

Road Of The Pilgrims



Chanukah 5768 / 2007

Table Of Contents

Scripture: Let Us Study
The Marriage Question

Articles
Unto The Third And Fourth Generation

The Poem Page
Our Spirit
Take My Hand

The Guardian
Josiah's Lament

The Keeper At Home
A Virgin's Career

The Children's Page
The Little Lost Lamb

Across The Ocean.....
Eretz Yisrael

Thoughts to Ponder

The Missionary Column
Printable Tracts Available Online

A Voice to the Young
Our Chanukah Challenge

Scripture: Let Us Study

The Marriage Question

a study done by the Coover family, 08-5767 (11-2006)

Marriage ~ there are many questions, multiple ideas, and countless situations centered around this integral part of life. What are the answers to the questions? Which ideas are the correct ones? And what does Yahweh say about the ideal way to handle things?

Yahshua And Moshe (Moses) Synchronized

First of all, let's take a look at Matthew 19.

Verse 3 ~ “**The Pharisees also came unto Yahshua, testing Him, and saying unto Him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?’**” Let's stop and think about this a minute. Isn't this what the American culture has done? Yes, sadly it has declared it “legal” or “lawful” for one to put away his or her spouse FOR ANY REASON. But is this what Yahweh desires? Remember, when the Pharisees came asking this question, they were TESTING THE MESSIAH.

Verses 4-6 ~ “**And He answered, ‘Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore, they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore Elohim hath joined together, let not man put asunder.’**” Later on, we will be talking about this statement, “What therefore Elohim hath joined together.” For the basics though, what has Yahshua just declared? Without directly answering their question, He made it clear that one cannot put away his wife for every cause.” So the Pharisees had to test Him more.

Verse 7 ~ “**They said unto Him, ‘Why did Moshe (Moses) then command to give a writing of divorce, and to put her away?’**” Keep in mind that the Pharisees are trying the Master. DID MOSHE REALLY COMMAND TO GIVE A WRITING OF DIVORCEMENT AND TO PUT HER AWAY?

Yahshua replies in verse 8 ~ “**Moshe, because of the hardness of your hearts, ALLOWED you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.**”

So let's look at Deuteronomy 24, which is where Moshe permitted them to put away their wives.

Verse 1 ~ “**When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes because he hath found some matter of nakedness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorce, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.**”

To start with, we see that the issue is a matter of nakedness in the wife. While KJV translates it as “some uncleanness”, the Strong's Concordance traces this word back to the Hebrew word # 6172, which means nudity and indecency. (See the Strong's and Strongest Strong's Hebrew Dictionaries.) The Strong's also tells us that this word can figuratively mean “disgrace” or “blemish”, but obviously a physical marriage is not a figurative thing. The majority of the time, this Hebrew word is used when referencing physical nakedness in regards to human relationships, such as when Ham “**saw the nakedness of his father**” (Genesis 9:22), or when Yahweh commanded that one not uncover the nakedness of a close relation. Again, in Isaiah 20:4, this Hebrew word is translated as “shame”, but from the context of the verse, is obviously speaking of nakedness. The word is also used several times, speaking of figurative nakedness, whoredom, or shame, in reference to figurative marriage (between Yahweh and His people) and/or fornication with the nations (that is, idolatry, or figurative fornication). In accordance with the way the rest of Scripture uses this verse, we see Deuteronomy 24:1 speaking of a

physical marriage and a matter of physical nakedness being found in the wife. This clarifies that a man is not allowed to just put away his wife for anything he pleases.

But, is he commanded to put her away if he finds such a matter of nakedness? If we will look up the words in this verse in the Hebrew concordance, we will find that the word "let" (as in, "Let him write her a bill of divorcement") was never in the Hebrew, but was added by translators. In the Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, instead of a number at the end of the word, it instead says, "NIH", meaning that the word let is "Not In the Hebrew". In the Strong's, there is nothing at the end of the word except an asterisk (*), which signifies that in the Revised Version, this rendering was not used.

What about verse 2? "**And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.**" Once again we pose the question: Is Moshe commanding her to do so, or even condoning her doing so? In the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, we find that this word "may" means "to be able, lit. (can, could) or mor. (may, might)". The Strongest Strong's, however, differs with the Strong's, stating that in this case, the word "may" is NIH (not in the Hebrew). We mentioned that in Deuteronomy 24:1, where KJV reads, "Let him write her a bill of divorcement", that the Revised Version translated it differently. Let's take a look at this Revised Version.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (RSV) ~ "**When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took her to be his wife; then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her**

again to be his wife, after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before [Yahweh], and you shall not bring guilt upon the land which [Yahweh] your [Elohim] gives you for an inheritance."

Revised Standard Version is not the only one which takes this stand on the issue.

Deuteronomy 24:1-2 (New Living Translation) ~ "**Suppose a man marries a woman but later discovers something about her that is shameful. So he writes her a letter of divorce, gives it to her, and sends her away. If she then leaves and marries another man....**"

Deuteronomy 24:1-2 (English Standard Version) ~ "**When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife....**"

Deuteronomy 24:1-2 (New American Standard Bible) ~ "**When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts {it} in her hand and sends her out from his house, and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's {wife},....**"

Deuteronomy 24:1-2 (Robert Young Literal Translation) ~ "**When a man doth take a wife, and hath married her, and it hath been, if she doth not find grace in his eyes (for he hath found in her nakedness of anything), and he hath written for her a writing of divorce, and given [it] into her hand, and sent her out of his house, and she hath gone out of his house, and hath gone and been another man's.....**"

Even the New King James Version corrected this error.

Deuteronomy 24:1-2 (NKJV) ~ "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife....."

