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NEWS

PASTOR MEEITNG IN SWITZERLAND

On Tuesday I was all the day in an Adventist Temple in Biel/Bienne (Switzerland) in order to speak with the pastors of the Swiss Union of Conferences. The subject was why do we have to start a Jewish outreach ministry in Switzerland and what are the Biblical foundations for such a ministry. 40 pastors were gathered together in this beautiful city at the border of the lake of Bienne. The organization of the Seventh-day Adventists is quite special, they have two conferences because Switzerland has two official languages (French and German) we could say even three with Italian in the South of the country. However there are two Conferences one French-Italian and one German speaking. The Union is organized around the two conferences, that is why the President of the French speaking conference is also the Union's president and the President of the German speaking conference is also the Union's secretary. This organization seems to be good for this small country and the work of the God is progressing even if it is very difficult to preach the true gospel to people who are strongly attached to either Catholicism or Protestantism. At the end of the meeting I launched an appeal for the start of a Jewish Adventist ministry among the 20,000 Jews who are living in Switzerland, I said to them that as soon as there will be a pastor or a congregation ready for this ministry I will come back for a special training, explaining how to reach Jews and how to lead a Jewish Adventist synagogue.

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EUROPEAN ASI CONVENTION



On Wednesday, I went to Constance (Germany) where is organized the European ASI convention. The last one was in 2009 in Romania, it was a good meeting but this convention in Germany was much more popular and many more people joined us. The organization of ASI asked me to lead two workshops on Jewish ministry. I did it with pleasure. These workshops were held on Thursday afternoon from 2:15 to 3:45 and then from 4:00 to 5:30 pm. The devotional mornings are shared between the officers of the two European Divisions; Gabriel Maurer, Executive Secretary of the EUD, on Thursday morning and Dr. Bertil Wiklander, President of the TED will preach on Friday morning. We are all waiting for Sabbath morning to hear what will be the amount of the ASI offering in Europe and also to hear the sermon of Ted Wilson, GC's President.

OVERVIEW

BEHA'ALOTCHA

Numbers 13:1-15:41

At the insistence of Bnei Yisrael, and with G-d's permission, Moshe sends 12 scouts, one from each tribe, to investigate Canaan.

Anticipating trouble, Moshe changes Hoshea's name to Yehoshua, expressing a prayer that G-d not let him fail in his mission. They return 40 days later, carrying unusually large fruit. When 10 of the 12 state that the people in Canaan are as formidable as the fruit, the men are discouraged.

Calev and Yehoshua, the only two scouts still in favor of the invasion, try to bolster the people's spirit. The nation, however, decides that the Land is not worth the potentially fatal risks, and instead demands a return to Egypt. Moshe's fervent prayers save the nation from Heavenly annihilation.

However, G-d declares that they must remain in the desert for 40 years until the men who wept at the scouts' false report pass away.

A remorseful group rashly begins an invasion of the Land based on G-d's original command. Moshe warns them not to proceed, but they ignore this and are massacred by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

G-d instructs Moshe concerning the offerings to be made when Bnei Yisrael will finally enter the Land.

The people are commanded to remove challa, a gift for the kohanim, from their dough. The laws for an offering after an inadvertent sin, for an individual or a group, are explained.

However, should someone blaspheme against G-d and be unrepentant, he will be cut off spiritually from his people.

One man is found gathering wood on public property in violation of the laws of Shabbat and he is executed.

The laws of tzitzit are taught. We recite the section about the tzitzit twice a day to remind ourselves of the Exodus.

WRONG REPORT

This week's parasha tells the story of one of the greatest failures in Jewish History, the failed mission of the twelve meraglim (spies). It begins simply with the charge from the Almighty which was prompted by Moshe's request. And the Lord spoke to Moshe, saying, **"Send for yourself, men, that they may spy the Land of Canaan, which I give to the people of Israel; of every tribe of their fathers shall you send a man, everyone a leader among them"** (Numbers 13:1-2).

The Torah tells us how Moshe directs them, almost verbatim to Hashem's command. **"And Moshe sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, Go up this way southward, and go up into the mountain"** (Numbers 13:17).

Yet the mission goes awry. Instead of telling a tale of a beautiful country flowing with milk and honey, ten of the spies focus on negativity, spinning stories about insurmountable giants, unconquerable cities and a land that devours its inhabitants.

The spies were righteous prominent leaders of Israel, but their words caused terrible calamity.

What made them do this? Rather, they said: "If Israel enters the land, Moses will cause us to be replaced, for we can only lead in the desert, but in the land we will not lead." (Zohar Shlach 158a).

