



B'NAI CHAYIM

CHILDREN OF LIFE

16 Elul, 5780 (05/09/20) **Sixth Shabbat of Consolation: Learning to Discern the Truth** J. M. Terrett

Ki Tavo	When You Enter In	Getting Set Up in the Land
Torah:	Deuteronomy 26:1-29:9 (8)	
Haftarah:	Isaiah 60:1-22	
Brit Chadashah:	Luke 24:44-53	

This amazing portion mainly describes what has to be done to transform Canaan from a land flooded with criminal paganism into the cleansed Holy Land. When the people cross the Jordan and defeat the demoralized Canaanites, they are to initiate their first festival cycle at First Fruits in their second year, with grains they have grown themselves, and not with what they plundered from the Canaanites. There would have been a final transitional festival cycle, like the ones they observed during the wandering years, but they were really home free only when they offered to the L-RD the bounty He had given them.

They crossed the Jordan on the 10th of Nissan, when it was in flood and its waters had overflowed its banks to form a ten kilometers wide, temporary lake. They camped on the plains of Jericho, at the first of two camps named Gilgal and performed a rite of passage for all the men who had been born during the wilderness wandering. They were circumcised in order to be covenant members of the generation of Israel which was to take possession of the land. In Hebrew, the word Gilgal means to roll away and after they performed the rite, the shame of Egyptian slavery was finally and fully rolled away.

We are not told how many men (and boys) were circumcised, but it must have numbered in the hundreds of thousands and the place where it was performed is still called the hill of the foreskins. When the people of Jericho and other nearby Canaanite fortresses, saw the waters of the Jordan backed up, they abandoned their ripe crops and retreated into their forts, leaving an abundant harvest to Israel.

When the circumcised men recovered, the people celebrated their first Passover in the land on the 14th of Nissan. The next day, the manna ceased and the people harvested the abandoned crops and had enough food stored up until their first harvests on the following year. They would also have harvested the wheat which the Canaanites had planted, along with a second grain harvest in the Fall, but they did not harvest the fruit trees for three years, so the trees could be cleansed of any defilement left over by the Canaanites.

The L-rd has never mandated the cessation of the annual festival cycle and our lives should still revolve around the festivals, as we live in the provision of G-d and under the protection of G-d, until the Kingdom comes. Before Messiah, the seven festivals all looked forward to the arrival and ministry of our Suffering Messiah and now that He has risen and ascended, this same cycle both remembers the salvation which He accomplished for us on the cross, and looks forward to the wonder and glory of His coming kingdom, which will be set up when He returns.

Our passage outlines two ceremonies which Israel was to perform, once they had entered the land. One was to be done once they came up out of the mud of the Jordan's riverbed. The Aaronites were to stand midstream holding the arc on their shoulders and those who stood with them to spell them off (it likely took several hours for the entire camp to cross) were to gather 12 large stones and carry them across the river to the banks of the flooding river. These were to be used to erect a stone monument in memory of their crossing.

Once they reach Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, they were to set up an altar on Mount Ebal and erect a stone pillar monument, which they were to cover with plaster. They were to then engrave the Ten Commandments on this stone pillar as a permanent reminder that all who dwelt in the land were now a covenant people, tasked with keeping the Law and serving the L-RD in every area of their lives. It was to be a visible sign that they had left all the pagan filth of the world behind, as they brought the Law into the Land and established it as the new, permanent law of the land.

I have said before that accounts in the Bible are not always chronological. The contents of Chapter 26 were to occur after the conquest was completed and after the people harvested the first crop they themselves had planted. They are to recite a one-time memorial liturgy prayer to mark their permanent transition from being a wandering people to a settled people, who, from now on, would be living off the abundant harvests of a land which flowed with milk and honey. Their harvest celebrations were to include the strangers who dwelt in their midst.

This was followed by the first mention of the year of the tithe, which occurred every three years and where the people turned all of their offerings and tithes over to the Levites, the strangers and the widows and orphans who lived in the land.

