

## The Conclusion of the Whole Matter

*"<sup>13</sup>Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God & keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man (KJV) <sup>13</sup>A final word, when all has been heard: Fear God and keep His mitzvot! For this applies to all men. <sup>14</sup>God will bring every deed into judgment, including everything that is hidden, whether it is good or evil." (Eccl. 12:13-14)*

About a year ago (on January 11, 2020), I preached a message entitled *'The Year 2020 – the Time to Fulfill Our Destiny'* based on today's Parashah (*Vayechi*, "And Ya'akov lived..." Gen 47:28) which brings us to the end of Genesis – 50 chapters, 4 events and 4 people – 12 *Parashiot* total. At the conclusion of the Book of Genesis we are told *'our father Jacob lived'* (147 years) and his last recorded act is to bless and prophesy over his 12 sons.

Well, the year 2020 is all said and done. Scripture states unequivocally *"<sup>14</sup>God will bring every deed into judgment, including everything that is hidden, whether it is good or evil." And He WILL!* What relationship determines success or failure later in life? Ultimately (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! 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 surely a typological figure for *Yeshua* (He also cried). I teary-eyed when I consider the very real 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 have movie day during the Christmas holiday. What can Messianic Jews do for entertainment on that holiday? On December 24, 2001 on our way home from the MJAA conference we rented "The Princess Diary" for 14-year-old Amelyse, "October Sky" for 18-year-old Ian, "A Dog of Flanders" and "Mother" and for Marilyn and "Simon Birch" for me. To my great surprise, Amelyse's movie was ultimately 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 wanting to become anything except a coal miner (he 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 or 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! To this day, December 25 is family movie day. Stephen and his mom joined us for movie day this year.

According to these movies 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 dad 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 my message for this week.

When Joseph's life was all said and done (enduring to the end) we see that he is able to say: *"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good (KJV), <sup>20</sup>Yes, you yourselves planned evil against me but God planned it for good" (Gen. 50:20)* 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 and for our country. I am therefore reminded of the following verses:

*<sup>4</sup>Behold, the puffed up one—his soul is not right within him, but the righteous will live by his trust {faith} (Hab. 2:4)*

<sup>1</sup>Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of realities not seen...<sup>6</sup>Now without faith it is impossible to please God. For the one who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Heb. 11:1, 6).

<sup>28</sup>Now we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose (Ro. 8:28).

<sup>2</sup>Focusing on Yeshua, the initiator and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame; and He has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2).

Fathers, we must 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: “<sup>13</sup>But the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matt. 24:13). Scripture uses the same Greek word in both references (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 only speaking to His disciples, and that it should only apply 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 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 Joseph’s life? By accepting suffering and disgrace and enduring afflictions Joseph’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 two of the tribes that inherit land in the promised land. At the end Joseph is doubly fruitful in the Promised Land!

Another secular year has started. What kind of declaration 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 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 12-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?

Brothers, if we endure until the end, we will accomplish our 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 corner 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 revival in the Body of Messiah is the revival or restoring of fathers to our families (Mal. 3:24) ... *Shabbat Shalom!*