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NEWS JEWISH ADVENTIST MINISTRY IN PARIS

I am very encouraged this year because after years of talk and seminars with the Adventist leaders in France, the North-France Conference is ready to plant a new church for the Jewish Ministry in Paris. On the first week of January I had two meetings with the Conference Evangelism Director with pastors and members. The conference is ready to employ a pastor for this new ministry, we agreed with the members we met to start now a preparation for this ministry, I will see them once every month until the summer time. The Conference is willing to put at our disposal a building which belongs to the Division and is not used now, this building is in the heart of the Jewish quarter of Paris where are many synagogues, kosher shops and restaurants, Jewish book shops and the headquarters of the "French Consistory", which leads the Jewish people for the whole country, but also the headquarters of the "Ile de France Consistory" which leads the Jewish people in the large metropolitan Paris. The members who are willing to work on this ministry have to be prepared in order to learn more about the Jewish culture, how to lead a Jewish-Adventist liturgy, how to sing Hebrew or messianic songs etc... That's why we think that we will be ready to start worshipping in a Jewish Adventist synagogue in Paris on the Summer 2011. Thanks for your prayers for this ministry in Paris, and all over the world.

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HANUKAH IN FLORIDA

It is always a pleasure to receive news from our congregation in the world, even though from time to time it is little bit late. We have received a short word from Jeff in Florida with some pictures. He said: "We had a wonderful Chanukah celebration this December at: St. Petersburg Beth-El Shalom



New Port Richey Beth-El Shalom.



NEWS FROM BUENOS AIRES

David Barzola says, "In 2010 we modified the style of the celebrations. We organized various spiritual activities alluding to the story of the Maccabees during the eight meetings of Chanukah. In the month of December we performed some concerts that helped us to involve more people to the activities of the temple. Thanks to all who have prayed for us and sent us messages of encouragement. These have been very important to us."



OVERVIEW

BO

EXODUS 10:1-13:16

G-d tells Moshe that He is hardening Pharaoh's heart so that through miraculous plagues the world will know for all time that He is the one true G-d.

Pharaoh is warned about the plague of locusts and is told how severe it will be. Pharaoh agrees to release only the men, but Moshe insists that everyone must go.

During the plague, Pharaoh calls for Moshe and Aharon to remove the locusts, and he admits he has sinned. G-d ends the plague but hardens Pharaoh's heart, and again Pharaoh fails to free the Israelites.

The country, except for the People of Israel, is then engulfed in a palpable darkness. Pharaoh calls for Moshe and tells him to take G-d's people out of Egypt, but to leave their flocks behind.

Moshe tells him that not only will they take their own flocks, but Pharaoh must add his own too. Moshe tells Pharaoh that G-d is going to bring one more plague, the death of the first-born, and then Israel will leave Egypt. G-d again hardens Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh warns Moshe that if he sees him again, Moshe will be put to death.

G-d tells Moshe that the month of Nissan will be the first month of the year. The people of Israel are commanded to take a sheep on the 10th of the month and guard it until the 14th. The sheep is then to be slaughtered as a Pesach offering, its blood put on their door-posts, and its roasted meat eaten. The blood on the door-post will be a sign of faith and that their homes will be passed-over when G-d strikes the first-born of Egypt. The Jewish People are told to memorialize this day as the Exodus from Egypt by never eating chametz on Pesach. Moshe relays G-d's commands, and the Jewish People fulfill them flawlessly.

G-d sends the final plague, killing the first-born, and Pharaoh sends the Jews out of Egypt. G-d tells Moshe and Aharon the laws concerning the Pesach sacrifice, pidyon haben (redemption of the first-born son) and tefillin.

THE LAND WAS GIVEN TO ISRAEL

We find many times in the Torah, G-d's promise to give the Land of Israel to the Jewish people. We found some of these promises in this week's Parsha, Bo.

"When you will come to the land which G-d is going to give you as He promised..." (Exodus 12:25).

"When G-d will bring you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hitites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Yebusites, which He swore to your forefathers to give you - a land flowing with milk and honey..." (Exodus 13:5)

"When G-d will bring you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and to your forefathers, and He will give it to you..." (Exodus 13: 11).

"WE ARE A COUNTRY LIKE ALL OTHER"

It is told that when the first ganef (thief) was caught in Israel, the people came to Prime Minister David Ben Gurion and complained, "We apprehended a Jewish ganef! This is terrible..."

Ben Gurion smiled and said, "I feel relieved now, for now I know that we are a country like all other countries!"

But in truth Israel is not a country like all other countries. Israel is a land whose very existence is a constant miracle just like the miracle of the existence of the Jewish people for about four thousand years.

THE LAST PLAGUES

In Parshat Bo, we find the final three plagues with which G-d afflicted the Egyptians;

8th: The locust,

9th: The darkness

10th: The plague of the first-born.