It is obvious that Moshe did NOT "command to give a writing of divorce, and to put her away", as the Pharisees deceitfully said. He did not even say it was permissible. However, he did put up with it, just as Yahweh does, saying, "If a man does this and this, and then the woman does this, and then the next man does this... OK, we've put up with enough. She can't go back and marry the first guy. The line's got to be drawn somewhere." As 1 Corinthians 14:33 says, "**Elohim is not the author of confusion, but of peace...**" Because of this, and because of the hardness of men's hearts, He puts up with those who are too hardhearted to want to make their marriages work out. He puts up with those who divorce their spouses, because He doesn't desire them to fight with each other. However, there comes a place where He draws the line, and says, "This will not be allowed." Does this mean that divorce and remarriage was acceptable? Does it mean that that was truly what Yahweh and Moshe desired? No. As far as the divorce goes, "**Yahweh the Elohim of Yisrael saith that He hateth putting away**" (Malachi 2:16). And when it comes to the remarriage, Yahshua declared that "**whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery**" (Matthew 5:32), and Deuteronomy 24:4 makes it clear that after the woman goes and marries another, SHE IS DEFILED.

Returning to Matthew 19, Yahshua says, "**I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.**" (Matthew 19:9) Or, as He worded it in Matthew 5:32 ~ "**Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause**

of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery...." These verses raise several questions.

The first is: Is Yahshua saying that it is good for one to put away his wife if she has fornicated? Well, let's return to the Torah. In Deuteronomy 24:1 Moshe said that people do this, but he didn't say that it is good. "**When a man hath married a wife, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some matter of nakedness in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and gives it in her hand and sends her out of his house.....**" Yahshua said to the men who tested him, "**Moshe, because of the hardness of your hearts, allowed you to put away your wives.**" (Matthew 19:8) There are two cases of hard hearts. One is the man's heart, if he refuses to forgive his erring wife, and desires to get rid of her instead. The second is the woman's heart, if she refuses to accept forgiveness, and continues walking in uncleanness. Due to these two situations, Yahweh allows a cutting off and putting away, but He does not condone it.

The second question that comes up is whether or not it is OK to remarry. Yahshua said, "**Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.**" (Matthew 19:9) Or, as we read in Matthew 5:32 ~ "**Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery....**" Does this mean that it is OK for a man (or woman) to remarry if their spouse has indeed been maritally unfaithful? Well, to return to our first question, Does Yahweh even condone putting the offending spouse away? No, He simply allows it because of hard hearts. So, does Yahweh condone putting one's spouse away, and then remarrying on top of that? Of course not. As the disciples replied to Yahshua in Matthew 19:10, "**If the case of a man be so with his wife** (that is, she committed fornication against him), **it is not good to marry** (that is, remarry, as we see that he has already gotten married once)." To this Yahshua replied, "**All**

men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let Him receive it." (Matthew 19:11-12) Either we will receive it, or we are hard-hearted, for it is obvious that Yahshua's intention is not that if one's spouse is unfaithful, then it is OK for the other spouse to be unfaithful too. Rather, what He is saying is that whoever puts away his wife is encouraging her to commit adultery, by placing her out there on her own under the temptation to remarry. By encouraging her to commit adultery, he is partaking in the sin of adultery himself. The only way that he is not tempting her to be adulterous (and thus partaking of the sin himself) is if she already made herself unclean by committing fornication against him. Then, even though Yahweh does not desire a putting away (but rather a repentance and forgiveness), the man is not pushing his wife into uncleanness himself, for she has already made herself unclean. So, whosoever puts away his wife is partaking of adultery, unless she has already defiled herself. Whoever enters a second marriage after a divorce is also partaking of adultery. Mark 10:11-12 ~ "**And He saith unto them, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife (even if she has been unfaithful), and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband (even if he has been unfaithful), and be married to another, she committeth adultery.'**" It all comes down to this: Whether one's wife has been unfaithful to him or not (or the other way around), he still promised to be faithful to her. He still promised that she would be his only soul mate as long as they both lived. To say, "Well, she broke her promise. She did it first. So now I am justified to break mine as well", is simply an excuse to be unfaithful himself. Does it matter who sins first and who sins second? Yahshua said, "**[Thou] shalt perform unto Yahweh thine oaths.**" (Matthew 5:33) He didn't say, "As

long as your spouse performs his or hers." If a man or woman makes a promise, he or she must keep that promise, disregarding whether or not the other one keeps their promise.

What Elohim Hath Joined Together

Genesis 2:22 ~ "**And the rib which Yahweh Elohim had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man.**" Matthew 19:6 ~ "**What therefore Elohim hath joined together, let not man put asunder.**" Does this mean that only the marriages which take place among believers are binding? To start with, let's look at a few other examples. Is it acceptable for a non-believer to murder, because of the fact that he has not bound himself to Yahweh's covenant? Is it permissible for him to steal another's possessions, as he has not dedicated himself to following Yahweh's instructions? Is it OK for him to break his promises? How about his marriage promises?

Matthew 5:31 ~ "**It hath been said, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.'**" As we already discussed, that is not what Moshe really said. Yahshua turns our attention back to what Yahweh really intended, when He says in verse 32 ~ "**But I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.**" As Yahshua says these words, questions are raised. "Well then, if she commits fornication, are we allowed to remarry? And what about if we divorced a spouse back before we were believers? Does that promise count?

Yahshua was ready to immediately answer these questions, not even waiting for them to be asked. Matthew 5:33 ~ "**Again, ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Ye shall not swear falsely, but shalt perform unto Yahweh thine oaths.'**" This command was given in Leviticus 19:12, where Yahweh commanded, "**And ye shall not swear by My Name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the Name of thy**

Elohim: I am Yahweh." The Pharisees had twisted this verse to suit themselves, saying that as long as the oath was not made in Yahweh's Name (swearing by Yahweh), then it could be broken. According to them, certain kinds of oaths were binding, but others were obsolete. An example of this is found in Matthew 23. In verses 16-19, the Pharisees were saying that if somebody swore by the Temple, they did not have to keep that oath. The only way they had to keep it was if they swore by the gold in the Temple. Another one of their perversions was that if one swore by the alter, it was not binding, and that he was only held to his promise if he had sworn by the gift on the alter. Thus they twisted and perverted the Scriptures, seeking to make ways to "lawfully lie". Isn't this what we are doing when we say that a nonbeliever's marriage promises are of none effect?

