

Beshalach	When He let Go	The L-rd Will Make a Way For Us
Torah:	Exodus 13:17-17:16	Sea of Reeds, Manna, water, Amalekites
Haftarah:	Judges 4:4-5:31	Devorah, Sisera, Jael and the tent peg
Brit Chadashah:	Revelation 19:1-20:6	Marriage Super, Final Battle, 1st resurrection

Just as the L-rd made a way for the House of Israel to cross the Sea of Reeds and to learn to live as a free people, He will also make a way for us to be set free from everything that gets in the way of His kingdom in our lives. When Pharaoh saw that Israel appeared to be lost in the wilderness, with their way blocked by the Sea of Reeds, he pursued them because it looked like the L-rd had abandoned them. He intended to capture them, kill those who lead the rebellion and herd the survivors back into slavery. He was relying on faulty intelligence because the L-rd has never abandoned His people and never will.

The people had not had much time to get organized and they cringed with fear when they saw the approach of the mightiest army on earth. Many of them probably wanted to throw themselves on Pharaoh's mercy because they could see no way out of their dilemma – Pharaoh had them cornered.

But G-d went into action, both preventing Pharaoh's army from approaching the camp of Israel and making a path through the swamp. When the Egyptians foolishly followed them into the swamp, the returning waters swallowed them up and spit their dead bodies out. Moses composed a song of victory and Miriam supplied the chorus. Then the people shouldered their belongings and headed for safety out of Egyptian held territory, before any of them had time to change their minds and return to their former slavery.

Their first actual stopping place was at the bitter waters of Mara, where they drank the waters which had been made sweet and had time to bake their bread. They were a distance of seven walking days out of Egypt, with no fear of being pursued. G-d promised that if they obeyed Him, none of the diseases of Egypt would strike them and the sweeten waters acted like a purgative and all the parasites and other infections of Egypt were flushed out of their system.

Once their meagre food supplies began to run out, they cried out in their hunger and falsely remembered their time in Egypt, even saying that they sat beside pots full of meat. They forgot the pain of their slavery and wondered if G-d had brought them into the waterless wilderness to kill them with hunger and thirst. G-d promised to provide them with bread in the morning and quail at night.

Their flocks could feed off the land, but if they did not get adequate food and water, both them and their flocks would perish. Manna (what on earth – man hou?) appeared once the morning dew dried and they gathered and cooked enough for each day. On the sixth day they were to gather a double amount, without any fear that it would become infected if they kept it over night. There is no mention of the quail arriving until later on.

On the fifth day of the second month after their departure from Egypt they turned and headed in land away from the sea. Once they were given manna, they cried after water, both for them and for their flocks. In Hebrew the word for wilderness means an area devoid of surface water

and there were no wells in the part of the wilderness they were travelling through. They kept on being mesmerized by the limitations of their situation, instead of anticipating the provision of G-d. We must never forget that the L-rd will always make a way for us.

Moses struck the rock and enough water gushed out of the rock for them and their flocks. Then they moved on towards the mountain in a series of stages until they came to a place called Rephidim, where they were bushwhacked from behind by their distant cousins, the Amalekites. They assembled a strike force and as long as Moses held his hand elevated on a mountain overlooking the combat, they were able to vanquish Amalek all day until sunset.

They went on their way and arrived at the mountain of G-d, with all of their needs met and waited for instructions about the next stage of their journey. They had to learn to listen to what the L-rd was saying to them on their journey to the mountain, in order to be ready to hear what He would have to say to them from the mountain.

The prophetic portion deals with the warrior prophetess Devorah and the victory of Israel over the iron chariots of the Canaanite king Jabin. His general, Sisera was not only defeated in a battle he thought he could not lose, but he was killed by a woman, Jael, in whose tent he sought refuge. Two ladies spelled his doom because the L-rd will always make a way for us.

In Revelation we see the final battle, where the hosts of the L-rd are victorious over the forces of the beast and the false prophet. We are given a vision of the marriage supper of the L-rd, which was to occur after the battle and we are shown the thousand year victory of the saints over the imprisoned devil. It is called the first resurrection and the second death will have no power over those who experience it, because the L-rd will always make a way for us.

No matter what mighty adversaries arise to block our path, or who sneak up on us and attack us from behind, the L-rd will always give us victory as long as we learn to walk with Him and hear His voice. His voice will be both what He has said in His Word and what He is saying to us personally when we ask for wisdom and instructions on our pilgrimage through this life. When we learn to distinguish between opposition and defeat, we will not be terrified by any trials which fall upon us, because even if they kill us, the final victory will be ours when this weary world finally runs out of gas and we all stand before the King of Glory and a place is made for us at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

I want to close with a wise saying that describes a very important spiritual reality. Born once, die twice, born twice, die once. When we come to faith in our Messiah, we are born again and the only death we will know is when we are delivered from our mortal bodies while we are waiting for the second resurrection where we shall receive our new bodies. If we do not come to faith in our Messiah, we experience two deaths, one physical and the other spiritual. The L-rd will always make a way for us in this life, so that we can arrive spiritually intact when the next life dawns forever over all the generations and nations of mankind. Has He made a way in your life?

