

## **“Fathers: Let us Hear the Conclusion of the Whole Matter”**

*“<sup>13</sup>Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. <sup>14</sup>For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Eccl 12:13-14, KJV)*

### **Introduction**

About a year ago (on January 7, 2013), I preached a message entitled ‘*Fulfill Your Destiny*’ based on today’s Parashah (*Vayechi*, “*And Ya’akov lived...*” Gen 47:28) which ends the book of Genesis, with 50 chapters, 4 events and 4 people, 12 *Parashot* in all. The conclusion of the Book of Genesis begins relating to us that ‘*our father Jacob lived*’ (until age of 147) and his last recorded act is to bless and prophesy over his twelve sons.

### **The Conclusion of the Whole Matter**

When it is all said and done, what relationship determines success or failure in life? Ultimately (perhaps obviously) it is the relationship with our parents – and for those of you with a living father, the relationship with him carries the most weight. Coincidence, right? We see that Joseph spent a lot of time crying (Gen. 43:30; 45:1-2, 14-15; 46:29; 50:1, 17) and he is one of the best typological figures for Messiah *Yeshua* (He also cried.) I am also driven to tears when I consider the tragedy we have in our families when a father is checked out, spent out, worn out, non-existent, and notoriously absent from the lives of their children.

In my family, we usually rented movies during the Christmas holiday. After all, what can Messianic Jews do for entertainment on the holiday? On December 24, 2001 on our way home from the MJAA conference we rented “*The Princess Diary*” for Ame, “*October Sky*” for Ian, “*A Dog of Flanders*” and “*Mother*” and for Marilyn and “*Simon Birch*” for me. To my great surprise, Ame’s movie ultimately was about the diary a father left his daughter and how it changed the daughter’s life. Ian’s movie was a true story about the dreams of a young high school boy (Homer) in a West Virginia coal town to become anything except a coal miner (he ultimately became a NASA engineer), but it really was about the relationship of Homer and his hero, his dad. Marilyn’s first movie is based on a famous book and tells us the story of a poor orphaned boy who aspires to be an artist. He is tried and tested and in the process finds his dad. Three out of three dealt with relationships with dads... We saw my movie two days later – perhaps the most powerful of all – even though Simon Birch is the smallest kid in town (a midget of sorts), deep down he knows that he was born to do something big, that God had a purpose for him! He is on a constant search to discover his destiny, but somehow manages to find nothing but trouble! Meanwhile, Simon’s loyal best friend Joe is searching for the identity of his father, a secret his beautiful and righteous mother has guarded Joe’s entire life. At the end, Joe discovers God, his father, his life and Simon finds his purpose in life. I couldn’t believe it! Was the Lord trying to get a message to me, to us? Well, you’d never guess what “*Mother*” was about. It was ultimately about restoring the relationship of a son to his mother so he could live his life without conflict!

According to these movies, then when it was all said and done, the relationship that determined ultimate success or failure in life was the relationship with a living father (mother). But the relationship with him carried the most weight. It was a sure coincidence, right? We did so much crying that week watching those videos! In fact, I can still feel tears come to the surface as I prepared this message for us this week.

When Joseph’s life was all said and done, by enduring to the end, we see in Genesis 50:20 that he is able to say: “*But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*” What an amazing testimony! I want us to get this phrase into our spirit: **“Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good.”** You see, often what Satan intends for evil, God intends for good for you and for me.

*Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. (Hab 2:4)*

***Faith (trusting)** is being confident of what we hope for, convinced about things we do not see...And without faith (trusting), it is impossible to be **well pleasing to God**, because whoever approaches him must trust that he does exist and that he becomes a Rewarder to those who seek him out. (Heb. 11:1, 6)*

*Furthermore, we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called in accordance with his purpose (Ro. 8:28)*

*Looking unto the Initiator and Completer of that faith (trusting), Yeshua – who, in exchange for obtaining the joy set before him, endured execution on a stake as a criminal, scorning the shame, and has sat down **at the right hand of the throne of God.** (Heb. 12:2)*

## **Fathers – Stay the Course**

How appropriate that Scripture uses the word “**endured**” in Heb. 12:2 referring to *Messiah Yeshua*’s life. I know that this same character quality – endurance – is important to all of us in the Messianic movement, especially for fathers. *Yeshua* said in Matt 24:13 “*But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*” Scripture uses the same Greek word in both references, mainly, Strongs’ 5278 *hupomeno* (hoop-om-en'-o): to remain, to bear (trials), have fortitude, and persevere. Do you think *Yeshua* meant it? Maybe you feel that He was just speaking to His *Talmidim* and that it only applies to them. Really? What is endurance? A good operational definition for endurance is: “*the inward strength to withstand stress to accomplish the best.*” “*So then, you, my son, be empowered by the grace that comes from the Messiah Yeshua. And the things you heard from me, which were supported by many witnesses, these things commit to faithful people, such as will be competent to teach others also. Accept your share in suffering disgrace (endure hardness, KJV) as a good soldier of the Messiah Yeshua.*” (2 Tim. 2:1-3)

The Greek word used above is Strong’s 2553 *kakopatheo* (kak-op-ath-eh'-o): to undergo hardship to endure afflictions (hardness), and suffer trouble. Do you suppose that *Messiah Yeshua* wants us to endure afflictions and suffer trouble so that God may bring forth His ultimate purposes in our lives for good like it was in *Yosef*’s life? By accepting suffering and disgrace and enduring afflictions *Yosef*’s name (literally, He (God) added) is fulfilled with his sons: though born from a Gentile mother, though raised in *Mitzrayim* as Egyptians, the sons will become tribes that inherit land in the promised land. *Yosef* is indeed doubly fruitful in the Promised Land!

Another secular year impinges upon us. What kind of resolutions should we make and stick by? The princess read her father’s diary and she was transformed by her father’s blossoming expectations for her life, she resolved to become the next ruler of her country. Homer saw *Sputnik* race across the sky and resolved, against all odds to become a rocket man. He wrote Von Braun and kept reaching for *the inward strength to withstand stress to accomplish the best* and he found his hero – his own father – and became a great scientist. The Flanders boy also found his destiny: “*Determined to rise above his humble beginnings, a poor orphan boy sets out against all odds to pursue his dream of becoming a great artist.*” And then there was Simon Birch, deformed and left a midget from birth, despised and laughed at by nearly everyone, but full of faith that God had a purpose for him. He asked everyone to support him in this faith, but even the pastor/minister who plays such a key role in the events surrounding their lives, cannot himself admit that God has a purpose for Simon Birch, a twelve year-old midget boy. I found this movie the most challenging of all: do you know without a shadow of a doubt that God has a special purpose for your life? Yes, you do!

Brothers: endure until the end and you will accomplish your destiny! Set out, against all odds, to fulfill God’s calling upon your live. Let us build up fathers (parents) and their children and eliminate the curse upon “our piece of the earth.” Let us strive to obey first and understand later whatsoever the Lord has asked us to do. Let us resolve to seek Him and meditate in His Torah daily so whatsoever we do shall be prosperous. Let us finish our course and not become weary in well doing. Let us “*press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Messiah Yeshua.*” Let us *chazak, chazak, venitchasek* – *be strong, be strong and be strengthened.* Let us purpose to become all He wants us to be, individually, and as His body. The most important resurrection in the Body of Messiah is the resurrection (the restoring) of our fathers to our families. Shabbat Shalom!