What does Yahshua have to say about it? Matthew 5:34-37 ~ **"But I say unto you, 'Swear not falsely by ANYTHING, neither by heaven, for it is Elohim's throne: nor by the earth, for it is His footstool: neither by Yahrushalayim (Jerusalem), for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.'**" His closing remark is, **"But let your communication be 'Yea, yea; nay, nay': for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."** If one says, "Yes, I do", that stands as a "Yes, I do", whether they did it in Yahweh's Name or not. Exception clauses and excuses for unfaithfulness and remarriage come of evil, and are not part of Yahweh's desire.

A Broader Perspective

Too often when reading passages on the marriage subject, we neglect to look at things in context. There is far more to the marriage issue than what we have read so far.

First of all, let's return to Deuteronomy 24. Here, Moshe gives an account of the grave mistakes and defilement of a hard-hearted people, along with prohibitions for certain abominable

actions. Immediately following this, though, He starts over at the beginning, talking about when a man hath first taken his wife. The idea is, "OK, guys, it's obvious that there's an awful lot of people messing up drastically. Let's start at the beginning and try to fix things before they ever go wrong." Deuteronomy 24:5 (English Standard Version) ~ **"When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be liable for any other public duty. He shall be free at home one year to be happy with his wife whom he has taken."** The message is clearly that a good relationship needs to be built, a relationship of genuine love, faithfulness, and happiness in each other. How much better marriages would turn out if the couple was not so busy running their own ways in life. Yahweh's desire is that a marriage start out with a healthy foundation of understanding and happiness.

Now we'll return to Mark 10. Immediately following a discussion on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, **"And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them, and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Yahshua saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of Elohim. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of Elohim as a little child, he shall not enter therein.' And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them."** (Mark 10:13-16) Yahshua was not only displeased with His disciples turning away the little ones; He was also displeased with those who would not believe as a little child, and who would hardheartedly ruin their marriages and families, thus causing their own little ones to stumble. In today's divorce and remarriage scenarios, are children taken into account?

Last of all, an important topic of relevance is the heart. Matthew 5:27-30 ~ **"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after**

her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.” If one becomes discontent with his or her spouse, and begins to lust after somebody else instead, the answer is NOT to cut off the first spouse, but to cut off the lust and the adultery of heart. Physical adultery is so rampant around us, because purity of heart has been neglected. No one wants to pluck out his own eye or cut off her own hand. Yet many are so quick to cut off bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh.

When Yahweh looks at a situation, He doesn't just look at it from one perspective. He looks at the whole situation, and at everything involved. He looks at those who will be affected negatively or positively, depending on how an issue is handled. He looks at the hearts of those involved. But more than just this, He also provides answers to us. He gives us solutions, so that we can live pleasing to Him.

Conclusion

Yahshua says, “**He that is able to receive it, let Him receive it.**” Will we receive His words? He desires that we be fanatical about being pure and unadulterated. He wants us to apply love, forgiveness, and commitment in life's daily situations. He yearns that our hearts be not hard, but that we be molded according to His perfect desires. May it be so in our hearts, marriages, children, and homes. Yahweh bless you.

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Articles

Unto the Third and Fourth Generation

given to Rivqah Yahsepha Coover, age 16, 11-17-5766 (01-19-2006)

“For I, Yahweh thy Elohim, am a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me.” (Exodus 20:5) What is this verse saying? Is it simply a warning, or is there more to it? Is there any significance to the three generations and four generations? As we will discover in the following paragraphs, this wording is very significant, and contains an important prophetic message.

We all know that the sin of the fathers is passed down to their children. Sin teaches sin, and humanity readily learns the ways of evil. But we also know that children can break the mold. **“As for his father, because he hath cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity. Yet say ye, ‘Why? Doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?’ When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all My Statues, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.....”** (Ezekiel 18:18-20) So we see that Yahweh does not curse the third and fourth generations if they will rise up and break the mold. Furthermore, sin does not always follow the pattern of four generations. It seems logical then to say that the concept is that sin is carried on to future generations, but does not necessarily get carried on forever by all descendants. So we conclude that the words **“unto the third and fourth generation”** are

figurative, at least in a sense.

If, however, “**the third and fourth generation**” simply means that sin is passed down, why did Yahweh pick those numbers? Why did He settle on four generations?

The majority of believers will agree that Yahweh created the world approximately six thousand years ago. When Elohim created man, there was no sin. Everything was perfect. Adam and Chavah transgressed though, and banished themselves and all of their descendants from the Garden of Eden. So we see the sin of the fathers coming upon the children. What a terrible guilt must have rested on the hearts of the first man and woman after they fully comprehended what they had done to their children. Was there no way out? Was there no way for their children to have everlasting Life? Of course there was a way out. Elohim slaughtered an animal (a lamb?) to cover over their transgression and to point them forward to the Lamb of all time who would come to make restitution for the sins of the repentant.

But what does all of this have to do with the verse from Exodus? The answer is that it has ever so much to do with it, for Exodus 20:5 points us to the Lamb as well.

As was mentioned before, Elohim created the world six thousand years ago. It is also common knowledge that Yahshua died about two thousand years ago. So He shed His blood at the four-thousand-year mark. This means that after sin entered the world, four thousand years passed by before the Lamb of deliverance arrived on the scene. What does this mean to the reader of Exodus? What did this mean to Moshe (Moses) and to Israel? It meant, “We have all sinned and transgressed the commands of our Heavenly Father. At the beginning of creation, man walked and talked with Elohim and saw Him face to face. Right now, Yahweh is visiting our

iniquity and the iniquity of our fathers upon us. But in the future, in four thousand years (four figurative generations), the Light of Life, Elohim in bodily form, will again descend to earth, and we will walk and talk with Him as at the beginning.”

There is so much more to the Scriptures than what is on the surface. Every word in TaNaK (“Old Testament”) points to the manifestation of the Word. Elohim in the flesh, Yahshua, came to earth as a bodily picture and fulfillment of the things which were said during the four generations.

We have not talked much about the number “three” and the “third generation”. While the concept of four generations is very significant, so is the mention of three generations.

