

Lightening the load for the journey ahead

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While much of the world is now over a month into the beginning of a new year, the people of Elohim should be making plans for the beginning of their new year and a renewed cycle of Covenant rehearsals that begin at Passover.

Over the past several weeks we have been discussing the meaning and purpose of the Passover observance that is largely relegated to a meal through religious traditions.

I hope that it has become clear that Passover is really about beginning a journey, and we should be expecting and anticipating a future fulfillment. That is, if we believe the Prophets.

It's easy to say that you believe something, but it's sometimes a completely different thing to act on your beliefs. That brings faith into the equation.

For instance, if I told you that YHWH wanted you to leave your life behind in a couple of months and go on a journey without a clear itinerary, would you jump for joy or have a panic attack?

Now I urge you to think about that and be honest with yourself.

It might be tough to just leave it all behind, but that's the standard that Yahushua gave us.

Remember the Torah observant rich man who threw himself at the feet of Yahushua?

“¹⁷ Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? ¹⁸ So Yahushua said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, Elohim. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and your mother. ²⁰ And he answered and said to Him, Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth. ²¹ Then Yahushua, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the stake, and follow Me. ²² But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” Mark 10:17-22

I am amazed how Christians can often quickly gloss over this passage - especially American Christians. Not only do they gloss over it, some Christian preachers teach that we should be seeking prosperity, which amounts to “great possessions.” It seems like they are promoting the exact opposite and missing the point of the story altogether.

First of all, this was an actual event, not a parable. It actually happened. The man was a Torah observant Yahudim, and Yahushua loved him.

The question was “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” In common Christian understanding that would be: “What must I do to be saved?”

Yahushua’s first response was to point the guy to the Commandments. Wait. What? That doesn’t compute. Obey the Commandments in order to have eternal life? That sounds like legalism.

Well, this is the Messiah talking. So, instead of following some formula given at a Crusade or church service, you might want to heed the Messiah’s advice and start following the Commandments. The Commandments are what get you on the path that leads to eternal life. That, after all, is the journey that we have been talking about.

Interestingly, the guy said he was on that path, but Yahushua said He was still lacked something. The thing that he “lacked” was that he had too much stuff.

What we consider wealth and prosperity here on earth can amount to a serious lack in the Kingdom. You see, we are not given wealth in order to hoard it or simply enjoy our lives. We are given wealth to serve the King. We are supposed to use it to invest in the Kingdom and lay up treasures in heaven. (see Matthew 6:20)

So, the guy’s problem was that he just couldn’t let go of his possessions. It was like a ball and chain around his ankle.

He obviously believed in YHWH and he even wanted to be saved. He was given an invitation by the Messiah Himself! All he had to do was unload his stuff and follow Yahushua. He had to make a split second decision and he made the wrong one.

Imagine if he had just made the right choice. Instead of walking away sorrowful, he could have followed Yahushua and had an amazing life of adventure serving the King.

I find this incident to be tragic, heartbreaking and extremely poignant for this modern society that is literally drowning in “great possessions.” Even those classified as poor in western society would be considered rich by ancient standards.

I believe that Yahushua was shouting this message through the ages for this generation that has possessions like none other in history. He was kind enough to warn us of the danger of materialism and wealth. He loves us too, and He wants us to make the right decision.

The Pharisees were lovers of money as well. And that was one of the problems Yahushua had with them. They looked great on the outside but they were lawless and filthy on the inside. Their motives often involved greed and spiritual pride. (see Luke 16:14 and Matthew 23:25-28) He said they were not getting into the Kingdom.

The moral of the story of the rich man is that even people who admire, esteem and converse with the Messiah can end up making the wrong decision. People who say they love Him and sing praises to Him will still be shut out if they continue in lawlessness.

Recall the passage that I like to quote a lot in Matthew 7? This would be a good time to provide it in a more expanded context.

“¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them. ²¹ Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will

say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? 23 And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness! 24 Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” Matthew 7:17-27

Here we have people appearing before Yahushua calling Him “Lord” and confessing all the things that they have done, which in the Christian realm would have been the hallmarks of an anointed ministry.

Of course, we understand that this group gets rejected because they are lawless. They are not doing the will of the Father. They are not following the Commandments. As a result, they will not survive the storms of judgment, because they did not heed the warnings of Yahushua. They simply did not take Him seriously.

Here is another take on that teaching as found in Luke.

