

To put this painfully disgusting and marvellous truth in another way – it is G-d's will for me to respond to everything and anything which happens to me according to the moral and ethical imperatives of His Word. Rav Sh'aul understood that even a calling can only be fulfilled and acceptable to our L-rd, if and only if it is lived out according to the ethical moral principles of His Word (look up Matt. 25:31-46 and tremble). We are called to high road home, even if they get to Loch Lomond before us!

It is not our job to figure out what is going on, it is our job to live according to His Word in the glorious triumphs of our lives, and when all our dreams have shattered and broken our hearts and our life has crumbled before our eyes – like Rav Sh'aul's did just before his martyrdom. But, hey this verse contains a double promise which is just as real today as it was, when it was given on the plains of Moab: children and forever.

The blood of Adam and Eve, of Noah, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and of every family of all the nations, will flow generationally until the Kingdom comes. Our episode, our verse, is only part of a greater story, which we are a part of, and which, when we walk according to His word, becomes part of us, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. How's His story in your life?

If we know the L-rd and walk according to His Word, then we know all we need to know and are in His will. Love is a central part of this will, and needs to be the firm foundation of the kind of community we continue to be, as we settle into our new location. Next week: Connected Mishpocah. Lets pray