

Tetzaveh	You Shall Command	Quarterly Meeting NOSH
Torah:	Exodus 27:20-30:10	
Haftarah:	Ezekiel 43:10-27	
Brit Chadashah:	Hebrews 13:10-16	

Reading: |Jo p. 31,33 and Ps. 65 Jewish Hero: Elisha. Carrier: Mike

Passage: *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, and crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the punishment which made us whole, and by His bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the L-RD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted; yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.”* (Isaiah 53:5-7)

When we look at the majesty of all that our Messiah accomplished on the cross and the power He released when He burst forth from the grave, there may be many things about G-d's timing in preparing for redemption which we are never be told. First, because so much of it is none of our business and secondly, because a lot of it would be beyond our ability to understand.

What we do need to understand is that right from beginning and even before the beginning of time, the voluntary sacrifice of our sinless Messiah was at the core of all of G-d's purposes for all of mankind. What Messiah accomplished once, all alone and misunderstood by everyone around Him, had an eternal impact on the history of the human race. This is especially true, because the foreknowledge of G-d has always superseded the best laid plans of mice and men, and always will.

Whether we see it or not and whether we understand it in the midst of all the horrors of human history, G-d has never for one second lost control over the course of history and He never will. Despite what He allows, as men sow and reap what they have sown and as cruel and vicious monsters repeatedly make victims out of innocent people, we should get discouraged. This is because, in the fulness of time, our beloved Messiah came and accomplished eternal salvation – over and above all the ceremonies and symbols which pointed to this marvellous event, because they were only pictures and images of the deliverance which He accomplished in fact when He walked among us.

As well, in the fulness of time and in the timing of G-d, He will return to bring our sorry world to an end and to establish His everlasting Kingdom over all the nations and generations of mankind. Moral darkness and evolutionary secularism may be sweeping across our fading world, but none of this can ever stop the power of G-d and the coming of His Messiah who is our Saviour.

He was the perfect sacrifice. He lived a completely sinless life and He was wounded and broken for our sins and these wounds which He suffered give us healing as they set us free from the horror and futility of this age which is quickly passing away. This healing is granted to us both in the physical sense and also in the spiritual, moral sense.

On the cross, He absorbed the iniquities of us all, Jews and Gentiles from every nation and generation of mankind and it was this burden which killed Him when the Father had to turn away from the darkness which landed on the Son. It was this necessary spiritual abandonment which killed Him, even more than the weight of all our sins.

It usually took a victim of crucifixion at least two days to die, when their cramping muscles could finally longer push against the nails and allow the tortured soul to draw one more breath. The vinegar they offered Him was not an act of compassion, but would only increase His thirst so that He would suffer even more agony. He was bleeding, famished and all of his muscles were cramping and the unimaginable pain might have caused Him to pass out repeatedly, but He reminded His apostles in the garden that if at any point it became too much for Him, He could have called down legions of angels and all of us would have been lost eternally. He saw it through to the end as an act of overpowering and everlasting love.

When He passed away so quickly, they pierced His side to make sure He was dead and water and blood came out – which meant His heart had quit beating and He was truly dead. It is a point of theological speculation to determine whether the enemy was aware of what was going on. He may have thought he had won, since he put it in Judah's heart to betray the Messiah and the Messiah failed to call down the legions of rescuing angels.

He may have been lurking in the shadows waiting to see if the Messiah would crack under the pressure and ask to be freed from His suffering, which was likely the expectation the enemy was aiming for. When Messiah cried out and died, the enemy may have seen what was actually accomplished and at the resurrection it is likely that he and all his demons shrieked in anger and even pain – and which is why he wages such an intense warfare against the disciples of our Messiah and those who keep the commandments of G-d. He lost and eternal salvation for mankind was won right under his nose.

Two little detours and we will continue examining the overpowering superintendence of G-d. When I was at Bible School, one of our professors asked us who the ransom was paid to when our Messiah died on the cross – was it to the devil or was it to G-d? It was never paid to the devil because we continue to owe him nothing and he is never G-d's jailor. Hell is the prison house of G-d (His spiritual remand centre) and the devil has never been there and he never gets any supervision over any lost souls. He roams the earth, seeking those whom he may devour, doing his best to lead every new generation away from the light and into his lying darkness.

Another school of thought says that he will repent at the end of time, because he is only pretending to be our enemy and all bad things will be undone and all damage and pain and loss will be repaired and restored. This is nonsense.

He is the perfect enemy forged out of controlled darkness to give mankind an actual choice between real light and real darkness. He has always been evil from the beginning and legends that he is a fallen angel who was formerly at the right hand of G-d, are false. Those who hold this view, twist passages of the Bible that refer to men and not to angels, even when these men falsely claimed to be angels.

