



B'NAI CHAYIM

CHILDREN OF LIFE

9 Elul, 5760 (29/08/20) **How Firm is Your Grip of the Missing Arm?** J. M. Terrett

Ki Tetze **When You Go Out** **Just in Case I haven't Told You**
Torah: Deuteronomy 21:1-25:9
Haftarah: Isaiah 54:1-10 (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)
Brit Chadashah: I Corinthians 5:1-5

This Torah portion covers a lot of ground and appears to jump from one subject to another without any plan. Since this is the second giving of the Law, through Moses, the Lord is identifying applications which were assumed in the first giving of the Law, but are now being articulated. It is not so much random as it is making sure that no stone remains unturned and that no major issue in the life of the people gets passed over.

Now some of the contents of this portion may appear strange to modern eyes, and without a close contextual reading of the texts, their intended meaning could often be blurred or even misunderstood. The first topic deals with marrying one of the ladies taken prisoner during a war. It may seem strange to us, but in the Ancient Middle East, marriages were usually arranged and occurred with no courtship. The newlyweds got to know each other after the marriage was performed and not before.

When an Israelite soldier selected an unmarried virgin to become one of his wives, she had to spend a month breaking all cultural and spiritual ties with her past. If the marriage failed, she could not be treated like a slave and was free to go wherever she chose. By her marriage, she had functionally become part of the community of Israel and had full rights of citizenship.

From very early on, in the history of Judaism, polygamy was widely practiced and the rights of all the wives and their children were carefully protected. No wife could be mistreated and no children could be ignored or passed over if their mother was out of favor with her husband. While the Bible does not specifically prohibit polygamy, rabbinic Judaism finally outlawed the practice in the 11th century. In the New Testament, it was understood that polygamy would die out in its second or third generation, especially since polygamists were excluded from any form of community leadership. Monogamy was held up as the new norm.

You may be surprised to learn that as part of his rediscovery of biblical truth, Martin Luther actually promoted polygamy to German princes who were having marital difficulty. The practice did not really catch on and was soon a thing of the past.

Polygamists who come to faith are nowhere commanded to choose on their wives and divorce the others. As was the case in the Torah, they would be required to treat all of their wives and children justly. The same would apply to Muslims who came to faith with more than one wife. We need to hold up the new norm without punishing those who cannot measure up to it because they had already contracted marriage to more than one wife. The stipulation for leaders to be the husband of one wife, refers to polygamy and not to divorce and remarriage.

In chapter 21:18-21 the passage does not say that we should execute our naughty children. It is talking about adult children who had backslidden into gross immorality without any intention of repenting, even after many warnings. Family ties were never intended to protect backsliders and their negative influence had to be firmly and finally removed.

Repeated warnings were given and death only came to those who stubbornly persisted in immorality, which would have included pagan idolatry. It is only referring to adult children who wanted to infect the community with their immorality and drunkenness.

The portion goes on to stipulate that the bodies of crucified criminals had to be removed from the cross before nightfall. Leaving a body on the cross was a curse which would defile the Holy Land. Joshua crucified every Canaanite King he defeated, but their bodies were never left on the tree over-night so that the curse they absorbed by being crucified would not return to the land if their bodies were left hanging overnight.

Yeshua absorbed the curse of all the sins of all the nations and generations of mankind as he suffered and died. Without realizing what they were doing, the Sanhedrin did not want His death on the cross to distract from their celebrations of First Fruits, so it was removed before night fall. If it had been left on the cross overnight, the curse which He had absorbed would have returned and His sacrifice would have been unacceptable. They helped to do the right thing, even if it was for the wrong reason.

Of the various applications of the Law to specific situations, it discusses a false allegation against a wife who no longer pleased her husband. The signs of her virginity had to be produced and this referred to the cloth which was bloodied when the protective covering of her lady parts was broken.

Adultery was punishable by death, but if it occurred outside of the town, where no one could hear the woman if she screamed, only the guilty man was put to death. If it occurred in the town and she did not scream, consent was assumed and they were both killed. However, stoning people to death was never really practiced in Judaism and if the Messiah had authorized the stoning of the adulteress in the temple, they would have stoned Him.