The Zohar paints a picture of leaders who are more concerned with their own position of power than the good of their constituents.

ONLY CALEB SPOKE

The Torah states: **"And Caleb stilled the people towards Moshe and said, 'We should certainly go up and possess the land for we are well able to take it.'**" There were two good spies - Calev and Joshua. Why did only Calev speak to the people and not Joshua? The Arizal, a famous rabbi explains that Joshua preferred that Calev speaks to the people because he felt that if he spoke up, the people would respond, "You only want to enter the land because of your desire for power. You are only concerned about your own welfare. You want leadership for yourself. For us, it is not in our best interests to go to the land."

Rabbi Packouz draw a lesson: When we try to influence others to do something, it is important

that they view what we say as being for their welfare. If someone we are trying to influence feels that we are motivated by self-interest, he will not heed us. In such a case, it is better to have an unbiased person speak to him.

A LAND WHICH EAT...

When the spies came back to the camp of the Israelites, they pronounced a very strange sentence. They described the land saying “**It is a land which eats up its inhabitants**” Why did they describe the land in this way? According to the Jewish tradition, God brought a plague wherever the spies went in order that no harm comes to the spies, thus, the people of the land were busy burying their dead and did not pay attention to the spies.

If the spies had a real faith in G-d they would have realized that this was to their benefit. However, because they lacked faith in G-d's words (that the land was good), they attributed the deaths to “a land which eats up its inhabitants!” This resulted in their discouraging the Jewish people from going up to Israel.

FEEL PROUD AND POSITIVE

The spies said also, “**And we were in our own eyes as grasshoppers and so we were in their eyes.**” What a strange statement about themselves. Our rabbis explain that how a person is in their own eyes so are they perceived by others. Had the spies been positive and confident in their mission, remembering that they were sent by Moshe, they would have been proud of their mission. But with their negative attitude (“**we were in our own eyes as grasshoppers**”) they projected the same image about themselves to the inhabitants of the land and, they too, viewed them as grasshoppers - small and meaningless creatures.

The rabbis derive an important lesson from this: When we do a mitzvah, performing our G-dly mission in this world, it is important to feel proud and positive about it. This feeling will then be projected and transmitted to others. They will look at us in a positive way and they too will be affected and influenced to do the same.

NO EVIL SPEECH...

The Torah states: “**The men who brought back the evil report on the Land died of the plague by the will of the Almighty**” (Numbers 14:37). What lesson for life can we learn from this verse?

The Talmud (Arachin 15a) teaches us the lesson that we learn the severity of speaking loshon hora (“evil speech” -- gossip, slander...) from the punishment of the spies who were sent to reconnoiter the land of Canaan. If those who spoke against wood and stones received harsh retribution, how much more severe a punishment is deserved by someone who slanders his fellow human being?

FOLLOW THE LIGHT

Rabbi Yisrael Yaakov Kanievisky said, “Man is led in the path that he chooses to travel!” Imagine. The spies see these giants wailing and weeping at massive funerals day after day. They should have figured that this plague was an anomaly, for if this was the norm, then the funerals would have become part of their everyday existence, and hardly an event worthy of disrupting their normally tight security.

In fact, comments the Steipler, that in the times of Yehoshua, the two spies who entered Canaan were immediately detected on the very day they arrived, and they were hunted with a vengeance! Yet these twelve spies remained unnoticed. But the spies did not look at the events with that view. When people have sour opinions and want to see only doom and gloom, then even a ray of light will blind them. When one is constantly weighed down with worry, he will only drag his feet down the path of discontent. However, if we take life's bumpy road, as a chance to exercise our endurance, and turn the lemons handed to us into lemonade, then unlike the meraglim we will glean light from even the seemingly darkest abyss. And one day we will follow the path of that light to the Promised Land.

FAITH IN G-D

Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidic movement, once wanted to teach his students what true faith in G-d is. They traveled to a certain village and stopped at an inn, run by a simple G-d fearing and pious Jew.

The innkeeper welcomed them very warmly and invited them to a meal. During the meal a soldier came in and knocked on the table three times and left. Later the soldier came back and repeated the banging on the table.

The innkeeper explained, "This year was a difficult one financially. As a result, I am in arrears of my rent to the Baron, who owns this village. Today I must pay the rent. The Baron sent the soldier to remind me to make the payment today. When the soldier comes the third time I must go to the Baron and pay what I owe. Otherwise, he will throw me in jail."

"From the way you conduct yourself, I assume that you have the money to pay the Baron," said the Baal Shem Tov. "The opposite is true," replied the innkeeper. "I have no money at all. However, I have complete faith that G-d will help me." Shortly afterwards, the soldier came a third time and knocked on the table as before. "Now I must go to the Baron and pay my debt. I will be back, G-d willing, shortly." The innkeeper excused himself and went calmly with the soldier.

