

19 Sivan, 5775 (06/6/15) **The New Man: Adapting to Our New Wardrobe** J. M. Terrett

BeHaalotecha

In Your Making Go Up

Poised For Conquest

Torah:

Numbers 8:1-12:16

The camp is finally ready to move, with an intact priesthood and an established marching order. The first Passover in the desert is celebrated and on the 20th day of the second month (Iyar) of the second year (since Egypt) the organized camp moves: " ***when the ark departed, Moses would say: Arise oh L-RD and let Your enemies be scattered! Let those who hate You flee from before Your face! And when it rested, he would say: Return oh L-RD to the myriads of Israel! (Nu. 10: 35, 36).***

At the first camping spot, the people complain and fire fell on the edges of the camp and then the mixed multitude got tired of manna and wanted meat. Moses has a near break down and in and around the second Pentecost, the Spirit which was on Moses is shared with the 70 elders and the people get quail, piled 6 feet high for a day's journey from the camp. They gathered the meat and were struck with a great plague. Then the third complaining - Miriam and Aaron try to take over the leadership of the camp and Miriam is struck with leprosy (and Aaron intercedes for her).

Finally the camp moves again and sets up at Paran at the entrance to the Promised Land. In less than a month, they have moved the necessary distance from Sinai and have everything in place for the conquest. Nothing can stop them now (except themselves). They are about to snatch defeat out of the jaws of victory!

Haftarah: Zechariah 2:10-4:7

Here we have a vision of the heavenly side of earthly conflicts and specifically the attempts to stop the return from exile and the rebuilding of the temple. Two images are given which speak of the wonder of Messiah's Kingdom - the Branch (Sprout in French) will grow up to remove the iniquity of the land in a single day - such a clear picture of Messiah Yeshua. The next is the vision of the heavenly candelabra, with the two golden sap bearing trees on either side. In other words, Heaven is self-sustaining and unaffected by the ups and downs of the world. Back on earth we need to see that it is neither strength nor power which will cause the purposes of G-d to be fulfilled, only the Spirit of YHVH of Hosts.

Brit Chadashah: Rev. 11:1-19

The image of the two golden sap bearing trees is repeated in the Revelation, but this time they are called both olive trees and candelabras and they have a prophetic ministry to get the attention of the world. This, even though the world will reject their testimony and kill them, only to see them resurrected and retribution for their deaths come upon their enemies. The passage ends with the worshipping by the 24 elders, the promised retribution on those who destroy the earth and the appearance of the true, Heavenly temple in preparation for the arrival of Messiah's kingdom on earth. Everything is ready in Heaven - He is poised for conquest. Are we?

(John p. 151, 153) **Ps. 86** Jewish Hero: Abel (who was killed for doing the right thing)

Sermon: The New Man: Adapting to Our New Wardrobe.

Two passages: 2 Corin. 5:16, 17 and Eph. 4:17-24.

When we become believers we become new creatures, but we are in a constant struggle with our old man, with the world and with the enemy. So what does it mean when the Bible says that all things have become new? When we become believers, we acquire a new spiritual wardrobe, which symbolizes a whole new set of habits and attitudes we are called to adopt to make sure that the clothing of our new faith "fits" and that we do not fall into the habit of wearing a mixed wardrobe, so that sometimes we are dressed with the old man and only sometimes are dressed with the new man.

In fact, some believers find that their new wardrobe makes them too uncomfortable and they return to the clothing of the world and there is no real, sustained spiritual change in their habits and attitudes - they are in fact slipping into a spiritual coma from which not too many awake in time to live the new life to which we are called.

Now, as an old hippy, I am never really comfortable with new clothes - and as I learn more about my allergy, I understand that new clothes frequently contain chemicals which trigger a reaction in me, so we usually have to wash the new clothes so that I can wear them comfortably. You see there is an adjustment period in our lives when we come to the L-rd and also whenever we come to any new challenges or changes in our lives on our pilgrimage through this life to our Father's Home in Glory. We have to get used to our new clothes.

It would seem that our new man wardrobe needs to be renewed and we have to make regular adjustments as part of what it means to walk with the L-RD.

When I came to the L-RD, my life went through quite a turn around. I went from a foul mouthed substance abusing hippy, to a Bible studying, church attending disciple. You see, I was entirely different, even though I was the same person. At first, my parents were thrilled and even encouraged the change until they saw how extensive and thorough it was. I was so happy to be out of the world that I spent my time going to services, Bible Studies and Prayer Meetings and I recruited many of my friends along the way.

I was very zealous and not always very wise, but after the horror and pain I had lived through growing up, I wanted to break all connections with the world and glue myself and my life firmly into the L-rd. I had no time for anything else and I was not always easy to live with and I noticed something which I have noticed along the way in the 43 odd years I have walked with the L-rd and in the 20 odd years I have been involved in the Messianic movement. After the dust settles, too many people cannot adjust to their new wardrobe and they return to the world they have been delivered from - or they try and drag the world with them and turn any group they are involved with into strange and new versions of the trouble they had in Corinth.

