

24 Tammuz, 57775 (11/07/15) **Steady Spirituality in An Uncertain World** J. M. Terrett

Pinchas (Phineas) Dark Skinned Keeping the Channels Open

Torah: Numbers 25:10-29:40 (30:1)

(1) 25:13 Phineas: ***perpetual priesthood*** (Jer 35:19 – Rachabites: ***shall never lack a descendent who stands in My presence***) (Luke 1:36 – ***Mary's cousin Elizabeth***). The L-RD never goes back on a promise. Because of Phineas' intervention and the faithfulness of the Rachabites, He promised that an Aaronite would always stand before Him and this is fulfilled through His mother Mary. She was of the House of David, a descendent of David through Nathan, Solomon's younger brother, but she also had a cousin who was of the House of Aaron, Elizabeth.

So she was of the house of David, but also had Aaronic blood in her. Our Messiah fulfils His ministry as David's greater Son, but through His mother's Aaronic side, He also stands before the L-RD as a descendent of the House of Aaron (Phineas, and the Rachabites). The Aaronite priesthood is both fulfilled and superseded by His Melchizedek priesthood, but He is also forever a descendent of Aaron in fulfilment of the promise made to that line.

(2) 26:64: ***Among them there was not any of the Children of Israel whom Moses and the priest Aaron had numbered in the wilderness of Sinai.*** Closure is important and the L-rd did not want any of the defeatist rebellion to be carried by the Children of Israel into the Promised Land. He wants all that remains of defeatism and rebellion to be finished and done with in our lives as well.

(3) 27:17: ***In order that the assembly of YHVH would not be like sheep who have no shepherd.*** In 1972, Stromboli's Pizza, I received my call to ministry before I accepted the L-rd. There was lots of disorder, confusion, pain and brokenness in my life, but nothing the L-rd could not teach me to deal with.

There is disabling brokenness and enabling brokenness, the one becomes a thorn in the flesh which keeps us humble and focused, the other fills us with bitterness, self-pity and trauma, depending on whether we keep the channel open and learn His ways of escape, setting straight paths for our feet. How about you?

(4) 28:2: ***You shall take heed to present to Me at its appointed time, My offerings, the food for My offerings consumed by fire and which are for me a pleasing odour.*** Israel was about to embark on a generational pilgrimage through the Land towards the Messiah and the coming kingdom and the festival cycle was to keep them (and us) focused on celebrating the L-rd and keeping our lives filled with a pleasing odour unto Him. For us that pleasing odour is prayer where we invoke the sacrifice of our beloved Messiah so we can keep the channels open and not lose sight of Him or contact with His sacrifice on our behalf.

Haftarah: Jer. 1:1-2:3

(5) (1:4, 5 - ***while he was in the womb, ordained a prophet to the nations***) 1:12: ***And YHVH said to me: you have seen well that I watch over My Word to fulfil it.*** On this, the

first Shabbat of Affliction we need to remember that the L-RD has an agenda which is non-negotiable and all of His interventions in the world and in our lives are singularly focused on the fulfilment of that which He planned before the foundation of the world. None of the horror of this life, nor any of its foolishness, nor any of ours will be able to slow it down or get in its way. As long as we keep our channels to Him open, we can be part of that agenda and not be swept away by it (we can even be protected by it). Are your channels open?

(6) 2:3: ***Israel was consecrated to YHVH, he was the first fruit of His revenue; all those who ate of it became guilty and catastrophe melted upon them says YHVH.*** Israel shall always be our L-RD's special people, in or out of the Gospel, and all those who feast upon them, by persecuting them or by leading them astray, shall experience catastrophe from the L-RD. Because long after all of our enemies have bit the dust and all their monuments have fallen into ruin, Am Israel Chai, I'Olam Va'ed. They will always have a special channel to the L-RD in our Messiah, whether they use it or not - How is your channel doing?