After Messiah fulfilled His mission on earth, He returned to the heavens. As His disciples stood gazing at the spot where He went up, two messengers appeared to them, and asked them this question: “**Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?**” They continued to say, “**This same Yahshua which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.**” (Acts 1:11) Again, Job declared, “**For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth..... In my flesh shall I see Elohim, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another....**” (Job 19:25-27) Just as those in the four generations before Messiah’s first coming, we cannot walk and talk with Elohim as at the first. And yet there is hope for us too, contained once more in the words of Exodus 20:5. For the Messiah is coming again, after another three generations following His first ascent to earth.

As is indicated by the weekly cycle, the seventh day is something special. Just as we have concentrated on the number “four”, now let’s concentrate on the number “seven”. Why did Yahweh pick the seventh day of the week? He does

everything with a purpose, and as stated before, every word in TaNaK points to Messiah. So what can we read in the seventh day? Precisely we read that a Sabbath day will occur in the greater realm of time. This means that on the seventh day (in the seven-thousand-year period), Yahshua will descend with the trumpet, calling His people to Himself.

Returning to Exodus 20:5, we notice two numbers paralleled: the numbers “three” and “four”. When we add these numbers together, we reach the number “seven”. So, just as Moshe and Israel realized that, though somewhat separated from Yahweh, they would walk and talk with Him as at the first, in four thousand years; likewise, as we read this prophecy today, we discover that, though the iniquity of the fathers is still passing upon the children (along with the children’s own iniquity), Yahshua will return after the designated three thousand years (three figurative generations), and this means His return is very VERY near, and soon, we too shall see Him face to face. While we do not know the day or the hour, Elohim has given us a very good idea, and it is contained in the prophecy of hope found in Exodus Twenty.

As we have discovered, there is much more to this little verse than it appears at the first. It is a verse of hope for all ages, for all people, a verse that speaks of returning to perfect unity with the Almighty. There is not much time left. Soon He will appear. Will you claim the promise given to you in His Word and be ready to face Him?

All praise and esteem belongs to the Father, who, for some unfathomable reason, chose to shed this light of truth upon me as I was reading about Adam and Chavah being banished from the Garden. Thank-You, Yahweh, for the riches of Your wisdom and mercy!

The Poem Page

OUR SPIRIT

(dedicated to all suffering believers past and present, to the Holocaust victims and survivors, and to the generations who will suffer in the future)

When we see the icy face, the lack of humanity...

And are crushed with the feet driven by hate...

Hatred ~ the demonic curse of the human race...

Yet they can't crush our spirits, our hope of eternity...

Brutality will be crushed, with love in its place.

When we hear footsteps of death approaching our beings...

They can crush our lives and our very breath...

But they can't crush our spirit, be it all we have left...

The Almighty enthroned is ever hearing and seeing...

And He'll require the price of our life blood's theft.

When we look into the eyes of our dreaded
enemies...

And are sawn asunder, beaten and shot...
The devastating trigger pulled with scarcely
a thought...

Yet will Yahweh arise to annihilate the
enmity...

And to redeem us who by His life blood are
bought.

Take courage, brothers and sisters: we be
tortured and killed...

But they can't make our spirit's candle null...
Nor e'er snuff out the everlasting hope of
our souls...

Our spirits, though weary, will depend upon
Yahweh's will...

Our flames shall burn brighter and higher,
and reach our eternal goal.

*(written by Rivqah, age 17, in the Chanukah season of 5767 / 2006
after having watched the video series "Heritage: Civilization & The
Jews", a historical documentation narrated by Abba Eban)*

TAKE MY HAND

Take my hand, sister; we'll fight together.

Take my hand, father, in the stormy
weather.

Though we be separated, our spirits will
never

In the bond of unity and vision be severed.

Reach out and take my hand, noble brother.

In the darkness, take my hand, brother.
This is a dreadful battle, and we need each
other.

We cannot compromise Yahweh's values for
another's.

Take my hand; let's press on, my nephew,
For in the combat, you need me and I need
you.

Take my hand, nieces, cousins, aunts and
uncles true.....

We'll form an army, though our numbers are
few.

Tender grandma, take my feeble hand.
Come and grasp it, grandpa; join the band.
Victory is not found in the wisdom of man,
But the battle is won when with Yahweh we
stand.

Take my hand, daughter; faithfully come along.
Take my hand, my son, and bravely join the throng.
And even if our hands are severed by the sword of the wrong,
Though scattered abroad, our hearts joined as one will raise up vision's song:

"The people perish when the vision has died,
But there's joy in the hearts where Yahweh's Law resides.
And that vision will remain; it shall always abide.
Though miles apart, we are still unified.....
Take my hand."

(written by Rivqah, age 18, in the Chanukah season of 5768 / 2007)

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The Guardian

This story, based on 2 Chronicles 33-36 and 2 Kings 21-23, depicts the terrible results of neglecting one's offspring. No matter how many great things a man has done, no matter how noble of a king he has been, no matter how well he has ruled his people, he has missed the mark if he fails his children:

Josiah's Lament

Rebekah Coover

At a certain time in Israel's history there was born to a king named Amon a child. And the king was a very wicked man who made his children to burn in the fire as sacrifices to one of the many idols that he worshiped. But this particular child was spared, and he was given the name of Josiah. Even as a young lad, Josiah viewed the acts of his father with great horror, and resolved in his heart to never be like the man that he called "Dad". And it came to be that when Josiah was just eight years old, his father was slain, never to rise again. And so Josiah took the throne.

Now Josiah sought to be a good and faithful king like David. He strove to do justice and judgment, and he cleaved not to the ways of Amon. And there were born to him two sons. The name of the first was Eliakim and the name of the second Jehoahaz. Watching the little sons that had been entrusted to him, he said in his heart, "These must never be corrupted as have their fathers. These must walk in the way that is right." But when he was sixteen years old, he said to himself, "What is the way that is right? I do not desire to worship these

destructive idols which do man no good. But then, who shall I worship? My name means, 'founded of Yah'. And then, should I not seek the one who has given me a foundation and helped me until this day?" So he began to seek after the Elohim of Israel.