I have settled down somewhat and am still praying and attending Bible Studies and services and that will never change because I really like my new clothes and I want to continue to keep my wardrobe renewed and in good shape. There have been periods where this was not always easy, but adapting to our new wardrobe at every stage of our lives will continue to be the central challenge of our lives as believers.

Again, the new man we have become is both an experience with the King and a call to adopt both new habits and new attitudes. Paul encountered the L-rd on the road to Damascus and

it took him over a decade to get his life in shape enough to begin his ministry. For someone who began his ministry so late in life, he had one of the most successful ministries in the Bible. It is never too late to seek the L-RD and adapt to our new wardrobe.

Wearing the new wardrobe (of biblical attitudes and habits) does not mean we will not encounter conflicts to solve and misunderstandings to resolve, but it does mean that we resolve to know no man, woman or situation according to the flesh, even if we have known men and women and situations in this manner in the past.

You see sin and the flesh will always clone, like the flu virus and we will have to constantly be on alert for new strands of the same old problems (the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life) and the three pronged attacks of the enemy (to tempt, to condemn and to confuse).

How do we adapt to our new wardrobe? Wherever we are and whatever happens to us, we both look for the strategy (attitude and habit) the L-rd wants us to adopt and the way of escape He also sets before us as we learn to set straight paths for our wounded feet. Sometimes, we can encounter great wounding in the L-rd because of life events or because of the biting and devouring which believers seem to be so good at and which we have to avoid being drawn into. You see in the L-rd we do not fight fire with fire, we fight fire with the Word and make sure we do not participate in the sins of others - and don't end up with the equivalent cry: Mommy, he hit me back! We need to learn not to hit or to hit back!

Forgiveness and the resolution of conflicts will determine both how well we adapt to our new clothes and how well we adapt to learning to walk together in what should be a spectacular spiritual fashion show, devoid of any of those unattractive works of the flesh which always want to ruin our wardrobe. Our call is to always be salt and light and the odour of the L-rd.

This is never a contest where we look at each other and say: I'm more spiritual than you are! We will all face challenges and we will all take turns needing each other's help as we learn to be a supportive flock, for all of us, as we travel from conception to the grave and beyond.

Paul says we have to purpose not to know anyone after the flesh and we have to learn to both put on and put off so we do not follow the corrupting ways of the world where gossip, anger and infighting are par for the course. Mishpocah, this should never become the norm among us because we are called to wear a different kind of wardrobe.

Knowing someone after the flesh is both measuring the worth of people according to a carnal standard (how good looking, smart, rich, funny or talented they are and how much we can get out of them) and refusing to see them as G-d sees them through His Word. Instead of understanding that the earth shall be inherited by the meek (and not by the violent) and that those who are first in this life will be last in the next life, and that the last in this life (not many of the mighty or the powerful) will be first in the life to come, we look at people as stepping stones to get what we want in a perpetual contest to become the king of the castle (get all you can, can all you get and sit on the lid). This is not how we are called to live!

It also means not seeking the first place at feasts and making long prayers in order to be seen as we try to get all eyes focused on us like so many Hollywood or Bollywood stars, instead of keeping our focus on the King and His righteousness and His kingdom. Our needs are valid

and should never be abrogated (ignored, passed over), but the needs of the King and His Kingdom need to remain the primary focus of our lives - and the focus of our wardrobe.

Learning how to undress the old man means that we avoid the works of the flesh which can even become active in the midst of believers (fighting, biting, gossiping and devouring) and we do this as a conscious decision and as a persistent lifestyle - kind of like digging out dandelions and treating our lawn (weed and feed) whenever it needs our attention. You see our status as a new creation is the product of our faith in His sacrifice - our status as a new man is the product of how we walk with the L-rd and how we live in the world we are to be reaching out to (habits and attitudes). How is your weeding and feeding doing?

Learning to dress the new man is a daily discipline, like getting dressed every day and even if we are not always successful, we need to persistently refuse to have any other agenda, either as individual believers or as a community of believers, to the Jew first and also to the gentile. Again, righteousness is both a status we receive from the L-rd and it is also the product of choices we make and priorities which we maintain - the product of the wardrobe we decide to wear. It is not an automatic feature of our spiritual lives, any more than health is an automatic feature of our physical lives. What are you feeding on? How much spiritual exercise are you getting? How is your wardrobe doing? Are you living as a new creation or do you occasionally slip back into the bad habits of the world, of the Egypt out of which you were delivered? And when we do, how long does it take us to pull back out of this folly?

Our lovely sunny, hot Canadian summer is upon us and we all need to soak up the sunshine we have missed all winter, but with a difference. As we get out our summer wardrobe, we need to learn not to neglect our spiritual wardrobe. Clothes often require repair and adjustments - so does our spiritual wardrobe. We have no intention of cancelling our prayer meetings or our Yeshivas over the summer. We encourage all of you to take vacation time; even though that means that many weekends many of us will be missing. But we all need to make sure that our spiritual wardrobe does not suffer and that we do not take a break from our healthy, dynamic spirituality - the habits and attitudes which will both draw us closer to the L-rd and keep us close to Him as the main focus of our lives. Bible Study, prayer, worship and good fellowship need to remain our primary summer activities as we shine and share with those we encounter at every season of the year and at every season of our lives. Let's pray.