“46 But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? 47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. 49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.” Luke 6:46-49

I'm afraid many people are going to be met with that question: "*But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord' and not do the things which I say?*"

I suspect that many Christians will have to answer that question if they don't start taking Yahushua seriously. They will be speechless, like the one thrown out of the wedding. They will find themselves with those weeping and gnashing their teeth. (see Matthew 22:11-13)

Did you ever notice how much time Yahushua spent warning people about the bad things that will happen to those who do not obey? He wasn't doing it to rain on your parade of grace. He was doing it because He loves His sheep and He wants them to inherit eternal life.

He did everything He could do. He taught, warned and eventually died for those who are willing to listen to His words and follow Him.

Amazingly, most Christians just gloss over those warnings as if they somehow have a blanket immunity from judgment because they said a prayer or asked Jesus into their hearts.

I have to confess that when I was a kid, I thought that no matter what, everything was going to turn out just fine. One of my favorite memory verses was from Paul – "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Since I loved God, I figured everything was going to be fine - no matter what I did. But that warning in Matthew 7 always haunted me until I finally understood Yahushua's statement in John 14:15: "*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*"

So, my memory verse was accurate if my love bore fruit through obedience. And I needed to love Elohim more than I loved my stuff.

That is why Yahushua summed the Torah into two commandments that involved 1) Loving Elohim, and 2) Loving your fellow man. (see Matthew 22:35-40)

He never told us to love our stuff and always directed against the love of possessions. He even lived a life of poverty as an example. He was a King, but He lived like a pauper.

That is why I get more than a little ticked when I hear false teachers like Joel Osteen encouraging people to chase after prosperity, as if they are entitled to a lavish lifestyle because they believe in Jesus. I'm not sure what Bible he is reading from, but that is not the message I am getting from Yahushua. That is the message of Babylonian religion.

The question we all must ask is whether we have a single item that we couldn't let go of in order to follow Yahushua? If you do, I suggest that you get rid of it now.

How about collectively? Are your accumulated possessions so important that you couldn't sell them all or give them to the poor? Has your house filled with possessions become an idol? How about your safe stuffed with gold and silver, or your bank account filled with lots of numbers? Could you just walk away from it, or are you chained to it somehow?

I know people who have spent half their lives stacking and lining up their pensions and their retirement plan. They think their future is all set, and it might be hard to abandon those plans if the time came to uproot and leave.

Could you step out of your home after Passover and walk away from your house and all the stuff inside and never look back?

Better to ask these questions now and prepare, rather than to make the wrong decision when it really counts. That's supposed to be why we rehearse - so it isn't a shock when the time comes. Rehearsals are to help you be ready.

Remember the event with Lot? That's what he had to do. I always like to kid about the fact that Lot's wife probably forgot her Gucci jacket, her Prada dress or her Louis Vuitton purse. Obviously, I'm being facetious, but I think it drives the point home.

She couldn't leave it all behind. Something was missing. YHWH send two messengers, but she had a hard time letting go and simply following them.

Yahushua essentially stated that we need to "hate" all of the attachments of this world as compared to the love that we have for Him.

"²⁵ Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ²⁶ If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not bear his stake and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it - ²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish.' ³¹ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:25-33

The word translated as “hate” is “miseo” in the Greek. It means to “love less, to esteem less or to regard with less affection.” So Yahushua was not telling us to hate our loved ones. He is stating that there cannot be anything that we love more than Him. Nothing can compare.

He is a Bridegroom calling a Bride. He wants His Bride to be pure and focused on Him. He wants her uncompromised love, otherwise she may be tempted to be unfaithful. That is what happened to Yisrael after all.

In another teaching Yahushua uses the word “hate” when specifically referring to money and possessions becoming an idol.

“²⁴ No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve Elohim and mammon. ²⁵ Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? ²⁸ So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Now if Elohim so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear? ³² For after all these things the Nations seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of Elohim and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Matthew 6:24-33

This is a message that we need to be regularly reminded of. Seek the Kingdom first, and He will provide us with the things that we need. And there is a distinction between the things that we “want,” and the things that we “need.”

It is interesting that Yahushua mentions Solomon in this teaching about priorities. The reign of Solomon was epitomized by wealth and prosperity. His father David united the tribes into one kingdom and made all the preparations for the Temple.

He had it all handed to him and YHWH even blessed him with great wisdom, riches, wealth and honor.