But there was something not right. All about him there were groves and pagan high places and images. And finally he said, "We cannot put up with this any longer. We must purge the land." Thus there was made a removal of the pagan images and a breaking down of the idolatrous alters and a demolishing of the molten gods. In Josiah's spiritual fervor, he commanded the powder of the crushed images to be cast upon the graves of the idol-worshipers, and he ordered that the bones of the wicked priests be burned on their alters. In this manner, Judah and Jerusalem were cleansed.

Now Josiah began to ponder. "We have gotten rid of something, but there is a void here. The wrong must be replaced with a raising up of righteousness." So in his twenty-sixth year of life he continued on in the constant busy-ness which he had heretofore been involved in. He called to himself three men: Shaphan, Maasiah, and Joah. These he sent to repair Yahweh's house. So they did. And a beautiful discovery was made. Hilkiah, who was the priest at that time, found the scroll of the Torah. He delivered it to Shaphan, who read it in the presence of the king. And King Josiah wept and rent his clothes. For he realized that though he had sought after his Elohim, he had not truly known Him or what He desired. "Alas, I have transgressed!" he cried. And then he thought of his two sons, sons of promise, sons whom he prayed would make good and be faithful men in the land. He realized with horror, "They are becoming young men already. And they have not known the Torah." Yet a small flame of

hope grew in his heart. "They have beheld me, as their father, seeking after Yahweh and zealously purging the land. Surely in observing my fervor they have picked up on that same love for Elohim. And now may we all, as a nation, relearn the Law."

But Josiah realized that they had gone so far and transgressed so greatly that severe judgment was due. So he inquired of the prophetess Huldah as to what Yahweh would say of the matter. And the word returned to him: "Yes, I Yahweh am going to bring great evil upon this land for all of its transgressions. I will pour out many curses. But, seeing you have humbled yourself before Me, I have hearkened to you. And I will let you die in peace, and spare you seeing the great trouble that I will bring." At first these words assured Josiah. But then a fear filled his heart. "Yahweh didn't say He has heard my sons," he thought. "And shall the curses then come upon them as well?" With secret anxiety he beheld his two young sons, wondering if they would be spared the curses. But he said nothing to them, for he was not in the habit of conversing with them on such topics. "How shall they learn the Law?" he asked himself. "I do not seem to know quite how to talk to my sons. I do better at ruling the nation. So then, thus shall be done: I will read the Torah to the entire nation. Then everyone will hear." And that is what he did. And he publicly made a covenant to serve Yahweh his Elohim, and caused everyone present to bind themselves to the covenant as well. But a fear lingered in his heart that perhaps his sons had not come to listen to the Torah. "And even if they did, how can I know if they uttered a pledge to the covenant?" he wondered. "There were so many voices, I would never have noticed if they remained silent. And I don't even remember seeing them..... so how can I know?" But he

feared to question his sons on the matter, not knowing what kind of a reaction he would get.

That year they celebrated the Passover. What a joyous occasion it was. They had been departed from it for so very long. Everyone ate freely of the sacrifices; they served one another joyfully; song was lifted to the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And yet Josiah thought in his heart, "I wonder if my sons are seeing the mystery and blessing of the Torah, or are they just reveling in the social of this gathering?" But he did not know how to ask them about it, and so he just prayed.

The years passed. Josiah's fears began to be multiplied, for he noticed that his sons did not seem to ever pray. And at times he wondered if idols dwelt in the hearts of his offspring, though they were physically purged from the land. He also noticed that his sons seemed to have little respect for their father. And he grieved over the acquaintances that he beheld them spending time with. "What can I say?" he asked himself. "They are young men now, and must make some decisions of their own. I fear that if I say something to them it will just make them worse." So he silently watched, and when the burden grew too heavy, he occupied his mind with matters of the kingdom and the nation.

Then in his last days, Josiah went out to war. And behold, the archers shot at him and he was wounded. So his servants put him in a chariot and brought him back to his hometown, Jerusalem, "City of Peace". As he was about to die, Josiah sent word – "Call my sons that I may bid them to serve Yahweh before I die." But the answer returned, "They have refused to come." And a terrible weight pressed upon Josiah's heart as he realized, "I have read the Law to the people, I have destroyed the

idols, I have purged the land. But I have not purged my own sons, and they will turn the people back to sin." And with this lament he died.

A special thanks to Steve Fedoriw for your message on 2 Chronicles 33 and 2 Kings 21, and your thoughts on busy fathers neglecting their children. As a result of your sharing, this story was born. May all who read it be blessed as I was blessed by your words.

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The Keeper At Home

QUESTION:

I am a young woman living at home, and for several months I have been unemployed. The type of job I have been looking for is one that would allow me to observe Yahweh's Sabbaths and Festivals. It's been impossible to find one like that. I am very discouraged by the whole job search. I don't know if it's possible to find a job where I don't have to make compromises. So far I haven't been able to. Do you have any suggestions?

ANSWER:

For one thing, Yahweh has a perfect time clock, and is never slack concerning His promises. "They that wait upon Yahweh shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31)

While the world does not always see it this way, a young lady's singlehood at home is a blessed time, a time of preparation, a time which, if used wisely, will never be regretted.

Speaking of preparation, a woman's Yahweh-given career is that of a homemaker. Thus her true higher education and career learning skills should be in the area of learning how to become a wife and mother, how to keep a home, and how to train her family in

the ways of truth. The world will offer many outlets for a woman to pursue, including higher education and the career life. However, all of this is a relatively new idea. Up until recently, the home was widely recognized as the woman's place of influence and work. This is in accordance with Yahweh's Word, which gently instructs a young woman to make it her ambition to learn the ways of caring for a home and family. His Word is the most important instruction and education she can immerse herself in. This is the manual which will prepare her for her career as a loving, faithful, and capable wife, mother, and homemaker, with everything that that entails. There are many options that the world would offer, but for a young lady whose heart desire is to do all according to the Father's perfect instruction, these options are distractions from the high calling that Yahweh has for her.

Singlehood is a time of opportunity, a time for a young lady to be seeking the Father's heart desires, allowing Him to mold her heart desires to be the same as His, and then pursuing the path of preparing for her calling. Continue to seek out the Father's design for your life, specifically in the area of embracing a Proverbs 31 woman's role, and the preparation that comes with embracing that role.