The portion goes on to say that once the conquest was completed, the people were to gather in the valley between the two mountains and build an altar, along with the stone pillar upon which the Ten Commandments are to be written. While there, the people were to make two consecration statements which outlined Israel's special status as the guardians of the Law, as well as her obligation to remain free of all and any defilement as they learned to apply the Word to every area of their lives. They were reminded of the extensive divine provision and protection of the wandering years, which would now be transferred to them as they walked with the L-rd in the land which His Word and His presence has now made holy.

Then the people were to divide up into two groups of six tribes, one was to pronounce blessings on Mount Gerizim and the other to pronounce curses on Mount Ebal. The actual blessings and curses were to be pronounced by the Levites and the respective groups were to say amen, which is still a solemn statement of reception and agreement.

After these initial statements were recited, there followed two more which did not require any subsequent amens, because they outlined what would happen in each scenario – blessings if they obeyed and cursing if they disobeyed. When they obeyed, they would be the head and not the tail and would always be above and never below. This is because faithful obedience is not a form of legalism, but is a powerful, unstoppable source of blessing and abundance.

The section of curses is much longer and is quite graphic as it warns the people how thoroughly they would be cursed into oblivion, with nowhere to hide. They would be struck with grievous plagues, as well as all the plagues which struck the Egyptians. The earth would be hard as metal when they tried to sow and instead of rain, dust and powder would strike the land. They would suffer complete defeat before their enemies and be reduced to an oppression worse than the once they suffering as slaves in Egypt. The guilty nation would also be both dismembered and dispersed, as a vicious nation poured forth so much destruction on the surviving people that they would end up eating their own children and consuming their after birth in secret, so they would not have to share it with anyone.

In their despair, they would even try to sell themselves into slavery, with no buyers. Those who succeeded in fleeing before this annihilation, would be rounded up and brought back to the land as useless slaves whom no one would buy. It would be a total destruction and a thorough punishment in every area of their lives, in contrast to the the total blessing which faithful obedience would bring. Which outcome do you want in your life?

Before their conquest of the land, it had sunk into the worst darkness on the planet and even though is remains the site of the original Garden of Eden, it had become an evil fortress of the enemy, filled with darkness instead of light. With Israel, G-d was turning it into a fortress of light in a darkness free zone. Our coming celebration of the Fall Feasts is our annual systems check where we take the time to repair any breaches the enemy has made, as we weed out any encroaching darkness which has slipped into our lives.

As believers, we want to be thoroughly and completely blessed in our Messiah, even as we walk through the darkest and the deepest valleys. We never want to backslide so that we are thoroughly cursed. YHVH is always more angry with those who abandon the light, than He is with those who yet dwell in the darkness and have not yet come to the light. In Messiah, we should always be catalysts for the light and never become spiritual, moral traitors, like dogs who return to what they have vomited and pigs who have returned to their muddy wallows. We never want our final condition to be worse than it was before we originally came to the light. Backsliders are the enemy's trophies which he displays to the world, to prevent any darkness dwells from coming to the light, which he claims to have defeated.

Sermon: Sixth Shabbat of Consolation: Learning to Discern the Truth

In my life and ministry, I encounter a broad spectrum of people who believe a broad spectrum of beliefs and who live a wide variety of lifestyles. When some of them are morally and theologically compromised, I call it wallowing in a puppy's breakfast theology/spirituality. They have not integrated the Word fully into their lives and are somewhat biblical, somewhat traditional, but mostly ridiculous. I am not talking about anyone in particular, because if I have something to say to anyone, it will not be from the pulpit, which would be unfair. We will meet together in private, declaring our mutual admiration for each other and wisely working out our difference with meekness and respect.

Our modern world is increasingly becoming a minefield of spiritual possibilities, but one which I neither find attractive, nor am intimated by. Open dialogue with those who oppose us is often the most effective form of outreach which believers can establish. So come with me as I take you on a journey through the three objectives of my Sabbath morning sermon.

