

Get Ready!!

Can you feel it? The evil has increased so much lately that it can easily be seen by those with eyes to see. The headlines scream the news: same sex marriages are on the rise, as are divorces, unwed mothers, and the love of such dark forces as witches and vampires. We are also seeing an increase in the attack on Judeo-Christian morals and beliefs, with our own government equating those who hope for the second coming of the Messiah with terrorists. And all indications are that this is only the beginning.

If indeed this is the beginning of the judgment that we've all seen coming, then we must look within our own communities first, for we all know that judgment begins in the house of God (1 Peter 4:17). Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Amos all agree; Adonai always begins His judgment within His own people, and He uses others to do such. But don't worry, their time of judgment is coming as well, and their punishment is even more severe.

We all agree that we are living in the end times. We know that judgment is coming and we look towards the promise of the coming kingdom to help us to get through, but is it enough? Can we have some sort of assurance that we will not be caught up in the coming judgments? There are many, many website dedicated to helping us to prepare for what's coming. They tend to focus on food, survival gear, and other aspects of physical preparations, but what of the spiritual preparations?

Too many believers think that God loves them so much that He would never allow severe tribulation to touch them. This, unfortunately for them, is not backed by Scripture, but is nothing more than the enemy's lies designed to steal our faith. What Scripture actually says is:

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; (1 Peter 4:12)

The children of God have always been tested. Think of the tests that Abraham endured, or those tests in the wilderness that the Israelites unfortunately failed. We too will be tested to see whether or not our hearts truly belong to Adonai. The Jewish people have faced this before, and we know that they are God's chosen, so if we are to identify with them, we must also identify with their trials and tribulations. The enemy does not make distinctions between the different sects of the "people of the Book," why must we?

Most of us really have no idea what it means to go through tribulation. We have a hard time dealing with a bad day at work, compounded by rush hour traffic, and children who never seem to listen. What are we going to do when things really get rough? Do we have the faith we need to stand firm when it comes to life or death? Do we truly understand what it means to stand in faith?

To be honest with you, I don't believe that we are ready. Why do I believe we are unprepared? When I look around at the many different sects within Messianic Judaism, I can't help but be reminded of what Paul said to the Corinthians:

Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)

Sure, we all have our favorite teachers and our pet doctrines, but why focus on such things? Why are we unable to simply come together and worship Adonai, united in love? Why does this seem so darn difficult? When are we going to grow up and behave like adults instead of bickering little children? None of us are right 100% of the time, and it shouldn't hurt our egos to admit when we've made a mistake.

This reluctance to admit fault seems to be the foundation of our lack of preparedness. Although it is extremely easy to find fault in another, it can be unbelievably difficult, and painful, to find our own faults, but find them we must. For without repentance, no one can stand. This is the lesson that we were to learn from the Israelites of old.

That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments, and not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God. (Psalms 78:6-8)

Are we going to be just as stubborn as they, refusing to bend our will towards Adonai's, or will we learn the lesson and prepare our hearts? And just how does one prepare their heart?

For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite." (Isaiah 57:15)

Webster's dictionary defines contrite as: broken-hearted for sin; deeply affected with grief and sorrow for having offended God; humble; penitent, as a contrite sinner. Does this sound like a description of your average believer? I would say not. Most of the Christians, Jews, and Messianic believers that I know would be better categorized as haughty.

I used to truly believe that the enemy could never do all of the evils foretold in Revelation with Christians around, meaning that they would HAVE to be "raptured" out before any of that could occur. Then I grew up and realized that we are really just a bunch of wimps, used to having life easy and unwilling to stand up for what is right if it is considered "too difficult."

If we are to prepare our hearts, then we need to be honest with ourselves, admit that we are self-centered and egotistical and then do something about it. Now is the time. This is the place. We must live a life of daily repentance, confessing our sins so that He can heal us. Only then will we be able to abide in Him. We need to humble ourselves and seek forgiveness of those we have hurt by word and action. And we need to be willing to fellowship with others who may not totally agree with our pet doctrines. We have to be willing to extend a little grace if we hope for the same treatment from Adonai, no?

As we see evil increasing, we should also be witnessing an increase in the power of the believers, but sadly this area has been found lacking. The end time saint is supposed to be so full of righteousness that he not only is able to withstand the evil around him, but he or she will be able to help others who are with them, like Rahab of old.