There are so many ways to prepare. Immersing yourself in the Word of Yahweh is the first important step. "Someone asked a man of wisdom when the education of a child should be commenced. 'Twenty years before his birth, by educating his mother,' was the reply." This statement rings so true. Now is the time

to begin to be filled with the wisdom which will carry you and yours through life. Besides that, the home offers so many "job opportunities" for the fulfillment of a young lady seeking Yahweh's will. Learning how to handle finances, keep a home neat and clean, prepare food, be hospitable, and develop a servant's heart are all necessary elements of a woman's life. You will face much opposition for taking this kind of a stand, but as Yahshua says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Yahweh has given you this time of singlehood as an open window of opportunity, a time in which you can become more dependant on Him and begin to embrace your high calling as a woman. Continue to be patient and content, and continue to pray. Above all, don't compromise. We hope that what we have shared will be an inspiration to you.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

"Home Is Where The Heart Is", a CD message by Susan Bradrick and daughters.

"Victory For Daughters", two CD's by four homeschool graduates, encouraging daughters to fulfil their Yahweh-given role in the home.

Both of these CD's are available from
Vision Forum Ministries ~ 4719 Blanco Road
San Antonio, Texas 78212
www.visionforum.org

The Children's Page

The Little Lost Lamb

I'm going to tell you about a shepherd who had many sheep. He had 100 sheep. That is a very lot of sheep. Hold all of your fingers up and imagine that each finger is ten fingers. That's how many sheep and lambs this shepherd had. But even though he had so many, he loved them all very very much.

Now the sheep had a cozy place to sleep at night with a fence around it. But every day the shepherd would open the gate of the fence, and he would take his sheep and lambs out to the meadows to eat grass. All day long he would watch them and keep them safe. You know, he would make sure that none of them got lost, and if he ever saw any wild animals, he chased them away so that they wouldn't eat his precious little lambs. Then when it started to get dark it was time to go home. As his sheep went in through the gate he would count them: "... ninety-seven, ninety-eight, ninety-nine, one hundred". And then he'd know that they were all there, and he'd close the gate, and he'd go inside and go to sleep.

One day, the shepherd led all of his sheep up to the top of a mountain where there was lots of green grass and pretty flowers. The sheep were very happy for a very long time. But then the shepherd noticed

that the sky was filling with grey clouds. There was going to be a storm. He got his sheep all gathered together, and they headed home to where it was safe. As they were walking all the way back home, it started to thunder. The loud booms of thunder scared the sheep.

Even though lightning was starting to flash down from the sky, the shepherd counted all of his sheep as they went through the gate: "ninety-six, ninety-seven, ninety-eight, ninety-nine...." But that was all. There were only ninety-nine sheep. One little lamb was missing. It was very tiny little lamb with black around its ears and tail. And it was nowhere to be seen.

"I must find the little lamb," the shepherd said, and he started to count all of his sheep again. As he was counting, rain suddenly started to pour down from the skies. But he counted them all anyway. No, that little lamb was not there.

How sad! What do you think the shepherd should do? It is raining now, and the lightning is flashing, and the thunder is booming. There are so many gray clouds that the shepherd cannot even see the sun shining anymore, and everything has become very dark. Should he go inside where he would be safe?

No. The shepherd loved his little lamb too much to do that. I am sure that you or me would just think of going inside. Of course we would be sad about the lamb, but we wouldn't want to venture out in the storm, would we? Oh no. But the shepherd never

even thought of going into his house. He knew that his lamb must be very frightened out in a storm like this, and so, with the rain pouring down on him, he started off toward the grassy slope where he had taken the sheep that day.

It was a very long walk. By the time the shepherd reached the bottom of the mountain, his clothes were soaking wet. He was feeling very cold now too, and he shivered as he started to climb the mountain. He could hardly see where he was going, and so he stumbled and fell a great many times. Sometimes there were trees in front of him that he didn't see, and he would bang his head on them. There were also thorns on the mountain. He could not see where they were, and so he walked right into them. How that must have hurt. Have you ever been poked by a thorn? Doesn't it hurt? Well, the shepherd got scraped and scratched by many thorns, and it really hurt. But he kept going up the mountain. Whenever the lightning would flash, he would look around to see if his lamb was anywhere close by. But nowhere did he see his poor little lamb with the black spots. One time, the shepherd tripped and fell over a log. His shoe fell off, and it went rolling down the mountain side. But it was too dark to look for it. So he kept walking with a bare foot. Now whenever he stepped on rocks and thorns, they made his foot hurt very badly. His other shoe got cut on several sharp rocks, and so the rocks and thorns poked through it and hurt that foot too.

The poor shepherd! His feet and hands were

bleeding. His head hurt badly. His clothes were torn. He was tired and wet and cold. And he could not find his lamb anywhere. Then suddenly, the rain stopped. Now the moon began to shine down brightly, and the shepherd could finally see where he was going. How happy this made him!

Then the shepherd heard a noise. It was coming from the very top of the mountain. And do you know what it said? It said, "Baa-a-a-a. Baa-a-a-a." Now the shepherd began to run. Even though his feet and hands hurt so badly, and even though he was so tired and cold, he ran until he came to a place where there was a deep hole in the ground. It was a drop off. That means that the hole just went down straight into the ground, and that it would extremely hard to get down into it without falling and getting hurt. There were also many sharp rocks and prickly thorns, so that if anyone tried climbing down into the hole, they would hurt their feet and hands. But down in the very bottom of that deep scary dark hole was the poor little lamb. It was scared and wet, and it was crying, "Baa-a-a-a. BAA-A-A-A."

We know that the shepherd loved his little lamb very much, and so he started to climb down the steep edge to where his lamb was. Of course this cut his hands and feet even more, and scraped his face and head. He wanted to cry, "Ouch!" But he just kept bravely going on until he came to the bottom of the hole. There he gathered his little lamb in his arms. It nestled close to him, feeling safe and happy now.