First of all, when we examine the power and the majesty of today's portion in Isaiah, I am suddenly engulfed by a mighty sadness. Our people were told that they would never have to be destroyed or dispersed ever again and could prosper in the land until Messiah's eternal kingdom was established over all the nations and generations of mankind.

As we mourn, we need to understand that G-d is no respecter of persons because all of us will reap what we sow. We will either resolve our personal baggage, or wander in circles in a wilderness wandering of our own making. Is your spiritual life a song of joy and victory or is it a sad song of spiritual defeat, sinking back in the darkness it was first delivered out of?

Secondly, it is entirely up to us to protect ourselves from the encroaching darkness and carefully examine all the weird and wonderful ideas which wander through our lives, so that we can be enriched and not be impoverished and polluted. We do not accomplish this mission by totally withdrawing from the world and hiding from every challenge we encounter. On the contrary, we need to fearlessly and boldly examine new ideas and perspectives, so that we can demolish all and any fortresses the enemy throws across our paths. We should not cringe in the dark, afraid of the new ideas which are rampaging through our darkening world. We need to be dragon slayers and not timid mice afraid to confront our enemies.

The enemy is alive and active and is working towards sinking our faith and corrupting our spirituality. Evolutionary humanism is the greatest enemy which has ever come against our faith and the worst challenge to our beliefs since all forms of ancient paganism have been debunked. This is followed by the politically correct immorality which wrongly wants to free our modern world from the supposed repressive yoke of biblical morality.

Both are merely attacks of the enemy which seek chain us with the handcuffs of hell and exhibit us as trophies which have both been defeated and debunked, and which he wants to put on display to the world that he wants to darken and swallow until there are no members of the shrinking righteous core left to abandon his criminal darkness and come into the wonderful; light of our Messiah's love.

His most hateful henchmen are both any form of theological liberalism which denies the truth of G-d's Word and all aspects of the modern sexual revolution which is doing its best to grind a biblical approach into dust and disrepute. These are two of the pillars of the final satanic assault on the truth of G-d and on the dwindling number of soldiers of the light who are being relentlessly hammered by a growing global blitzkrieg (bombardment) on every aspect of our theology and spirituality.

Too many compromised believers want to remain positive and upbeat during these assaults, rather than confronting this growing darkness as it gains more and more strength and momentum. They want to have a happy face and speak about nice things and give in to anything which might make them appear negative or critical, because it is all about being mister nice guy who accepts everyone and judges nobody. Blah!

They want to throw open the gates of their theology and preach acceptance and compromise so that the enemy does not have to assault them or any of the members of their dwindling communities. The enemy is targeting their children and their young people, who are leaving in droves, as the remainder either age into silence or are spiritually slaughtered when they wonder where all the young families have gone.

You see, our faith is being assaulted, both from the outside and from the inside and we need to use both the defensive and the offensive armour of G-d, if we do not also want to be overrun and decimated by the enemy of our souls. Instead of cowering in fear and defeat, we need to confront all and any new ideology or strange spirituality which crosses our paths to steal the hearts and minds of our young people. We may find some of what is being said acceptable and we might find other aspects unacceptable as we uphold the unchanging Word of our G-d. All of these fresh assaults are just recycled versions of what the enemy has always tried to say: has G-d really said that we should not do or think this? We need to have a firm grip on what G-d really says and not succumb to the lies of the enemy.

We need to understand the challenges which are battering at the door and which are trying to overturn our faith. In honest discussion and respectful dialogue we want to demolish the fortresses of their falsehood and not allow any of their trojan horses to sneak in and destroy the fortress of our faith from the inside. I am not in the least afraid of the silly nonsense which our modern world mistakes for the truth of some supposed brave new world. I am a convinced citizen of the bright new world which is preparing to smash this failing universe to pieces, as it sets up the indestructible, everlasting Kingdom of our blessed Messiah.

As we prepare for our annual spiritual house cleaning and repair and renovate for one more year, I want to briefly discuss seven modern assaults on our faith which are coming from the inside. None of us would really be willing to accept the stupidity of evolutionary humanism or succumb to the global sexual revolution which is defiling our world, but there are unwitting spies and passive traitors among us, who are falling under the influence of the enemy and creating great havoc among us, as they damage our ability to speak the truth and defend our faith.