"Or if I should send a plague against that country and pour out My wrath in blood on it to cut off man and beast from it, even though Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "they could not deliver either their son or their daughter. They would deliver only themselves by their righteousness." For thus says the Lord GOD, "How much more

when I send My four severe judgments against Jerusalem: sword, famine, wild beasts and plague to cut off man and beast from it!

"Yet, behold, survivors will be left in it who will be brought out, both sons and daughters. Behold, they are going to come forth to you and you will see their conduct and actions; then you will be comforted for the calamity which I have brought against Jerusalem for everything which I have brought upon it. Then they will comfort you when you see their conduct and actions, for you will know that I have not done in vain whatever I did to it," declares the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 14:19-23)

We will be comforted when we see their conduct and actions. What might they be? Twice Adonai states that we will be comforted by their actions, and we all know that He is never redundant, so this must be very important. When we see their conduct, we will understand that Adonai did not bring judgment in vain. Could that mean that it is the trials and tribulations, indeed the very judgment itself, that will cause such righteousness to shine forth?

Anyone who has spent time reading about the martyrs of old understands this simple principle: tribulation causes an increase in faith. This is due to the fact that we, like gold or silver, only shine brightly once the dross has been removed. This can only be done in the fiery furnace of tribulation.

"Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction." (Isaiah 48:10)

When one looks at the prophecies regarding what is to come, and then looks around at what is going on here and now, it is easy to become frightened. Seeds of doubt begin to grow in our hearts and we start to worry. "How will we make it?" "What are we going to do if..." The questions can become so overwhelming that we are almost unable to function normally. As long as we continue to focus on these "what if's," we will never live the victorious life that draws others to Adonai.

What we need to learn to do is focus instead on Adonai. Why is it that we can easily find time to do this or that, yet we never seem to have the time to spend simply reading His word and praying? Are we too distracted by the entertainment industry? Too busy working? Playing? Living? How can we be too busy to spend time with the One who created us and provides for us? Or is it that we don't truly believe that He is our provider?

Although he lived in the 16th century, Thomas Hawkes was very much like one of us. He wanted to know what the Scriptures actually said and he wanted to apply these truths to his life. He wanted the church service to be done in English so that the common man could understand it... was that too much to ask? Apparently it was, because on February 9, 1555 he was condemned as a heretic, a crime punishable by fire. The following account comes from Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the World:

A little before his death, some of Hawkes's friends asked him a favor. They were afraid for their own lives and wondered how long faith could stand in the midst of the fire. Hawkes agreed to lift his hand over his head if the pain was tolerable and his mind was still at peace. When he had been in the fire so long that he could no longer speak, his skin had shrunk, his fingers had been burned off, and everyone thought he was dead, Hawkes suddenly raised his burning hands over his head and clapped them together three times! The people there - especially those who understood his gesture - broke into shouts of praise and applause as Thomas Hawkes sunk down into the fire and gave up his spirit.

Is it any wonder why witnessing such an act can actually build our faith? Do you think that the enemy has finally figured this one out? Maybe that is why he has pretty much left us alone? How much longer do we have before he wages war against us in earnest? And remember what happens once he is given control:

It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. (Revelation 13:7)

Not only is he permitted to make war against the saints, Adonai allows him to overcome us. Thomas Hawkes was overcome by the accusations of the enemy, yet in the end it was he who overcame. The manner of his death actually brought hope to those condemned to die as he, simply because his focus was on Adonai and not his own sufferings.

Our accuser does just that; he accuses us before the Throne day and night. Besides that, he, or one of his cohorts, accuses us to our faces, reminding us of our sins and tempting us to sins some more. There is literally a war going on over our souls, and we are acting as if we cannot be touched. We need to realize that the more Adonai loves us the more attacks and trials we must endure. This is the purification process and unfortunately it is

necessary in order for us to grow and mature in our faith. A very wise person once told me, "In the walk of faith there is no standing still; one either moves forward or they fall back." I have found this to be true. If we stand still too long, He'll nudge us forward.

So why is it that we tend to look at one who is going through tribulation as if they have done something wrong? Is Adonai really punishing the believers in Indonesia when He allows Muslims to attack and slaughter entire villages? These people take Paul's words seriously when he continues to the Corinthians:

If you are reviled for the name of Messiah, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. (1 Peter 4:14)

These people have come to understand just what it means to be saved. It does not necessarily mean that He will save us from going through trials and tribulations; it means that He will provide us with what we need to make it through them. They also know another secret regarding the preparation of our hearts: memorization of Scripture.