The Baal Shem Tov and the disciples watched through the window to see what would happen. In the distance, they noticed a coach drive up to the innkeeper. A stranger had a conversation with him. Then the wagon drove away. A little while later, the wagon turned around and again approached the innkeeper. This time, they noticed that the man from the wagon handed a parcel to the innkeeper who continued on his way.

When the innkeeper returned, they asked him what happened. He told them

that on the way to the Baron, someone approached him wanting to buy a large quantity of vodka. "I quoted him a price and asked for a deposit, the amount I owed the Baron. But the man thought the price was too much, so we parted. After a while, he returned and told me that he changed his mind and agreed on the price. He then gave me the down payment which was exactly what I needed to give the Baron!"

The Baal Shem Tov said to his students, "This is the power of true faith in G-d. As we say every day in prayer, 'Blessed is the man who trusts in G-d and G-d will be his security.'

DO WE SEE OPPORTUNITIES

Back in the early 1950's a large shoe consortium with stores across the United States and Canada, decided to take their business venture into the emerging continent of Africa. They sent two of their salesman to explore the prospects of business in the remote villages across the black Continent.

After just one week, they received a cable from the first salesman: "I am returning at once. No hope for business. Nobody here wears shoes!"

They did not hear from the second salesman for four weeks. Then one day an urgent cable arrived. "Send 15,000 pairs of shoes at once! I have leased space in five locations. Will open chain of stores. This place is filled with opportunity. Nobody has shoes!"

EDITOR

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HAFTARA

Joshua 2

PARASHA: In the text of the parasha the L-rd commanded Moses to send spies to the Land of Canaan: "And the L-rd spoke to Moshe, saying, 'Send to you men that they may spy the land of Canaan which I give to the children of Israel...' Moshe chose twelve men — one from each tribe (Num. 8:10-12).

HAFTARA: In our haftara it is Joshua who send spies to the Land of Canaan. "Then Joshua bin Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, 'Go, view the land, especially Jericho.'" (Joshua 2:1).

Thirty eight years before the people of Israel were not ready to trust the L-rd, but now they are. They want to leave the wilderness and to taste this land of honey and milk.

The Canaanites heard what the L-rd has done for Israel since they left the land of Egypt. They are afraid of them. Some of the Canaanites have gotten faith in the G-d of Israel and are ready to help them. It is the case of Rahab the prostitute of Jericho. "So they went, and entered the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab, and spent the night there." (Joshua 2:1). Rahab said to the spies that she knows what the L-rd has done for them, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. (Joshua. 2:9-10). She asks them to remember her and her family when they will come back. "Now then, since I have dealt kindly with you, swear to me by the L-RD that you in turn will deal kindly with my family. Give me a sign of good faith that you will spare my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." (Josh. 2:12-13) Rahab become an example of faith "By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace." (Heb. 11:31). She deserved to become one of the ancestors of King David and the Mashiach, Son of David. (Matt. 1:5)

BRIT HACHADASHA

Acts 7

Among the main characters of our parasha there are Caleb and Joshua, the two spies who refused to speak negatively about the promised land of Israel. They were men of faith, but it was not enough to convince the other spies to accept the word of G-d and to go ahead with the conquest of the promise land. There is no text in the Brit Hachadasha which speaks about Caleb, but we have some texts about Joshua. Acts 7 is the speech of Stephan, the first believer who died for his faith. The speech of Stephan is a retrospective of the history of Israel starting with Abraham (Acts 7:2) and ending with the ministry of Yeshua in heaven after his resurrection "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." (Acts 7:56). Saying the story of Israel, he confirmed about Joshua "Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David," (Acts 7:45). Joshua was the successor of Moses, the one who lead the Jews to conquer the land of Israel, to realize the promise of God, that this country would belong to Israel. He was a national savior, in this way Joshua was also a kind of Messiah and a type of the true Messiah. According to Numbers 13:8, Joshua was a descendant of Joseph and Ephraim, it is one of the reasons that the people of Israel has called the national Messiah, "Mashiach Ben Joseph". In fact the two spies who were faithful to G-d became types of the two vision of the Messiah we have in the Bible. Caleb was a descendant of Judah, Tribe of David and of the "Messiah son of David". Joshua was a descendant of Joseph, Thus type of the Messiah son of Messiah of Joseph. We know that these two Messiah are in fact one Messiah, there are many characters of the Tanach who are considered as type of the Messiah, Joshua is one of them