Again, I am not singling out any particular person, but as I wandered through my week, I felt urged to identify seven potential trouble spots that Bible believing Messianic Jews and Gentiles need to avoid and not succumb to. If you have any concerns or questions about what I say, talk to me (email me, message me) and we will dialogue, as we enrich our faith as members of the body of our Messiah who want to grow strong and be enriched, no matter what we have to face on our pilgrimage through this insane world to our Father's Home in Glory.

As a young believer, I was exposed to many of these trojan horse assaults on our faith from the inside and, thankfully, more and more believers are beginning to sound the alarm and distance themselves from these snares which the enemy is laying before us.

The first goes by the name of dispensationalism and is a twisting of the meaning of a verse in 2 Peter which reads: a day is as a thousand years. They take the seven days of creation and understand each day as a reference to seven dispensations which each last a thousand years. They say human history will only last seven thousand years and the last thousand years will be a 1,000 year millennium of peace and abundance, before the last final attack of the enemy at the end of this age. They have tried to set a date for the arrival of this millennium by weird mathematical formulas and they claim that seven years before the end of the sixth 1,000 year

dispensation, believers will be raptured out of the world as the world sinks in a great tribulation which the Messiah will end when He returns for His first of two final appearances. Messiah is not a yo-yo. He returns only once and never secretly.

Many believers sincerely believe this nonsense, but it is not supported by the Bible and dispensationalists only want to help Jews go home to Israel, so that the beast can surround us and seduce us into worshiping him before all the armies of the whole world march on Israel, which will be saved by the angelic hosts of G-d, who will defeat the hordes of the devil.

Problem is, when the L-rd leaves the heavenly Holy of Holies, at that moment, the whole universe will dissolve and explode and there will not be any intermediate period of time, because the entire universe is gone. It is still popular among many evangelical believers as a oversimplification of the mysteries of the timing of the return, but none of it has any real biblical credibility. G-d bless you if you believe it, but I am not holding my breath.

Next we have the day-age theory of evolutionary creationism (theistic evolution) which teaches that G-d used the supposed geological time periods as the way He brought creation about and each of the days of creation in Genesis one is actually an age which lasted millions of years, because G-d supposedly used evolution as the means to develop life as we know it.

Two problems. There are two creation accounts and neither of them speaks of long ages where life evolved from primitive one celled creatures to the biological diversity we see today. Second of all, there is no objective indication that evolution has ever occurred to supposedly change more primitive species into higher species. It is not occurring today. Life is divided into gene pools whose contains may vary, but whose boundaries can never be violated.

Trying to reconcile the popular beliefs of secular science with the eternal truths of the Bible is both impossible and unnecessary. Evolution is a lie; Creation is the truth.

Our third trojan horse deals with the seed of the serpent, where supposed descendants of demons and people dwell among us and will be revealed at the end of the world and from whom the final beast will be born. Another version of this states that after having a family with Adam, Eve copulated with animals and brought forth the mud people, also known as the non-white races of our world. This is racist nonsense for three reasons. Angels and demons do not possess gender or sexual organs and cannot copulate with humans – they are spirit and have no flesh. Also, Adam was not a white man, he was a red man and we all possess the same DNA within a number of related gene pools, none of which possess racial superiority. The less variety you have in a gene pool, the weaker its people will be. Lastly, nowhere is any of this nonsense taught in the Bible. It is pure evil racism, used to justify both genocide and slavery, both of which the Bible forbids.

Related to this, in 1904, the Czarist secret police of Imperial Russia forged a document called the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion which made the spurious claim that Jews were members of a secret society of Satan worshipers, called the Illuminati. We were supposed to be secretly controlling the governments of the world and also the global economy in order to overthrow Christian civilization and establish an international global dictatorship. This is not true and was used by the Russians to justify severe persecutions of Jews and it was used by the Nazis for the same purpose. It is circulated among many Muslim and Arab leaders and has been used in Canada to deny the holocaust as a lie being used by Jews to obtain global domination. It is a sick, satanic lie. Jews have never sought global domination and are just trying to survive as we live good, moral lives and mind our business, as we wait for the Messiah.