Within the prison system it is easier to get your hands on a Koran than a Bible. Your average school child cannot tell you who Samson was, other than some sort of strong man. We have had just two generations without religious education at school, and just look at what we've become. Divorce is just as common within the household of God as without. The average believer cannot even explain exactly what it is that they believe, let alone the promises of God. Withdrawing God's commandments from our nation's eyesight has resulted in the fact that only one young person in ten knows the Ten Commandments.

How can we recall His words in times of trouble when we don't bother to learn them in times of peace? How can we stand firm on promises that we don't even know? If we are to recall His words when we need them, we must learn them now. We cannot wait any longer. This is not something that we can continue to postpone for another day. Tomorrow is another day, but tomorrow we may not be able to open our Bibles in public. Tomorrow we might be taxed for having a few friends over for a weekly Bible study.

"Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With a long life I will satisfy him and let him see My salvation." (Psalms 91:14-16)

What does it mean to know His name? Does the psalmist mean that we must know the proper way to pronounce His memorial name, or that we must know and understand His character? It seems to me that anyone can claim any name as their own, but their behavior reveals their true nature. How are we to spot a fake unless we are well versed in the original? Remember, the enemy uses just enough of the truth to make the lie believable.

When we know Adonai, and are known by Him, we can be assured of His help in times of trouble. This is the kind of relationship that involves commitment. It involves time... quality time. Not some hit and miss, "Hi God, love ya! Gotta go... oh and by the way, could you please bless me? Thanks, buddy." What we need to do is sit down regularly with our Father and ask honestly, "What do you want me to do?" We need to not only read the Bible, but "observe to do according to all that is written" within its pages. We need to hide those words in our hearts so that we can dig them out later when we need them the most.

This is especially handy when petitioning Adonai in prayer. The saints of old always reminded God of His promises when they were seeking His grace and forgiveness. Time and time again they reminded Him of His promises to bless Abraham's seed, to preserve a remnant of Israel, and to relent when we show true repentance. They were able to remind Him of these things because they memorized His words.

"Remember the words that You spoke unto Moses..." has begun more prayers than I can name. I'm sure that His memory is better than ours, but we need to repeat His words so that He knows we know them. How can we do that if we don't know them? And what good does it do to know the promises if we are not willing to spend time with the One who gave them?

As we get closer to that day, we will see not only a steady increase in the love of evil, but we will experience an increase in attacks against those who stand up for the truth. As in Amos' day, we will all too soon see that sometimes it is too dangerous to even mention the name of the Lord. We need to be wise as serpents if we are to survive. This kind of wisdom can only come from Adonai, but only if we seek it.

The Messianic movement has been pretty quiet regarding the topic of spiritual warfare thus far. Sadly, this has many of us unprepared for the spiritual battle that lies ahead. In our quest to know Torah, we often fail to look as closely at Yeshua and His teachings as some of our Christian brethren, and we often forget that we can still learn a thing or two from the church. Spiritual warfare is one such topic. Many Messianics dismiss the

entire topic stating that, "the casting out of demons is not found in Torah, so I don't buy it."

Apparently they are not alone in this belief, because most Jews don't believe in the casting out of demons. In fact, if one were to search the Torah, prophets and writings, they would easily see that the word "demon" does not even occur within the pages. This is because the word demon is a Greek word. The words the Hebrew text uses to describe these beings are words such as, "gods," "unclean spirits" or even, "princes."

Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia." (Daniel 10:12-13)

Daniel humbled himself and asked Adonai to give him wisdom, and an angel was sent, but a "prince" prevented him from reaching Daniel until the archangel Michael (chief prince) interceded. Obviously the enemy didn't want Daniel to understand what was to come at the end of days, so he sent one of his fallen angels (prince) to prevent Adonai's messenger from reaching him. This shows that the angels can affect our lives more than we know, because we can't see what is going on behind the scenes.

Adonai instructed us to remove any and all indications of the worship of these other gods (fallen angels/demons) before they defiled us as they had those who preceded us. We need to understand just what it means to be defiled, and what it means to be cursed. When Adonai said, "visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations," we need to ask ourselves just how that is done? How does this sin continue on, regardless of the actions of the person in question (the children)? Wouldn't that duty be given to some sort of angelic being? Angels are sent to comfort, and unclean spirits are sent to torment, right?

Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him. (1 Samuel 16:14)

Although we tend to think of evil spirits as being under the control of the enemy, we have to remember that even the devil answers to Adonai. He allows them to torment us because of our own stupid actions. Saul demonstrated a lack of trust in Adonai, so he had a spirit torment him as a

result. Now I wouldn't say that he was possessed, as the spirit would depart from him when David played his harp, but this spirit definitely had an affect on Saul's behavior, especially when it came to interacting with David.

We can see spiritual warfare as far back as the garden, with the serpent not being completely honest with Eve and leading her astray. Even ancient non-biblical texts speak of the devil taking on human form in order to lead someone astray. In the book of Jasher, for example, the enemy plays a big part in the story of Abraham, Isaac and Sarah, having delivered the news that Isaac was still alive, causing Sarah's heart to rejoice so much so that she breathed her last.

When we worship anyone or anything, we open ourselves up to the spirit associated with that person or object. If you don't believe that objects can have a spirit associated with it, then you need to find a friend with spiritual discernment and take them into a store containing items from the orient (Buddha, etc.) and watch how uncomfortable they feel. When we bring these items into our homes, we open ourselves up to their influence and are often unaware of the danger. Worship does not necessarily mean bowing physically; we worship that which we give value.

I don't think we will truly understand how many gods we have in our lives until the judgment falls. Let's say that it takes the form of an electromagnetic pulse (EMP), which totally disables any and all electrical circuits in its range. What will happen when the lights go out and then don't come back on in a couple of hours... or days... or weeks... or months? How many of us will go through computer withdraw? (Author raises hand.) How many of us have enough food in our house, outside of the freezer? What do we do with all the food in the freezer?

We are already seeing the effects of God's judgment on the almighty dollar, and this is only the beginning. We don't know how much longer we will have before hell literally breaks loose here in our own back yard. These spirits, which are being more openly worshipped day by day in the form of popular culture's fascination with the occult, are having a major influence on our neighbors and even our own families. Those who are spiritually attuned can see it in the eyes of those who are fans of some of the more overtly evil books, games and music. We should all be so attuned.

We also have to realize that we can be the victims of these evil spirits due to our parent's errors. The psychiatrists talk about how certain events can affect our ego, even events that occurred while we were still in the womb, and we believe them, yet Adonai tells us that our parents' sins can

affect us and we don't buy it? It's more than learned behavior; certain traits can be found in children who have been adopted that are not found in their new family, such as a tendency to steal, which obviously came from their birth parents. If we look at it analytically, we understand, but if we were to then say, "This is the result of demonic influence," we would find many eyes rolling. Why is that? Why do we believe Sigmund Freud before we'll believe in demonic influence?

And if we don't truly believe that we, as children of God, can be influenced by these unclean spirits, then how will we ever get ourselves free? If the spirit of deceit has attached itself to me, for example, how would I know? Wouldn't it lie to me regarding its presence? Wouldn't it take another person with a discerning gift to identify and call it out? Isn't that what Yeshua did? And we must remember what He told His disciples:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father." (John 14:12)

How many of us have the gift of healing? How many have raised the dead? What happened? Why can't we do as Yeshua did, bringing wholeness to so many? There are tales of miraculous healings in third world countries, but not in the western countries... why is that? Could it be because we don't truly believe like they do? Is it the trials and tribulations of life that produce that kind of faith?

Please don't get me wrong; I am not one of those people who see a demon behind every bush, blame demonic possession for all of life's ills, or claims, "The Devil made me do it!" What I am talking about is the very real effects of the spiritual on our physical existence. I'm talking about the woman who has done everything she can to lose weight, regardless of how much she eats, only to gain more, who then goes through a deliverance, has a demon of infirmity cast out, and suddenly she loses weight without even trying. Or the person who struggles with pornography because of demonic influence that is set free when the demon is cast out. How many of us struggle with pride, food addictions, bitterness, envy and the like, only to be defeated time and again?

When are we going to realize the spiritual side of life is sometimes more real than the physical? How many of us go from doctor to doctor only to be told that there is nothing else they can do for us other than putting us on medication? How many could be healed by God Himself if they only believed it possible? It seems that we are afraid to hope; are we so afraid

of looking bad that we are unable to act? What might happen if we were suddenly willing to take a bold step of faith and seek out healing?

A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse-- after hearing about Yeshua, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well." Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. (Mark 5:25-29)

And remember what Yeshua told her:

And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction." (Mark 5:34)

Why don't we see this kind of faith, especially in the Messianic community? Since we have repented of our ways and turned our steps to His statutes, one would think that we'd have incredible spiritual power at this point, but we do not. Why is that? What is it that we are lacking? We keep His precepts, meditate on His wondrous works, and are striving to teach our children to do the same, yet we still see the same divisions and infighting as in the Christian church.