Sermon: Confidence in the Kingdom: World Weariness

Passage: *The sayings of the wise are like goads, and their collected sayings are like firmly embedded nails given by one shepherd. Be warned my son of anything in addition to them, for the making of many books has no end and much study wears the body.*

Now that everything has been heard, here is the conclusion of the discussion: Fear G-d and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of mankind. For G-d will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.
(Ecclesiastes 12:12-15 – 13 – 16 in my Bible)

The collected wise sayings of Solomon dealt with an incredibly broad range of topics concerning both the purpose of life and the apparent meaningless of things which happen to us in this life. Solomon looked at life from many angles and once all is said and done, no matter what else happens to you, be it ever so good or ever so bad, mankind has a double spiritual duty, as we wander through the sublime and ridiculous of this fleeting life. We are to fear G-d and keep His commandments, nothing else in this life really matters but this.

As we observe International Holocaust Memorial Day and remember the senseless slaughter of so many innocents we could really get a massive, long term headache if we try and make too much sense of it all. In spite of all that we encounter in our pilgrimage through this life which appears so meaningless to us, we need to cling to our confidence in the Kingdom and not be overcome with the world weariness which Solomon describes.

There is really no end to the books which are being written as human knowledge continues to explode exponentially and yet our wise and sophisticated world is no nearer to understand the meaning of life than we have been since the printing press was first invented. And now with the internet, all that has been discovered and is being discussed is right at our finger tips without us having to leave our front doors. People seem to be developing an insatiable drive to keep on learning and expressing what they have learned.

In Hebrew we understand that there are three categories of that which may be learned by mankind: knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Knowledge is just that heap of bare facts which seems to have no beginning and certainly appears to have no end. Understanding is the ability figure out how things work and are put together in whatever realm of human endeavour you plunge into. Finally wisdom is the ability to know how to act and find meaning and purpose, whether you have a lot of knowledge or very little understanding.

Probably the three greatest minds our species has produced are those great thinkers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. They did not have much knowledge by our modern standards and they were not great inventors, ready to travel the world or conquer it. Their great strength was the wisdom they expressed to help people find meaning and purpose in this confusing world.

However, there is a greater wisdom than anything these great minds came up with and that is to fear the L-rd and keep His commandments. Life may not ever make much sense as we see the wicked prosper and the righteous man languish even though he deserves a better life.

I am frequently perplexed at the majestic folly of our world and the almost endless potential for people in our world to add confusion, as they increase the needless pain and suffering which our world seems so adept at giving out. I struggle to understand how one of the most civilized countries in the world turned into a nation of blood thirsty fanatics who brought death and destruction to so many millions of their victims.

I also struggle to understand why those nations who had the power to stop the Nazis, did nothing until Hitler brought the war to their doorsteps. The Nazi regime had to be bombed and

blasted into submission before the killing stopped and even then, Europe lay in ruins which took so many decades to recover from.

What was it all about? Why is Africa full of so many armed militias determined to kill anyone who opposes them? Why are so many factories around the world spewing forth poison smoke and dumping their waste into our oceans so that the fish who swim in there are getting so polluted that they are no longer really safe to eat?

Why is substance abuse on the rise among the wealthiest people on our planet and why is the youth of the world being ravaged by sexually transmitted diseases which grow more virulent every year? The world seems to want to kill babies in their mother's wombs and euthanize the elderly when they are perceived to be more of a burden than a joy.

These and other questions rise up and assault our faith in a loving, merciful G-d who doesn't appear to be doing very much to stop the malicious foolishness of this world and fix all the things which are being broken among the peoples of our globe. People often express anger to me that G-d is letting all of this happen as the world appears to be sinking into great darkness once again.

Well, there are many good and sound answers which could be given in response to all the human folly which our world seems to love to wallow in and it is my continual prayer that we acquire enough of the wisdom of faith not to lose heart in our confusing world. I could talk to you about free will and dignity, where people are reaping what they have sown. I could also talk to you about how the protection and provision of G-d, blesses us as we go through great trials.

However, perhaps the most comforting aspect of our faith is that the kingdom is coming and that one day, G-d will bring judgment on all the generations and nations of mankind, revealing everything that has been hidden in darkness, whether it is good or bad. Solomon realized that this world is complex beyond understanding and so many things which shouldn't happen, constantly get in the way, to prevent things which should happen from occurring, if they were only given a chance.

I even see this among too many believers who seem so determined to bite and devour each other, that too often they are destroyed by each other while the adversary laughs in their faces. And right in the midst of all of this, good things also seem to be happening when you least expect it and G-d does abundantly answer our prayers.

This morning, I want to use this passage in Ecclesiastes to talk to you about world weariness. Paul said that his spirit groaned in this mortal body and he could hardly wait to be set free of it forever and be clothed in eternity. He often reached moments of despair when his world would keep on crumbling around him as he watched what he had build so carefully, unravel before him. He did not live to see Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans or the second temple burned to the ground. He also did not live to see the wars and pestilence and famine which have raged across our world since his day.