The Mormons even teach that the enemy is really the brother of our Messiah who is only pretending to be our enemy, while he is really our friend. He is a liar and the father of lies and he is destined for the eternal flames, not as one who will spend eternity torturing lost souls, but as one who will burn in the flames of the lake of fire for all eternity.

What of the people who did not receive the message of our Messiah and all those who lived and died without hearing the message? As we examine the wonder of the salvation which was planned before the beginning of time, we need to answer questions from the Bible and avoid the temptation of adding to and taking away from what this holy book clearly teaches. When I run out of explanations, because G-d does not tell us everything, I invoke one of my favorite verses: "The secret things belong to G-d and the things which He has revealed, belong to us and our children forever, that we may put them into practice." (Deuteronomy 29:29).

This is not a cop out. It is an admission that human knowledge will always be limited in this life, but our faith will always be reasonable and when we run out of reason, we trust in the goodness of the orderly creator G-d, in whom there is no darkness and no folly. The false gods of this world, ancient and present are merely caricatures where the feeble minds of men try to fathom the unfathomable with make believe and conjecture.

I have spoken on this in the past and will remind you of what the Bible teaches. Yeshua is the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except by Him. He alone, by His Word will decide the final fate of all mankind (Eccl. 12:13, 14; Romans 2:13-16 and I Corin. 4:5). He will not blame them for their former ignorance when they had not heard the truth (Acts 17:30, 31), but He calls all men who have heard the truth to repent and abandon their folly.

Those who would have if they could have, will not be judged because they did not do what they could not do, they will be judged on the thoughts and intents of their hearts (Matt. 25:31-46) according to the principles of justice which are written on the hearts of all mankind because we bear His image. Does that mean that all will be saved and that some will be given a second chance? Never. But those who were never given the chance, but who spent all of their lives looking for it (John 3:17-21), will be welcomed because of what they were seeking for and what they never gave up on.

This is a very ticklish and potentially controversial assertion, but let me say unequivocally, so that you will make no mistake – the final judgment which will determine the fate of everyone who ever lived will be determined by our Messiah and by our Messiah alone. All men will be judged with mercy and righteousness and no one will get a raw deal when they stand before G-d. There will be a lot of surprises on the day of judgement.

That is why I keep short accounts with G-d and plead for His mercy, so that I never stop forgiving those who have sinned against me – because if we stop forgiving, we are no longer forgiven. At the L-rd's Table, we ask the L-rd to search us and try us so that no hidden iniquity lurks in our hearts and lives. Our eternal salvation is paid for and the plan of salvation in our blessed Messiah has always been the plan of G-d from the beginning.

Yeshua did in reality what the symbols and rituals of salvation only portrayed. His salvation extends to the ends of the earth and impacts all mankind. One more little silly legend before we bring the service to a close and beseech the L-rd for a good week. Some reformers looked at the Scriptures and said that when our L-rd resurrected, He appeared to all the nations of mankind and was rejected by them all, except for the Europeans. They taught that the rest of the world had willfully rejected the Gospel and they did not feel the urge to preach to those whose ancestors had already rejected the message.

The Mormons go a step further and say that native Americans were Jewish refugees from Babel and from Babylon, whose skin was darkened because they did not accept the Gospel which was preached to them by the resurrected Messiah. They also teach that these dark-skinned rebels killed the fair skinned one who responded to the message and delved into great criminal idolatry. This is utter nonsense.

The L-rd built the message of His love into all the languages and religions of those who fled Babel, so that they would recognize the truth when they encountered it. He gave them a thirst for the truth. There are six commonalities in all religions and they are: a creation, a fall, a redemptive act, life after death, an end of the world and a spiritual duty to perform to access the benefits of what was won.

Roman Catholics rejected this protestant nonsense and went to the ends of the earth and preached to the most hardened savages, which is why there are so many Catholics around the world. The cross was not a detour from the original purposes of G-d. No ransom was paid to the enemy. The truth of G-d's Word declares that there is salvation in none other than the Messiah from Nazareth and while this may not be politically correct for our all-inclusive secular world, it is the central truth of our faith and it will never change.

Thus, salvation was first mentioned to our ancestors in the Garden of Eden and was taught in many places throughout the Scriptures. All of the prophecies concerning every aspect of the Messiah's ministry have either been fulfilled in Him or are waiting to be fulfilled when He returns. He came the first time at the right time and was born into the right family and He lived His life in the right way. He died in the right manner and was buried in the right way. He arose and ascended in the right way and He will return according to what His Word says.

We are not serving a divine detour. We are serving according to what has always been the plan of G-d from the beginning and we should never deviate from it, even until the very end. How much of His plans form the foundation of your life and your faith? Shabbat Shalom and Shavua Tov!