Next is a group of people who have historically made at least two appearances, first among traditional Christians and now among several strands of evangelical Christians. The ancients knew the world was round and that the earth revolved around the sun. Many of these early scientists disbelieved the traditional religion of the Greeks who attributed all natural phenomena to a wide spectrum of various gods. Many kinds of flat earthers gained prominence in the church of the Middle Ages, but lost prominence after explorers circumnavigated the earth several times. In Roman times, a Greek scientist actually calculated the circumference of the sun accurately within a few thousand miles. This knowledge was recovered once the ancient scrolls began to be read again.

More modern flat earthers do not understand the difference between literary, symbolic language and literal language. Both kinds of language appear in the Bible.

The earth is symbolically described as flat and is also said to be founded on immovable pillars. Israel is described as a land which flows with milk and honey. It has trees which clap their hands and mountains which skip like rams and which melt like wax. The seas are said to roar and Israel is described as the flock of the L-rd and as the sheep of His pasture. Messiah is called the lion of Judah and the rose of Sharon, as well as the lamb of G-d. Sometimes the Bible says that our hearts are turned to stone and at other times, burn within us. It also says that those who wait upon the L-RD will take flight like eagles.

These are powerful literary references which speak the truth with powerful images which are never intended to be taken literally. Scientific proofs which have been used to determine the circumference of our globe and the speed of light and the distances between both various stars and even galaxies, testify to the wonderful, powerful majesty of G-d's creation. We lose our spiritual credibility when we fail to distinguish between literal and literary references. It discredits us in the eyes of the world, because we are failing to rightly discern the truth of the Bible. If you want to talk about it, lets. If you believe it, we ask you not to teach it in the shul and going for coffee is on the Rabbi, whenever you want to meet and discuss it.

Recently an Anglican friend said that they are dealing with the tension between Romans one which soundly condemns homosexuality and John seventeen which calls us to be one in the L-rd. One of the most explosive and divisive Trojan horses among believers is the global gay rights agenda which has hitched a ride on the civil rights agenda, alongside proponents of abortion. I do not hate gays. I do not want them jailed or executed. I can forgive them and befriend them, but I will never consider the abomination which they practice as acceptable sexual behaviour. Too many Christians and Jews are pro-gay. This is impossible for any of us who take the Bible at face value. They may change some minds, but all and any forms of homosexuality and sexual immorality are kingdom exclusion behaviours which separate them from the grace of G-d. They need to repent and seek healing. There are probably more homosexuals suffering from SSA (same sex attraction) who refuse to accept the behaviours of a gay lifestyle because they know it is brokenness. They want deliverance, not acceptance.

Lastly, there are many forms of mysticism (gnosticism) which claim there are special meanings hidden in the texts of the Bible and that there are lost books which should have been included in the Canon of Scripture. This is because they want to introduce false doctrine into our faith and claim that it teaches things which it does not. There is nothing of consequence missing from our Bible and if a missing book were to be found, it would never contradict anything which the books we have, teach. Legends and myths may make interesting reading, but we should

never actually believe them or confuse fact with fiction.

We have covered a lot of ground today, but learning to discern the truth is an essential discipline if we want to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Messiah and rightly teach all which His Word does, as we avoid all that it does not teach. I am not afraid of the attacks which we are being bombarded with from the outside. I am not afraid of the nonsense which is trying to penetrate our faith and spirituality on the inside. I will dialogue with anyone about the nature of spiritual truth, because our Word is a fire and a hammer which uncloaks and demolishes all and any of the nonsense which the enemy is trying to send our way.

As we get ready for the Fall Feasts, let us repair and renew our faith and learn to be effective communicators of G-d's truth, as we reach out to our dark and dying, spiritually foolish world. We need to discern the truth and reject the lies. Shabbat Shalom and Shavua Tov.