“¹¹ Then Elohim said to Solomon: Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life - but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king - ¹² wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like.” 2 Chronicles 1:11-12

It seemed like everything was going to be incredible, but it ended in absolute disaster. Solomon enjoyed all the pleasures of life – to an extreme. He fell away from YHWH and disobeyed the Commandments. He was the reason why the Kingdom his father united was ultimately divided. He died in shame. You can read all about it in 1 Kings 11.

Not many people talk about the end of Solomon’s life, but we are supposed to remember the example of Solomon – the son of David.

Thankfully, Yahushua, Son of David, came and lived a life of humility to provide an example for us. As King, He will unite the tribes that

were divided due to Solomon's sins. Instead of a Temple made of stone, He will build a Temple of "living stones."

"⁴ Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by Elohim and precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Elohim through Yahushua Messiah. ⁶ Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." 1 Peter 2:4-6

That is why Yahushua needed to start by repairing the broken Covenant at Passover. He is the High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek, and He is raising up priests into His Order through the New Covenant, forged in His blood.

All those who desire to join in the Priesthood must be covered by His blood. And as we have mentioned, Passover is a rehearsal for a Bride. A Bride who is about to go out and meet her Husband, just like Rebekah traveled from Babylon to meet and marry her husband in the Covenant Land.

That is how we need to view Passover. It is the beginning of a journey to a wedding. We need to be ready to take that journey. So, unless you have ten camels parked outside, you probably should think about lightening your load. I have a couple donkeys, but they're more concerned about getting fed than they are carrying my things. So I'm not counting on them for any help.

Last we talked about the stranger and the fact that we too are "sojourners" if we are in Covenant with YHWH. This message is only for a remnant. Indeed, it probably sounds crazy to most Christians who are perfectly content to remain in Babylon, and put up walls to protect their comfortable existence.

The irony is that many of the people arriving at the southern border are coming with nothing, hoping to acquire wealth and possessions in America – “the promised land.” Those of us who are comfortable in Babylon should probably start thinking the exact opposite.

We should be unloading, detaching and getting ready to leave. Until we dwell with YHWH in His presence, we are not home. This is a foundational truth that most of us never learned in church.

Those of us raised in western cultures have been taught to settle down and plan our lives on this foreign soil in the land of Babylon. Part of my mission is to remind me, my family and you that we are all strangers in a strange land.

If you want to get a taste of how strange this land is, check out my recent video on [The Serpent Mound](#). Some report that it was an ancient burial site for giants, and there are mounds and pyramids scattered all over America.

So, the accumulation of real estate in this land or pieces of paper bearing masonic imagery is not a good strategy for the future if you truly believe the words of Yahushua.

Further, the best bunker in the world won't protect people from what lies ahead. The only safe place is under the shadow of the Almighty. YHWH is our refuge and our fortress and it is in Him that we must place our unwavering trust. (see Psalm 91:1-2)

As I said in the beginning, it is a matter of faith. The problem is that most people really don't take Yahushua seriously.

If we believe Yahushua, then we need to invest in the Kingdom of YHWH, and that Kingdom awaits us at the end of our journey.

But first we need to set our focus on leaving Babylon and trekking through the wilderness to the Mountain of Elohim. The sad truth is that many will not make it because they are not prepared. They may want the Kingdom, but they are not ready or willing to make the journey.

Whether we leave in two months, two years or two decades, the words of Yahushua remain relevant to all of us in this generation who have become classified as “consumers.”

When I think of consumers, I envision a swarm of locust consuming everything in sight. That is what much of Babylonian society has become, and I imagine that is what it looks like when viewing this culture from afar.

Western society is preoccupied with buying food and eating food. Obesity is skyrocketing and sickness is increasing, largely because of a people who are obsessed with fast food and lots of it.

It is no coincidence that locust are one of the plagues leading up to Passover, and it is purposeful that the final meal in Egypt was brief and bitter.

It was a reminder to the Yisraelites that they were leaving bitterness behind, but their simple diet of unleavened bread was also revealing that their appetites and cravings would be tested along the way.

We have been duly warned regarding the tests that we can anticipate on our journey. I hope to discuss those tests further in future messages.

For now, it is important to understand that while you may try to take Babylon on this journey, you can't carry Babylon into the Kingdom.

We don't want to end up like the guy who didn't follow the Messiah because he had "great possessions."

As a result, I encourage everyone to consider lightening the load for the journey ahead.