TEACHING OUR CHILDREN

G-d tells Moshe that He is bringing these plagues so that, "You will tell your children and grandchildren My miraculous signs which I have performed amongst them, and you will know that I am G-d." (Exodus 10:2)

The importance of teaching children Torah was again emphasized at the giving of the Torah. However, G-d did not say "and they [the children] will know that I am G-d." he says, "and you [the parents] will know that I am G-d"? Teaching our children

and grandchildren about the miracles which G-d performed, strengthens our own faith in G-d. Thus, the Torah says that through teaching your children, “you will know that I am G-d.”

Rabbi Zalmen Marozov gives another explanation “is that if we expect our children to follow our teachings, we must believe very strongly in these teachings and practice them ourselves. Thus, the Torah says, you must teach your children, but first you must know and believe in G-d, otherwise your teachings will not be effective.”

The Midrash states that God agreed to give the Torah to the Jewish people only after they promised to teach and educate their children in its ways.

According to Jewish tradition, as soon as a Jewish child begins to speak, we must teach him/her to recite words of Torah. Children are our assurance of our continuity, for they are the connecting link in the golden chain of our spiritual heritage.

Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk explains the words to Pharaoh, “**With our young and with our old we will go**” Moshe here implies, “If we teach and train our young to serve God then we will have “our old” for when they grow old they will also serve God. But if we don’t concentrate on the young, in time, we will not have anyone, not even the old, to serve God either!”

Rabbi Moshe of Koznitz said: “Old age is like vintage wine. The longer fine young wine ages, the better it becomes. But if the wine was of poor quality to begin with, it only sours with age.

COMPLETE TRUST

The night before redemption, while they were still enslaved to Pharaoh, Israel smeared the blood of the Paschal lamb on the doors, and then sat down to celebrate the redemption, because at that point they already felt free!

In their minds, they were liberated from the oppression of Pharaoh. They believed so completely in the forthcoming redemption that they were literally able to taste it.

Their trust in God was complete. They were still in Egypt physically, but they were long gone psychologically.

It seems that this was God’s purpose on that awesome night.

Once the people of Israel felt liberated, they needed to eat from the bitter herbs in order to remind them of

the oppression. They were even able to eat the matza, which would serve as the symbol of their rapid exodus that would actually take place only the next morning. They knew that they would be leaving so quickly that they would not have time for the bread to rise.

They trusted in God completely, and literally tasted the future.

How ironic, then the commandment that every year we are to envision ourselves as if we left Egypt. Israel in Egypt did just that: They envisioned themselves as if they left Egypt, the only difference being that they accomplished this by looking into the future, while we must look into. According to the Jewish tradition “In every generation a person is obligated to envision himself as if he left Egypt.” (Mishna Pesachim 116b)

OUR BEHAVIOR

The Torah states: “**And Moshe said, “This is what the Almighty said, “Around midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die.”**” (Exodus 11:4)

Rashi cites the Sages of the Talmud that the Almighty actually told Moshe that exactly at midnight. He would cause the plague of the death of the firstborn. Why did Moshe then change His words to “around midnight” when he repeated the Almighty’s words to the Egyptians?

Rashi brings the answer of the Sages that “Perhaps Pharaoh’s astrologers will err in their calculation of the precise midpoint of the night and say that ‘Moses is a liar.’” (Talmud Bavli, Berachot 4a)

Amazing! Nine plagues have already hit the Egyptians. Moshe has warned them and been correct each time. Now the firstborn or each family throughout Egypt dies. What difference does it make whether it is a few minutes before or after midnight?

This illustrates the power of a person to find fault. From what might have been a minor discrepancy—and perhaps a discrepancy due to their own calculations—they would seek to call Moshe a liar and discredit him totally. When a person wants to find fault, he will find something.

Be aware of when we fall into the trap of finding fault when we should be seeing the bigger picture. Be aware when others are fault-finders . . . and tread gently because these personalities are easily irritated and difficult to deal with.

DO YOU LOVE TO STUDY

A story is told of a rabbi who was seeking to hire a teacher to teach his son Torah. A prospective teacher, with great credentials attesting to his teaching abilities, came for an interview. The father was satisfied with the recommendations, but said, "I have one question: " Do you yourself love to study Torah?"

"What difference does it make? I'm a qualified teacher and I will make sure that your son studies?"

"No," replied the father. "You can only transmit to a student whatever you yourself enjoy... If all my son will see is that you want him to study, he will also want someone else to study... But if you yourself enjoy studying, you will transmit that value to my son and he too will enjoy learning..."

TRUE FREEDOM

Our sages say, "True freedom is achieved only through the study of Torah." Without knowing between right and wrong, good and bad, one cannot be considered a free person, in the true sense of freedom.

An ancient story is told of a wealthy man who, in addition to many fields and orchards, had many servants and slaves. He was unkind, difficult and also had a violent temper. If a slave didn't fulfill his

wishes to the fullest, he would be beaten mercilessly.