Difficult cases including these applications would have been brought before higher courts until a solid, biblical solution was found. Problems should be resolved and not ignored. Problems which are ignored and unresolved continue to do great damage to the body of Messiah, as trouble makers go from place to place leaving brokenness and pain in their wake.

Next the portion deals from those who were to be excluded from the tabernacle liturgy when they dwelt in Israel as permanent Gentile residents. The exclusions did not apply if they converted, as was the case with Ruth. Mutilated people were also excluded from the tabernacle liturgy.

In the case of keeping a war camp undefiled, anyone experiencing a nocturnal emission of semen had to leave the camp, wash and only return the following evening. All soldiers had to have a shovel to dig a hole for their excrements so the L-rd could walk among them and not see their body wastes.

Neither male nor female prostitution was permitted and none of the salary of their sin could be brought as an offering to the L-RD. Punishment for sin could not be generational and the needs of the poor had to be met. The portion ends with a discussion of levirate marriage, where the closed male relative had to marry his brother's childless wife. It was shameful for him to refuse. Is there any area in your life where you have not made appropriate applications of the principles of His Word?

Sermon: How Firm is Your Grip on the Missing Arm? Isaiah 54:1-10 & 52:13-53:12

In my message today I would like to discuss two issues relating to our Messiah. There are some who are confused about His identity and there are others who are just as badly confused about the nature and timing of His return. There are around 400 references to the Messiah in the Tanach (Old Testament), so we have enough material to say firmly that no understanding of who Messiah is and what He came to accomplish can contradict what the Bible teaches about His identity or about the nature of His return.

In fact, there are as many misunderstandings in Christianity about the return of the Messiah as there are in traditional Judaism about the nature of the Messiah. All and nay myths or false teachings need to be identified and corrected from the Scriptures, even if you have to swim against the current of popular misunderstandings.

Traditional Jewish people have built what they say is a protective wall of traditions around the Torah to prevent it from being defiled. In fact, what they have done is to imprison G-d's Word behind a thick wall of traditions so that none of its light can shine out and uncover their false teachings and departures from the truth. Many traditional, mainstream churches have done the same thing by imprisoning "G-d's Word" by their traditions.

We know from history that before the three major Jewish rebellions against Rome, thousands of Jews were coming to faith in the Messiah. And if our people had not rebelled, in a generation or two, the empire would have become Jewish, and in a few generations more, Messianic Judaism would have taken over the Jewish population of the empire.

Our faith has no quarrel with anything which the Bible teaches. Messiah even went as far as to say that the only authentic spiritual authority any rabbi could possess was when they spoke or taught the words of Moses. Tradition, which departs from this unique source of spiritual information and authority, impoverishes faith and does not enrich it.

Whenever our people are able to rise above tradition and take the Bible at its face value, then they have escaped from the prison which Jewish tradition puts the Torah in and the veil is lifted and the face of Messiah shines on them.

You see, our Messiah came at the appointed time and accomplished His mission as the suffering Messiah, which was the first stage of His two-part mission. The servant song which goes from 52:13 – 53:12, not only accurately describes what our Messiah would be like, but in five specific verses it repeatedly proclaims that He would come to die for the sins of mankind. It is a painful portion to read because it clearly identifies the sinfulness of the people of G-d who should have known better.

Nowhere in the Scriptures is the Messiah described as a corporate body of people. Israel is often portrayed in the plural as a separate people, but the Messiah is never portrayed in the plural. The people of Israel can never be the suffering Messiah, called Ben Joseph because our sinfulness disqualifies us from this role. Our suffering comes from one of two sources. First, it comes because of our own spiritual stubbornness, and also because of the anger and rage of the enemy who could neither stop the Messiah's arrival, nor stop His victorious death and resurrection. The enemy not only attacks the truths of G-d, he also attacks anyone who receives this truth or who had any part in bringing it into the world.