Torah Meditation: Tetzaveh (You Shall Command)

This week's Torah portion is very technical and deals with the clothing of the High Priest, the consecration of Aaron and his sons, along with the daily burnt offering and the incense altar. The priestly clothing was to be a reminder both that G-d was willing to dwell in their midst and that the distance between earth and the heavens could only be breached by the daily offerings. A ritual distance between the people and their G-d was to remind them that He was holy and totally separate from the fallen world in which the people lived.

Putting together the High Priest's clothing was to be done artistically. The breastplate was to be made of twelve precious stones and was to be a memorial both of the reality of sin which separated them from G-d and of His righteous judgement which provided a sacrificial means to bridge this gap until the Messiah would come and be a permanent bridge between their sins and their Saviour. All the colours which were incorporated into the priestly clothing were reminders of the heavens from which their Holy G-d reigned and also spoke of His desire to dwell in their midst.

It was not easy to depict the heavenly realities or the distance between them and the people, but the rituals spoke of a ritual connection and a sacrificial contact so that the people would understand the wonder of how G-d was dwelling in their midst. Even though the High Priest could only go behind the veil once a year, daily contact with G-d was provided for through the daily sacrifices which the High Priest performed.

The High priest was to perpetually remember both the sins of the people and G-d's love for the people He was willing to dwell in the midst of. There was also established a two-way communication between the people and their L-RD. They could ask the L-rd questions through the urim and the thumim, which were yes and no stones. The question would be rendered as a yes and no proposition and the High priest would put his hands into the place where these stones were kept and he would be guided to either a yes or a no answer.

The L-rd was to also meet with the people during the regular twice daily sacrifices where He would speak to and through the High Priest. The ritual distance protected the people from the lethal holy presence of G-d, but it also granted them the access they would need in order to communicate with the G-d who delivered them from Egyptian bondage and who would accompany them on their way to the promised land. It was this contrast between ritual distance and daily communication which both the sacrifices and the priestly clothing highlighted. He was both fully present and also totally separate.

Burnt offerings and blood reminded the people that they had to deal with their sinfulness, if they wanted to walk with their Holy G-d and have Him walk with them. In the same way, we need to separate ourselves from the sinful folly and darkness of this world if we want to walk with the Holy G-d who provided His Son as a means of breaching the distance between us and the G-d we wish to serve. How well is this distance breached in your life?

When Aaron and his sons were set apart for the service of the tabernacle, they were instructed to wear a set of holy underwear so that there was no risk that their nudity (sinfulness) would interfere with their ministry before the Holy G-d they were serving. Whenever they would clothe themselves with their holy garments, they would not only wash their bodies, but they would also use the blood of the consecration offering to protect them as they entered into the presence of the L-RD. Is the blood protecting you?

It would be placed on three strategic portions of their body as a sign that they were totally and fully dedicated to the L-RD. It was first placed on their right ear lobe as a sign of their willingness to listen to the voice of the L-RD and to actually hear what He was going to be saying to them. Even today, too many believers go about their daily lives without pausing to listen to the voice of the L-RD and actually hear what His Word is saying. How are your listening skills doing? Does His word have the full attention of your ear?

Next, the thumb of their right hand was to be anointed with blood as a sign that they would fulfil the will of the One into whose service they were entering. These anointings were in no way a slur upon left-handed people, as much as they were a sign that the people were willing to do the will of the One whom they served. The priests were to handle holy things and they had to be cleansed and consecrated in order to fulfil this sacred duty.

The blood of our Messiah still speaks to us today of our need to live lives separated from the darkness and filth of this present age. While we still live in the world, we are not of this world and we should never allow it to govern how we live our lives. Our true citizenship is in Heaven and we are called to handle heavenly things and not the things of this world. Are you letting His blood protect you as you wander through this life?

A third consecration was to occur every time the priests put on their holy clothing and this was putting the blood of the sacrificial offering onto the big toe of their right foot. They were about to enter holy territory and deal with heavenly realities, so where they stood and where they went was to be consecrated to the G-d whom they served.

The people were to take their daily contact with the L-rd very seriously and they had to have the double covering of the ritual distance and the blood to protect them during their contacts with G-d. We need to dedicate ourselves to hearing the voice of G-d through His Word. We need to understand that it is our primary calling to always be handling the things of G-d as we study the truths of His Word. We also need to realize that when we walk with the L-rd, we are walking on holy ground and we also need to realize that we are called to be holy in every area of our lives as we walk through the valleys and cross the mountains of this life. How holy is the way you are walking through this fading world?

Sin will always separate us from the presence of the Holy G-d we are called to serve and the blood of our Messiah will always break the power of this world's darkness as we walk in the light where He dwells. Our ears, our hands and our feet should be seen as instruments dedicated to the service of the One who died on the cross for us and whose Word we are called to study and to follow in every area of our lives. How dedicated to the L-RD is the life you are leading every day as we journey towards our final destination?