But the shepherd had a lot of troublesome things to do. The sides of the hole were very steep, and he had to climb back out again. It would be kind of like trying to climb up the wall. And he had to carry the lamb all the way up too. That would make it even harder.

First of all, the shepherd tucked the lamb inside of his coat so that it wouldn't get scraped up anymore than it already was. Then he grabbed hold of the prickly thorns with his bare hands, and s-l-o-w-l-y began to pull himself up the steep edge. It took him a long time to get to the top, and his other shoe fell off and tumbled down into the hole, but he made it. Then he sat down in the moonlight with his little lamb cuddled on his lap and rested for a while. He did not rest very long though, because he knew he had to get home.

It was much easier to go down the mountain, because he could actually see where he was going. But still, every step he took made his feet hurt terribly, for they were cut and bleeding. Holding the lamb made the scrapes and thorn-pricks on his hands hurt very badly too, and whenever the lamb nuzzled his face, it made the scratches and cuts on it start bleeding again. But he made it all the way home with his precious lamb, and he dried it off and put it in a warm bed of straw to sleep for the night. So his lamb was safe and happy and warm.

Did you know that I didn't make this story up? I found this story in the Scriptures. It is about

Yahshua. Yahshua is like a shepherd and we are like sheep. He takes care of us, and He loves everyone of us. But we have all done bad things. And because we have, we deserve to be lost out in a storm like that little lamb, and to get cold and hungry, and to die. We all deserve to die forever because of the bad things we have done.

Yahshua has never done anything bad. He lived with His Father up in the skies where everything was pleasant and nice like a warm happy home. But He saw that people were doing bad things and that they were unhappy and that they were like sheep lost out on a mountain. He saw that they were going to die. He saw that you and I were going to die. And so instead of staying in His warm pleasant home, He came all the way down to earth, and He made Himself look like a man so that people could see Him. He came to teach us how to live and how to be happy. He came to show us how we could live forever with Him, instead of being lost out on a mountain and dying.

And then, He took our punishment for us. He allowed wicked men who hated Him very much to kill Him, and He died for us, so that we wouldn't have to die forever. He said, "I don't want you to be punished. I'm going to be punished instead, so that you can live forever." Mean men pushed thorns against His head. They whipped Him, and they hung Him up on a piece of wood by hammering nails through His hands and His feet. And then after He died, they poked a big hole in His side with a sword.

Isn't that terrible?

But do you know what? It wasn't just the wicked men who killed Him. It was my fault just as much, and it was your fault too. It was all of our fault. Because if we hadn't sinned, He wouldn't have had to die. He only died because we sinned, and because He didn't want us to be punished and to have to die forever. He did the same kind of thing that the shepherd in our story did. If that lamb hadn't stayed behind and gotten lost, the shepherd wouldn't have had to go out on the mountain and get hurt and cold and tired. But he did all of that because he loved the lamb. And Yahshua came and let men say mean things about Him and put thorns all over His head and beat Him and pound nails into Him and cut His side with a sword, all because He loves you. And because of that, someday when you die, you won't have to stay dead forever. Just like Yahshua came back to life, you will be able to come back to life, and live forever with Him, because He loves you. You are His little lamb, and He wants you to be safe and happy with Him. Isn't that wonderful?

I hope you will always remember what Yahshua did for you. I hope you will never forget how much He loves you.

This story was first told to Moriyah (age 3), snuggled up on the sofa together on 11-14-5766 (01-15-2006).

Across The Ocean.....

ERETZ YISRAEL

A Report By Susanna LaGoy, age 19, on her trip to Israel

I was asked to write about my trip to the most beautiful country in the world, Israel! I hope this will bless you all!

I went to Israel on the 24th of Feb. and come back on March 7th. We saw many places and I learned a lot. The first day I went for a walk and touched my first palm tree! I didn't find out till later that it wasn't a very pretty palm tree after all. Throughout the week I was able to ask the tour guide many Hebrew questions that I had. He didn't mind answering my questions and I loved to ask them. Israel is the place that Yahweh chose above all the places on the earth to place His name. It's easy to see that He is there by looking at the country, plush and green with flowers every where. Of course, I was there in the spring but if you look on a map you'll find that it is much greener than all the surrounding countries. When the Jews once more inhabited the promised land it was nothing more than swamps. They almost all got malaria, and many of them died there trying to drain the swamps. Now there are hardly any swamps at all and instead there are miles of greenhouses, banana groves, grapefruits, oranges, tangerines, olives, dates, grapes, plush green grass, and miles of different crops. It is so amazing what it's like now. I was also amazed at the many trees growing there. The sky goes on forever and it seems as though it would never end with a few fluffy clouds in it to add more beauty to it. Mountains wrap around Israel giving their own touch to the lands beauty. Sheep grazed peacefully on the hill sides and the birds never missed a beat when it came to singing in the mornings. Yom Kinneret

(Sea of Galilee) cast waves to the shore leaving a foot high of shells onto its banks. At night I would find a big rock and sit, listening to the beating of the waves and feel the cool breeze touch my cheeks. Walking the country side of Israel, I felt as if I was apart of the land. The sun setting behind Galilee cast a beautiful painting upon the waters. Upper Jordan's murky waters rushed over its banks and took every thing in its path down river. The buildings of the cities outlined the horizon. In Jerusalem I walked the old stone roads intertwining between buildings, with my steps echoing as I went. Stores ran along the streets with every kind of merchandise, and beggars held out their cups for even a shekel. At the wall in front of where the Temple once stood, people stood with tears running down their cheeks for the lack of knowing their Messiah. But Yahweh is visiting His chosen people again. He hasn't forgotten them by any means, for today there are over 15 congregations in Jerusalem alone that know their Messiah! "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Isaiah 62:1 Yahweh is working there and making salvation known throughout His land, and echo across the hills. When we drove to the top of Mount of Olives I was met with a spectacular view over looking Jerusalem. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Psalms 137:5,6 Oh, pray for the peace of Jerusalem was the cry of King David and is still the cry over Jerusalem as people lose their lives not knowing their Messiah. As the dew touches the grass and the Ivey sun-bathe on the rocks, the heart of the Jew mourns to know who the Messiah really is.