Brit Chadashah: John 2:13-25

(7) 2:19: ***Yeshua answered them: destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.*** This portion of John, and the portion before it – the wedding in Cana – is not in chronological order in the Gospel, but is used to establish a primary focus on what His ministry will always be about, building the kingdom and His temple in our midst. As we mourn the loss of both earthly temples, we take comfort that we belong to the heavenly temple and are in fact building blocks for the same, as long as we keep the channels open to Him as He prays for us in the heavenly temple and as He superintends the ups and downs of this life in order to fulfil His purposes in all the generations and nations of mankind, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. How are your channels doing this summer? Are you keeping them open or clogged?

(Bernie p. 165) **Ps. 50** Jewish Hero: Shem

Sermon: ***Steady Spirituality in an Uncertain World***

But thanks be to G-d who gives us the victory by our L-rd Yeshua Ha Mashiach! Therefor, my beloved brethren, be firm, unshakeable, always abounding in the work of the L-rd, knowing that in the L-rd, your work is not in vain. (I Cor. 15:57, 58)

This week's Torah portion gives the longest summary of Jewish time in the Bible – daily, weekly, monthly and annually, because no matter where we are in our lives and no matter what is going on in our lives, we can always celebrate the goodness of G-d (past, present and future) and walk with Him according to His Word.

As children of G-d, Jew and Gentile, we need to be living lives that are strong from the inside and which bring this spiritual strength to the outside. Maintaining a daily, constant heavenly focus in all the details of our lives will help us to have a steady spirituality in an uncertain world, nothing more and nothing less.

It is the work of the L-rd in our lives which matters and which should define us, because as we abound in this work our lives are not in vain and remain unshakeable through all the ups and downs (and earthquakes and tsunamis) of life. We will all face challenges in our lives, from conception to the grave, but it is the spiritual challenges which will define us before the L-rd

and either make sure our work is not in vain, or set us up for the loss of all we have worked for if it is in vain. Vain here is defined as not in the L-rd.

What does that mean? Vain means that we set priorities based on the values and goals of this temporary life and move away from a constant daily, weekly, monthly and annual walk with the L-rd. Let me ask you the same question in four ways, so you can understand whether you are setting yourself up for steady spirituality or just waiting for the next earthquake of life to shatter your dreams as they have for generations of those who do not put their absolute, practical trust in the L-rd.

What is the high point of your day? What is the high point of your week? What is the high point of your month? What is the high point of your year? What turns your crank?

The L-rd wants us to live full lives, which can only mean one thing – lives full of Him and the things of His kingdom and His righteousness based on His Word. Spiritual immaturity occurs whenever we make anything in our lives more important than our spirituality. You see spirituality always has a double focus – in this life and in the life which is to come and we are only pilgrims through this life. We are both sowing for the next life and picking up gems in how we relate to the ups and downs of this life or we are clogging our hearts and lives with choices that are neither kingdom focused or kingdom friendly, wasting our lives, our time.

We reach a point in our lives where our choices will define us more than the events which we have encountered or which have happened to us and thus move away from being victims to victors, even if we have encountered great pain and damage along the way.

This last week, I was thinking about what could have been in my life if I had not given my heart to the L-rd when I did. You see repentance has a short shelf life and too many people become so spiritually distracted that doubts, temptations and the cares and riches of life are what their lives are all about as they slip into a spiritual coma without any signs of authentic spiritual life. I was hostile to spirituality before I gave my heart to the L-rd and I have known people whose spiritual hostility has become what their lives are all about. How about you?

Said another way, if you do not know why you are here and what it is you are supposed to be doing in our complicated and confusing world, you are just putting in time making noise on a sinking ship instead of figuring out what the journey is all about and where it is going. Steady spirituality is a lifelong choice which we have to keep on making, keep on maintaining.

The tragedy of our modern world is not all the fancy gimmicks and gadgets which our technology is generating endlessly. The tragedy of our world is not even pollution or the loss of the natural habitat for more and more endangered species. The tragedy of our world is not even globalization and the loss of so many indigenous languages and cultures.

The tragedy of our world is the loss of spirituality, which is both a loss of faith in the supernatural origin of the universe and a loss of any concept of a moral/spiritual duty as the only valid way to relate daily to an understanding of that supernatural origin.

People today feel that it really does not matter what we believe or how we live as long as we do our own thing and do not hurt other people or tell them how to live. And biblical spirituality is seen as a problem to be eradicated in order for true scientific progress to occur and lead us into an enlightenment freed from the superstitious shackles of the ignorant past we are

progressing out of. High sounding description of a horrible spiritually destructive agenda.

