

20 Shevat 5779 (26/01/19) Let's Not Inherit the Wind J. M. Terrett

Yitro (Jethro)	Abundance	Giving of the Ten Words
Torah:	Exodus 18:1-20:26 (23)	
Haftarah:	Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:6,7 (5,6)	
Brit Chadashah:	Matthew 5:8-20	

Reading: Betty p. 175 and Ps. 19. Jewish Hero: Caleb. Carrier: Richard

In this Torah portion, the people are camped at the foot of Mount Sinai and Moses' father in-law, Jethro, brings back his wife and two sons. When Jethro sees how Moses hears the people and judges them all by himself, he makes a recommendation which Moses acts on. Moses divides the camp between leaders of 1,000, 100, 50 and 10. The leader of 10 dealt with simple questions and the more complicated questions went to the next level of leaders, so that Moses only had to deal with the really different questions.

The rabble that stumbled out of Egypt was being organized into the hosts of the L-rd and they were ready to enter a covenant relationship with G-d through the commandments and the ordinances which He was going to give the people through Moses. He did it in three stages. First, He wanted a blanket submission where the people would agree to obey anything and everything that He commanded and they agreed. Next, He spoke the Ten Words which are the principles upon which their faith and obedience was to be based.

Secondly, despite being terrified by hearing the voice of G-d thunder like a loud trumpet, when He spoke the Ten Words or covenant stipulations, they agreed to abide by what are now called the Ten Commandments. Thirdly, in the next portion, a series of applications of these covenant stipulations are given as examples of how they should be applied into every area of the people's lives. Later on, the people also agreed to follow these as well.

In the New Testament portion, we learn that these commandments are a package deal, which cannot be added to or subtracted from. We are not allowed to divide them up in greater and lessor commandments and we are not allowed to break any one of them. Yeshua also taught that these covenant stipulations are still in force and will not disappear or cease to be in force as long as the heavens and the earth exist.

In the prophetic portion we read about Isaiah's amazing vision of the glory of G-d, where he receives a promise that even if the country is one day overwhelmed, a righteous stump will remain. The two enemies who are currently coming against Juda in Isaiah's time will not prevail over the kingdom and the wonderful promise of the child who will be the Messiah is given. He has five names which describe His divinity. They are: Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty G-d, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. He is the living Word and everything He teaches is based on the same Ten Covenant stipulations.

I am going to read the Ten Commandments and after each one, I would like you all to say amen.

- (1) You shall have no other gods before my face.
- (2) You shall neither make any graven images, nor bow down before them.
- (3) You shall not take the name of the L-RD your G-d in vain.
- (4) Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.
- (5) Honor your father and your mother
- (6) You shall not commit murder
- (7) You shall not commit sexual immorality
- (8) You shall not steal
- (9) You shall not bear false witness
- (10) You shall not covet anything which belongs to your neighbour

Sermon: Let's not Inherit the Wind

Passages: "**Anyone who troubles his own house shall inherit the wind and the fool shall be the slave of the wise man. Just like someone who seizes the ears of a dog, so is a passerby who gets irritated about a quarrel which is none of his business. Just like a madman who shoots arrows of death, so is a man who deceives his neighbour as says he was just kidding. Without wood, a fire extinguishes, so without gossip a quarrel is appeased. But if you bite and devour one another, be careful that you do not destroy one another.** (Pr. 11:29; Pr. 26:17-20; Gal. 5:15)

The enemy of our souls and his henchmen have one overall objective when it comes to believers – he wants to destroy us. To accomplish this, he uses a three-pronged attack: he tempts, he condemns and he confuses.

If he cannot prevent the seed of G-d's Word from taking root in our hearts and lives, he will do his best to wither it or choke, so that it has no real lasting impact in our lives, as we slip into a spiritual coma with no visible signs of life. He especially targets believers because he does not want us to influence others to come to faith.

His major offensive against believers in congregations is to get us to turn on each other and self destruct through immorality, lawlessness and infighting. Sometime look at the numerous instances in the Torah where the people misbehaved and complained. You will see that you can get the people out of Egypt and you can get Egypt out of the people, but we have to learn to crucify the flesh or it will end up crucifying us.

Our community is in its 17th year and we have seen our Messiah do some amazing things. We have also had our fair share of spiritual attacks and battles. During this time, we have seen slightly over 400 people come through the doors of our shul and we have kept around 60 or 70 who have remained active in our shul to some degree.