How great is Yahweh and greatly to be praised! Psalms 48

Thoughts to Ponder

Sin.....

"Sin is not imaginary. It piles up on men's backs like loads of heavy stones..... It cannot be removed any other way than this: some other, some completely innocent other, must remove the burden. And this, the Almighty teaches, requires a death..... For repentance to be effective . . . for anyone to be forgiven and know without doubt that he is forgiven . . . that which is sacrificed must cost something, be precious, even be agonizing in the loss of it."

- "Jerusalem's Hope", by Bodie and Brock Thoene
excerpts from pgs. 199-200

Fear.....

"Fear makes us forget right and wrong sometimes."

- "Jerusalem's Hope", by Bodie and Brock Thoene
excerpt from pg. 199

Love.....

"True love is founded on esteem, as esteem rests on respect; when respect fails, there is no ground for love."

- "True Womanhood", by P. F. Collier, 1877
excerpt from pg. 45

The Missionary Column

We would like to encourage you to visit:
www.joyintheworld.info/roadofthepilgrims/tracts_index.html
Here you will find tracts available for printing and distributing to others as a light to the nations. The tracts which we have available at present are:

All Scripture

An explanation of the validity and importance of the TaNaK Scriptures, as well as a list of the steps of salvation, using TaNaK verses

Are You In Touch With The Savior?

Introducing the true characteristics of Yahshua and the real way to salvation

What Is His Name?

Explains the Names of both the Father and the Son, with historical, prophetic, and practical proofs

He Remembers

Stresses the importance of being on-key with the Elohim who is very knowledgeable of what goes on in our lives, and who will reward us according to our works, whether they be good or bad

A Mother's Role

Defines a mother's role, according to the Scriptures

Just A Little Bit Of Bread And Fish

Moves from the miracle of five loaves and two fish to the need in every human being to be filled with the Bread of Life

Getting Your Exercise

1 Timothy 4:7-8 – "Exercise thyself unto righteousness. For bodily exercise profiteth little; but righteousness is profitable

unto all things.....”

Parable Of The Forest

Lessons from nature on the King of kings and the Savior of the world

Is Your Patriotism Scriptural?

Thought-provoking questions to consider in the light of Scripture

Now Is The Accepted Time

Warns against putting salvation off until later

Prayer Is Powerful

The results and blessings of praying from the heart

Use It Carefully

A parable to teach the necessity of investing our lives wisely

See Ya

Reminds one that we never know when our last day will be, and to be ready for when Yahweh says, “Your earthly life is over.”

The Artist's Masterpiece

A parable comparing Yahweh to an Artist who fashions humanity (His masterpiece).... prompts us to think of everything that the Master Artist has done for us, and to consider whether or not we are responding properly to Him

What Color Was Adam?

Thought-provoking questions to consider in the light of Scripture

Wise, Simple

“I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.” (Romans 16:19)

www.joyintheworld.info/roadofthepilgrims/tracts_index.html

A Voice to the Young

Dear brothers and sisters,

As this Chanukah season is upon us, Yahweh has been impressing on my heart a very important aspect of Chanukah, and that is that the whole dedicated revolt against Antiochus would not have taken place if a little command given in Deuteronomy and Proverbs had not been obeyed. That command? “And thou shalt teach [My Words] diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way and when thou liest down and when thou risest up.” (Deut. 6:7) “Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Prov. 22:6)

Notice that Mattithiyah, the leader of the revolt, was an elderly priest with five sons: Yahuchanan, Shimon, Yahudah, Elazar, and Yonathan. Mattithiyah openly opposed Antiochus' infringement on Yisrael's duty to cling to Yahweh's covenant, declaring, “Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of their fathers, yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers.” (1 Macc. 2:19-20) How could he proclaim this message with such surety? Because, obviously, he had trained his sons in the way they should go, and he knew that they would not depart from it.

Just before he died, he charged his sons, saying, “Now therefore, my sons, be ye zealous for the Torah, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers.” (1 Macc. 2:50) And again, “Wherefore, you, my sons, be valiant, and shew yourselves men in the behalf of the Torah, for by it shall you obtain esteem.” (1 Macc. 2:64) Mattithiyah could be assured that when he departed this earth, his sons would carry on his legacy, for: “He that chastiseth his son shall have joy in him, and shall rejoice of him among his acquaintance. He that

teacheth his son grieveth the enemy, and before his friends he shall rejoice of him. THOUGH HIS FATHER DIE, YET HE IS AS THOUGH HE WERE NOT DEAD: FOR HE HATH LEFT ONE BEHIND HIM THAT IS LIKE HIMSELF. While he lived, he saw and rejoiced in him: and when he died he was not sorrowful. He left behind him an avenger of his enemies, and one that shall requit kindness to his friends." (Sirach 30:2-6) This was certainly true in Mattithiyah's case.

We see another shining example of the faith being carried on by the younger generation in Fourth Maccabees where we read of Antiochus' attempt to cause seven brothers to eat unclean meat. Brought before the king along with their elderly mother, they refused to taste the meat, declaring boldly over and over again their determination to remain true to the Elohim of Avraham, Yitzhak (Isaac), and Ya'acove (Jacob).

Why? Why did these seven brothers so nobly bear up, though they lost their lives for it? Why did Mattithiyah's sons so bravely fight, for years, even though their father was no longer with them? The message is clear that a legacy was passed onto them which they would not let die. Yea, they would rather lose their own lives than let zeal for the Torah die.

What a challenge is placed before us. How our parents love us and how earnestly they have prayed for us. Are we following in their footsteps, determined to remain true? Do we have their same noble resolve and tenacious attachment to the Covenant of Yahweh? Will we faithfully carry it on after they are no longer with us?

I would just like to encourage each of you, my fellow youth, that we are called to be present-day Maccabees. It is in our fidelity and virtue that there lies hope for the next generation. If we fail, we are bringing about the conquest of Yisrael rather than her victory.

Be true. Be faithful. Be strong. Be courageous for the Torah and the Covenant, and be willing to lay down your life for it.

Earnestly, a fellow soldier in the battle for truth, Rivqah

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