Once when he was beating one of his slaves, a wise man happened to walk by. He stopped and said, "It is neither proper nor ethical for one slave to be hitting another slave!"

"What do you mean one slave hitting another?" declared the rich man angrily. "I am the owner and he is my slave!"

"You are mistaken! In my opinion, you are more slave than he is! He, unfortunately, has no choice that he is a slave, but you, who cannot control your anger, are indeed enslaved to your evil temper and temptations. Your anger is your master and ruler and you are enslaved to it!"

A FINE REDEMPTION

Rabbi Packouz gives this story: There was once a Jewish girl who stopped in Israel on her way to India to seek spirituality. Friends suggested that she go to Neve Yerushalayim to take a class and give Judaism one last shot before seeking other pathways to spirituality. The one class happened to be studying the laws regarding returning a lost item:

- When is an item considered lost?
- What if the person gave up hope of its return?
- What constitutes a legitimate identifying mark to claim the item?
- To what extent and cost of time and money are you obligated for returning the item?

The girl was furious! This is NOT spirituality. She left in a huff and headed off to India.

Six months later she and her guru were discussing a philosophical matter while walking through the village. They came upon a wallet filled with rupees. The guru picked it up, put it in his pocket and continued with his point. The girl interrupted him and asked, "Aren't you going to see if there is identification in the wallet to return it?" The guru replied, "No. It was his karma that he lost it; it's my karma that I found it. It's mine." The girl implored, "But, he might have a large family and that might be his monthly earnings, they could starve if you don't return it!" The guru responded, "That is their karma."

The young lady then remembered the class she took in Jerusalem—and realized that spirituality without justice, kindness and concern for others is just a false spiritual high, corrupt emotion. She returned to Jerusalem and ultimately returned to her Torah heritage. The Torah gives us great insight on spirituality.

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HAFTARA

Jeremiah 46:13-46:28

PARASHA: Pharaoh does not want to repent and to let God's people go... Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me!" (Exodus 10:28).

HAFTARAH: Jeremiah announces the coming of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon upon Egypt: "This is the message the L-RD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to attack Egypt." (Jeremiah 46:13). The punishment for what Egypt has done to Israel is that they will be exiled and will never come back (19). It is exactly what happened in the history, the Egyptian of today are Arabs who came from Saudi Arabia in the 7th Century.

Even though Egypt has been a great nation, with a great army, they will not resist the Babylonian invasion, the L-rd has decided to give Egypt to the Babylonian: "Why will your warriors be laid low? They cannot stand, for the L-RD will push them down. They will stumble repeatedly; they will fall over each other." (Jeremiah 46:15-16).

Egypt will go to Exile, they will not live anymore in their country, even great cities like Memphis will be without its original inhabitant. "Pack your belongings for exile, you who live in Egypt, for Memphis will be laid waste and lie in ruins without inhabitant. Egypt is a beautiful heifer, but a gadfly is coming against her from the north." (Jeremiah 46:19-20). Today the people living in Egypt are not descendents of the ancient Egyptians.

What happened to Egypt is presented by the prophet as a punishment from God: The L-RD Almighty, the G-d of Israel, says: "I am about to bring punishment on Amon god of Thebes, on Pharaoh, on Egypt and her gods and her kings, and on those who rely on Pharaoh." (Jeremiah 46:25)

Even though G-d will punish also Israel for her sin He will not destroy her completely: "Do not fear, O Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, O Israel. I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid... "Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished." (Jeremiah 46:27-28).

BRIT HACHADASHA

Rom 8:16-39

PARASHA: The text of our parasha insists on the necessity of teaching the children, "You will tell your children and grandchildren My miraculous signs which I have performed amongst them, and you will know that I am G-d." (Exodus 10:2) G-d had a great concern about the children of Israel, because in fact they are his own children. This concept is much more developed in the Brit Hachadasha.

BRIT HACHADASHA: Rabbi Shaul has written to the believers who were living in Rome: "The Ruach himself testifies with our spirit that we are G-d's children" (Rom 8:16) It is not only a feeling, it is testimony we receive in our mind and in our heart that "we are G-d's Children". G-d is presented in this text and many other Bible's texts as our father and exactly like in the Bible G-d asks Israel to teach their children, G-d as our father teaches us by the Ruach Elohim. Yeshua affirms "But when He, the Ruach of Emeth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; He will speak only what he hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me [Yeshua] by taking from what is mine and making it known to you." (John 16:13-14). The consequences of being children of G-d is that we will be heirs of the promises of G-d.

An heritage is waiting for us as a reward of our faith in the Mashiach. "Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Mashiach, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." (Rom 8:17) What a wonderful promise, to be co-heirs with Mashiach. It is indeed a great manifestation of G-d love for each one of us.

Rabbi Shaul is so amazed by this love that he concludes this chapter saying: "I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8:38-39)