Steady spirituality understands that each generation of believers will encounter new versions of the same old challenges to an authentic biblical faith and determines not be shaken loose from our foundations or swept away by our society which is calling darkness, light and bitterness, sweetness in a concerted effort to change the way we look at the world and at how we should live in it.

There have been no valid solutions given by this approach, based on discovered truth or special revelation, just an endless mess of speculations and possibilities which want to require us to follow the crowd and adopt whatever perspectives are fashionable as we learn to see truth as whatever the larger group says it is. We are told to get with the agenda!

Steady spirituality rises above this sophisticated seduction, which could also be called lemming spirituality or Babel spirituality, and says that daily, weekly, monthly and annually, our lives will be based on faith in His Word and on obedience to its righteousness.

We will always have to deal with potential upheavals in our lives and our pilgrimage through life will mostly be stormy as our world darkens and sees religion (spirituality based on revelation which stipulates a clearly defined morality) as a stubborn set of myths from which people need to be delivered. There is a growing worldwide hatred of biblical spirituality.

People will doubt both our intelligence and our sanity and want us to agree that belief is a private concern where all the variations and differences are merely different shades of the same thing (everyone can believe what they like as long as they are good people and do not try and change what other people believe or force their moral values on others).

This is complicated because what it means to be good is changing and we face increasing, even overpowering pressure, to conform to the slavery of political correctness and treat our faith as another version of our personal “through the looking glass” which may enrich our lives but has no business in the lives of others. We are told to leave other people alone spiritually.

Israel encountered a different version of the same kind of spiritual opposition. The apostle Paul faced a sophisticated hostile worldview and the Gospel has encountered an endless series of adversaries, competitors and false versions and our modern world is just another one of the same old, same old the serpent has been generating in every generation to trip us up since the beginning. There is really nothing new under the sun.

We need to have steady spirituality on the inside daily, weekly, monthly and annually and determine to seek the Lord and let Him show us how to remain unshakeable in a life which is only a pilgrimage and never a destination. We know the origin of life and the purpose of life and this precious commodity can either turn our lives into a victory where biblical spirituality empowers us to overcome the wiles of the enemy, the world and the flesh or we can slip into a coma and be carried along by a darkening society that is entertaining itself to death.

This does not mean that we will live in endless conflict and not find periods of rest and renewal. It means that whatever rest and renewal we find will be in our walk with the Lord, daily, weekly, monthly and annually and that this walk needs to be that which defines us and which is our source of strength and inspiration.

If we have questions, doubts, problems and challenges, we need to bring them to the L-rd and deal with them from a place of steady spirituality and not let them destabilize our walk with the King. Today is the first Sabbath of Affliction and rather than give ourselves over to sadness and regret, we need to examine why it is that both temples fell and what caused the great tragedies which Israel has encountered in our long history, so that we can make sure that they do not happen to us or to our children.

Whenever spirituality was compromised by idolatry or fornication, Israel suffered and had to be brought back to the right path, the straight and narrow path and the same remains true for us in our modern world. Both our individual spirituality and our corporate spirituality need to be steady and not haphazard. We will all be taking sometime this summer to rest and to reflect and this is a good, necessary thing, not because we are in any danger of being shaken loose and swept away, but because we always want to live lives where how we choose to live defines us more than either the places where we live or the things which happen to us, be they ever so good or ever so painful.

Steady spirituality in a darkening, uncertain world is our calling and this kind of steadfastness is what the L-rd is working to bring into our lives and this kind of biblical spirituality will be the only thing which makes sense in our lives and in the life of our community.

How steady is your spirituality? Is it unshakeable or is it uncertain? What we believe is of the utmost importance as is how we live and the choices which we make. An abundant spiritual life is available for all of us – it may not bring us unlimited riches or free us from the trials which afflict others in our world, but it will give us an inner source of strength, where we willingly step out of the boat and walk towards our L-rd on the waters of life, without being troubled by the winds and the waves which are only temporary and which need not have any lasting impact on how we walk or where we walk. Let's pray.