He saw enough to encourage us to have the wisdom of faith when we grow weary of this world and wish that it would all be over very quickly. World weariness is a good thing for believers to deal with because our destiny is in no way linked to the folly or the fortunes of this life. Instead

of being so perplexed by what we see going on around us that we lose heart and want to quit, we need to learn to lift up our eyes, because the coming of His kingdom is the only true certainty we can have in this life.

He will certainly always bless us and protect us and provide for us as we wander through this life, even if He allows the heathen to rage and fill our world with violence and filth as we pass through it. I cannot fully grasp why G-d allowed the events of the Holocaust to nearly destroy European civilization, but I can say with great certainty that He upheld and guided the allies to put a stop to the killing, even at the cost of so many brave young lives. There are very few traces left of all the death and destruction, but that was not the final assault on humanity by the enemy of our souls.

I cringe when I think of the rise of the final antichrist and all the deception and suffering which the final battle will bring, but I have read the end of the story. We can look forward with great anticipation, not to some deluded pot of gold that is supposed to be waiting for us at the end of some rainbow. We are heirs to the coming kingdom, and even though it is still invisible, it is more finally real than any of the vanity which this world boasts so loudly about.

Millions of our people died horrible deaths at the hands of those who hated them and these monsters were doing the will of the devil who hates all of man kind passionately. We know that he is hard at work undermining the moral and spiritual fabric of our world and his lies are gaining ground, as he moves to bring a second great darkness upon mankind.

Our job is to make sure that none of his darkness gains any ground in our lives as we shine as salty light before our fading world. He will try and pull us back into his darkness and we know that he wants us to fall under the dominion of the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. He wants to use broken and defeated believers as a deterrent to prevent the masses of our world from coming to His Word to find meaning and purpose in a life of faith. He will say anything and do everything he can to defeat the children of light and snare them back into his darkness.

How effective are we going to be, so that we are not overcome by the increasingly aggressive folly which he is spewing into our world? World weariness can be a trap if we give up on the grace and love of G-d, because of all the senseless horror our world is so famous for. In how I live my life and in how I dialogue with people as I journey through this life, I want to do my part to take a stand against racial hatred and the evolutionary propaganda which makes people want to get all they can and can all they get, as they settle down to sit on the lid.

Remembering the Holocaust is never a pleasant thing which we can do lightly and then run to get back to the business of living our lives, untouched by the unspeakable things we have become witnesses to. We need to keep alive the memory of those who perished and speak openly about the horrible efficiency which their enemies used in their annihilation. We need to speak out against the lies which were used to justify Hitler's final solution.

There is no worldwide Jewish conspiracy to take over the world. There is no secret financial conspiracy secretly running everything in the world, under the supposed leadership of the Rothschilds and their cronies. Jewish people are not Christ killers who are in league with the devil and we do not use Gentile blood in our wine during our Passover Seders.

You cannot convince everyone who has chosen to believe these made up lies and slanderous

stories about Jewish people and Israel will continue to make the rounds on the internet. Participating in International Holocaust Memorial Day is one big step in the right direction and I am never shy about correcting false ideas people may have about our Jewish people.

World weariness can be a good thing if we have a firm grip on our confidence in the Kingdom. And it will take spiritual wisdom beyond anything Socrates, Plato and Aristotle came up with not to be overpowered by the burgeoning folly of this world. I am talking about the wisdom of faith which believes more in the coming of Messiah's kingdom than it does in the daily rising and setting of the sun.

We may yet have to go through periods of great tribulation and even suffer the loss of our possessions, as we see many of our number lose their lives because of their faith. We may have to go underground and meet in secret as we watch many of our friends and neighbours turn on us and even turn us in to our enemies. Good times may go on for a while yet, but we need to be on our guard against the encroaching darkness of this present age.

It is gathering momentum to set the stage for the final battle between the darkness of our enemy and the light of our beloved Messiah. Will we be equal to the task? Are we growing in our world weariness because we want to escape from its darkness and see His glorious kingdom break forth upon our unsuspecting world? Do the problems you face make you doubt the mercy and love of G-d? Or do they drive you to your knees, so that His protection and provision can overshadow you like a pillar of fire in the night and a thick cloud during the heat of the day?

It is a wild, dark and untrustworthy world we have to wander through and there are still more horrible things to come before the arrival of the kingdom of our blessed Messiah. We should take comfort that there is also a final judgment coming, where all that was done in secret will be brought to light, as this weary old world dissolves and finally passes away.

It may not make sense to us in this life, but we need to cling to our faith in the next life and keep on seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness. In the final analysis, His kingdom is the only thing which makes sense in this life and all the rest will keep on slipping away. May we always have the spiritual wisdom not to slip away with it, because it is G-d who is in final control and it is under this final control that we want to live. Shabbat shalom and Shavua tov. Am Yisrael Chai.