Having said this about the targets of our enemy's wrath, let me reaffirm that all and any hatred of the Jewish people, including hatred of Israel is satanic deception, whether or not you claim to be a Christian or are just looking for a scapegoat to blame for the problems of the world. You cannot effectively love the true King of the Jews, if you do not love the Jewish people. We are not perfect, but we exist because of the promises which were made to our forefathers.

As concerns the Messiah, there will only ever be one Messiah who will come twice. He will come once to suffer and die to pay the price of all the sins of all the nations and generations of mankind. He will then come for a second time to usher in the Heavenly Kingdom. No amount of traditional misinformation or satanic opposition will ever be able to derail this inescapable eventuality. Whether you like it or not and whether you are ready for it or not, the Kingdom is coming. Accept it and receive the promise and the power of everlasting life. Deny it or resist it and you will suffer the eternal loss which is waiting for the enemy of our souls.

His return will be according to His agenda and to His agenda alone. Setting dates based on strange interpretations of prophecy will only destroy your spiritual credibility. Proclaiming that certain signs and wonders are indicating the timing of His return, ignores what the Scriptures teach about them just being birth pains of the Messiah's arrival. Playing the endless guessing game is sinful folly which, again, diminishes and even destroys our spiritual credibility.

Nowhere in the Bible do the Scriptures teach that there is coming one final, supposed great tribulation. It says that we must pass through many tribulations because the end times started when our Messiah rose and ascended back into Heaven. Persecution and all kinds of spiritual resistance will be the staple of our existence and have been for the many centuries which have passed since the Messiah returned to the Father.

As well, the Scriptures do not teach that there will be a secret rapture of believers to escape the final troubles which are supposedly coming. This is because rapture is to the living what resurrection is to the dead and both events will happen at the same time, when this fading world finally ends. When Messiah leaves the heavenly Holy of Holies, the universe will explode with great heat and much noise. Everything is over the instant Yeshua exits Heaven and there will be no intermediate period of time before the final judgment begins.

A thousand years is a symbolic number which refers both to the stubborn grace of G-d and to our rule and reign with Messiah as we boldly stride through this present darkness. It is never resented in the Scriptures as a literal number which refers to a literal period of time. A day maybe like a thousand years with the L-rd, but six days of creation are not thousand-year periods and the seventh is not a period of great peace before the second final rebellion, and the second final arrival of Messiah's kingdom.

Imposing unintended mathematical formulas on the Scriptures is even less accurate or valid as any other form of numerology, including the horoscope. The date of the Messiah's return is not given in the Scriptures, but it is taught that He will only return when everything His Word teaches is set in place and fulfilled. He will be faithful to His Word and not to the false predictions, which believers have never stopped coming up with, and for which they have never apologized when they are proven wrong. I want to exercise confidence in His Word and not be caught up in the confusion which speculations about the date of His return have generated.

When it comes to understanding who the Messiah is and what He will accomplish, Jewish people are ignoring the missing arm and are looking at all the wrong people in all the wrong places. There have been thousands of people claiming to be the Messiah, but none of them resembled the arm which the Scriptures identify as the true Messiah. Close is not good enough. Messiah came to live and die and resurrect at the right time, and that time is passed. They have to juggle the Scriptures and invent special interpretations in order to falsely name someone as the Messiah.

Doing so, they violate the ordinary intended meaning of Bible passages and indulge in toxic mysticism. Too many did not recognize Him when He came the first time and with all the strange and twisted traditional understandings which continue to be fabricated, they will miss His return unless they return to His Word and to His Word alone.

When it comes to Christians who are trying to understand the timing of Messiah's return; for centuries, believers have wrongly claimed that specific world leaders are the final Antichrist and they see the mark of the beast everywhere. At the beginning of the last century many identified; first the radio and then the TV, as the mark of the beast. Computers and implanted micro-chips are the latest victims of their misunderstanding.