Now before you get discouraged and think we are not doing a good job. One of the biggest challenges churches and synagogues face is the tremendous circulation of the saints.

Most churches and synagogues have a central core of faithful, stable people around which a crowd of perpetual spiritual migrants swirl. They are spiritual gypsies who are always on the move without ever being able to settle down anywhere. They have a whole arsenal of excuses why they are always moving on, and while many of them usually think that they are on the verge of settling down, their baggage of unresolved issues and carnal habits always seems to eventually flare up and they break camp and head for the hills.

They are perpetual camp followers, always looking for the best spiritual deal and they are convinced that the grass is always greener on the other side. Now, I am not saying that there are not valid reasons for moving on and perhaps far too many religious communities are not very visitor friendly. Sometimes the little cliques who run the show do not want to welcome strangers who might challenge their comfort zones.

At B'nai Chayim, we want to be very visitor friendly. We never want to be worried about protecting a comfort zone. We want to maintain a zone where people can feel safe comfortable, as they work out their spiritual issues and find their place in our midst.

We welcome the constant stream of visitors and want to love them all in the Messiah. That being said, we also have a very well-defined mandate and a clear vision statement as a congregation of Jews and Gentiles who accept Yeshua as the Messiah of promise. We are a community of people who want to walk with our Messiah as salt and light, according to the Scriptures.

We also maintain high standards of biblical conflict resolution and want to live in mutual harmony as we get to know and to appreciate one another, even with all our flaws and baggage.

The passages which I have selected, speak of self destruct tendencies which we want to avoid. We understand that because Messiah died on the cross to grant us forgiveness and everlasting life, we need to forgive one another and learn to access the power of everlasting life in how we relate to each other.

Prov. 11:29 says we should not trouble our own house or we will inherit the wind. In other words, if we do trouble our own house, it will collapse and be blown away by the big bad wolf who wants to devour us and scatter us to the wind. In the Bible, foolishness may be defined as living according to the works of the flesh and not seeking to grow into the fruit of the spirit.

A solid community foundation needs to be built on three things. It needs to be built first on the Scriptures and then on the firm commitment to resolve all and any problems according to the Scriptures. This also needs to be built on the mutual forgiveness which the Scriptures teach.

The next couple of verses for today, deal with meddling and conflicts where people just stir up trouble instead of seeking for peace through conflict resolution. Pr. 26:17 gives a colourful image warning us to mind our own business and not intrude where it is none of our business. We need to learn to quit grabbing the dog by the ears.

How people live in our community can have a high degree of flexibility and the biggest need for flexibility has just passed. We are free not to celebrate Christmas and we are also free to celebrate Christmas. We want to promote freedom of conscience which seeks to serve the L-rd according to His Word and sometimes we just need to learn to mind our own business, no matter which side you take in this or other issues.

Prov. 26: 18,19 talks about those who deceive their neighbours and instead of taking responsibility for their actions they say that they were just kidding. We need to learn to fix what we have broken and we need to help those we have hurt and not make our negative behaviour their problem. To do so is childish in the most irresponsible, carnal sense.

Pr. 26:20 says that when people quit keeping a quarrel alive by gossip, it will die out like a fire which lacks wood. In our speech we should always attempt to make things better and never worse.

My last passage in Galatians talks about cannibal sheep who bite and devour one another, so that they are destroyed by one another. Religious communities are often notorious for their endless political intrigues and power struggles between powerful, stubborn personalities. And many of them are divided into warring factions who endlessly snipe at each other and are never able to get along.

Over the years, we have had our fair share of these spiritual terrorists who have tried to rip us apart and divide us into warring factions. If any of us are not willing to lay aside our carnal agenda and actually learn to work well with each other, then perhaps it is best to move on elsewhere until dealing with our spiritual baggage becomes a higher priority.

We do not want to inherit the wind and watch our congregational house collapse. We do not want to endlessly self destruct. We want to maintain a core of solid, faithful members and to invite our visitors to join us in our mighty quest to learn to walk with our Messiah. We want to grow spiritually and find healing, so that the howling winds of the enemy find somewhere else to blow.

We will always be visitor friendly and we will always welcome those who want to join us as we explore our faith in the Messiah from a Messianic Jewish perspective.

So, mishpocah, take hold, send down roots, buckle up and lets see where the L-rd is going to take us when we learn to do things His way, according to His Word.