The Bible identifies two sets of external spiritual identification: the seal of G-d and the mark of the beast. The seal of G-d is the righteousness of faithful believers who have the seal of His approval. The mark of the beast is that scratching of people's conscience which they wear when they are given over to gross immorality and criminal idolatry. So, you see it is a symbolic reference, as it is not intended to be taken as a literal mark or a literal seal. A symbolic reference is just as real as a literal reference. Messiah is the Lion of Judah, but He does not have a mane. He is the rose of Sharon, but He has neither got leaves or buds. He is also the lamb of G-d but

He does not bleat or have hooves.

Symbols are powerful word pictures and the Scriptures are full of them. Many describe who the Messiah is and what He shall accomplish. Others use harvest language to describe the manner of His return. Traditional Jews do not accept the symbols which described who Messiah would be and now they wander from one set of traditions to another in an endless, vain attempt to know who He is and when he shall appear. He has already appeared once and He will appear a second time. It is the nature and the timing of His return which confuses evangelicals as they make up strange formulas and time tables which they claim give the exact time when He shall return.

They also falsely claim that one world government will soon be set up under the reign of the yet to be revealed final Antichrist, and their list of possible candidates is almost endless. They will not recognize the beast until it is too late and they do not recognize that all their confusing deceptions are part of the enemy's endgame to destroy their spiritual credibility. Society has little respect for these guesses and more and more people are being inoculated against believing in the Kingdom which will one day burst forth and consume everything in this present age of darkness.

The one group has no clear idea who the Messiah is supposed to be. The other group has not clear idea about when the Messiah will return. The enemy sits back and laughs as he pours forth more and more deceptions that believers keep falling for.

Messiah's return is approaching, and more and more Jewish people are being exposed to biblical truths about Him. He was born in the right place (Bethlehem) to the right parents, who were both of the House of David. He was also born at the right time, despite the enemy's attempts to prevent this, and to kill Him once he could no longer prevent it. He was never sure who the Messiah was until Yeshua was an adult and was ready to face the arch deceiver and to defeat him.

Messiah will return at the right time and in the manner which the Scriptures describe. He will bring the world to an end and recreate the cosmos in a form which will be both sin free and darkness free.

In our time, knowledge is exploding at an accelerated rate. Spiritual understanding and spiritual wisdom are diminishing as fast as they did in the days of Noah. For the first time since Noah, we have become a single global economy and spiritual darkness is bringing in another great darkness as evolutionary humanism is overturning faith-based religions.

What believers do not seem to get is that it is only the righteous core, both in the body of Messiah and in the world at large, which is restraining the revelation of the final Antichrist and this valiant, faithful group of people, is diminishing as spiritual deceit of all kinds are invading the church and the synagogue as its tide of deception rises to swallow all the nations of our darkening world. Deception and spiritual confusion are making inroads into our congregations as more and more people fall for an increasing number of departures from biblical teachings.

With all the trash this world is generating and all the immorality which it is embracing, it is more important now, than it ever has been for us, to make sure that our grip on the missing arm is not slipping. I am glad the missing arm found me at the age of nineteen and I am glad that He is standing at the entrance to noisy places and reaching out to those darkness dwellers who will never succeed in completely drowning out His voice.

The Gospel is making inroads among Jewish people as they realize that their understanding of a dual Messiah is wrong. The heathen are raging louder and louder through social media and our message is now being seen as hateful, and as a politically incorrect attack on both unbelievers and gays, Both our credibility as good people is being challenged, along with our mental stability because we supposedly believe wild and improbable myths.

Today I have spoken to you about the case of the missing arm and we need to pray for our Jewish people and dialogue with them gently and with great wisdom so they can escape from the traditional prison they have locked the truth of the Torah into.

I have also spoken with you about the amount of deception which surrounds how evangelicals view the return of our blessed Messiah. G-d is not the author of confusion, but of truth and this truth is found only in the truths which His Word teaches. As we come closer and closer to the Fall Feasts, we need to make sure that our grip on the missing arm is solid and that we are not falling for the confusing deceptions the enemy is trying to derail our spiritual lives with.

There is so much spiritual sadness in the world. May our lives and our congregation be filled with spiritual joy because the true Messiah came and one day He will return, and all the sadness and darkness of this world will be forever removed. Shabbat Shalom.