What is holding us back? What is preventing us from becoming the powerful children of God that we were reborn to be? What is it going to take to wake us up to the power that is truly available to us? When are we going to realize that our prayers cause angels to battle and can set free those who have been held captive by the enemy and his minions? Will it actually take great tribulation to spark true faith in His people?

Once again I feel that we need to look to the teachings of Yeshua for this answer:

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit." (John 15:1-2)

It is this very pruning that we need in order to become the powerful believer that we are striving to become. Pruning hurts; there are no two ways about it. We can't have our cake and eat it too, as the old saying goes, and we have to be willing to sacrifice comfort for righteousness. I know no godly person who enjoys confrontation, but it is something we must be willing to do if we are to stand up for justice. No one likes to be corrected, but we

must remember that our Father only takes the time to correct the children He loves, and He loves us very much.

One can almost hear the adversary speaking into the last paragraph... "Look forward to tribulation? How ludicrous! Who would actually ask for tribulation? Only some sort of masochist! Are you a masochist?" This is because the last thing the enemy wants is to see us grow in faith in Adonai. He will say whatever it takes to prevent us from becoming who we have been called to be: righteous children of the Most High God.

"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you." (John 15:16)

The fruit we bear, the good deeds we do, remain behind us wherever we go. The more we bear, the more we are pruned. The pruning hurts, but when the healing has finished we discover new growth, and this new growth produces much more fruit than what could have be possible without the pruning. What might have been one branch now becomes two, which when themselves are later pruned, can become many, many more.

Even so, certain events in our lives not only produce this growth in ourselves, but also growth in those around us who are watching us and making note of how we react. Just as the witnesses of the martyrs of old, their faith is increased at the display of our faith. Each time we are pruned, with each trial and tribulation, we learn to rely on Adonai's provision and Salvation, and witness the same to the nations, as per Yeshua's instructions.

Take heart, beloved of God, for He will never abandon you, nor will He forget you, and no weapon formed against you shall prosper.

"Since you are precious in My sight, since you are honored and I love you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life." (Isaiah 43:4)

"For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself." (1 Samuel 12:22)

"When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them." (Deuteronomy 4:30-31)

"No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD. (Isaiah 54:17)

This is our heritage; these are our promises. Learn them. Memorize them. Repeat them aloud to yourself often so that you believe them. Search the Scriptures for the other promises and memorize them as well. Then you will have them available whenever you need them, wherever you may be.

We each have a different calling. Some of us are called to endure more trials and tribulations than another. Some are called to go into captivity, some will be martyrs, but any who have taken the time to memorize Scripture now will have comfort then, when they are going through the worst of it.

If anyone has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. (Revelation 13:9-10)

He who overcomes will get to eat of the tree of life, will not be hurt by the second death, will be allowed to partake in the hidden manna, will be given authority, will be clothed in white, will not have his name erased from the book of life, will hear Yeshua speak his name aloud before the throne of God, will never have to leave the Temple or the presence of Adonai, and will be eternally called the son of the Most High God. These are the promises we are given in the book of Revelation. These are our rewards for overcoming.

Overcoming what? Just what is it that we are to overcome? Webster defines the word overcome as: To conquer; to vanquish; to subdue; as, to overcome enemies in battle. Again, this is in reference to warfare... spiritual warfare. We are to subdue the enemy... does that mean only Satan? Doesn't that also refer to his cohorts? We must understand that unless we believe that we can and must fight against demons, or unclean spirits, or whatever you want to call them, we will never be victorious. We will forever be bound by these tormenting spirits, never fully walking in the freedom promised by Yeshua's sacrifice.

Salvation is not just a ticket into the afterlife, a return to the paradise we lost, but it is also about the here and now, about daily having the power to face the attacks of the enemy and walking away victorious. Because of Yeshua's sacrifice, we are no longer guilty... as long as we maintain a lifestyle of confession and repentance. There is nothing we would, or could

do that Yeshua's sacrifice cannot cover. Daily living in the Word of God is essential to maintaining a healthy spirit, free from the torments of the enemy.

Those who love Your law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble. (Psalms 119:165)

Even so, we are not without our own personal tormenting spirits that are the result of either the actions of our parents (familiar spirits) or our own past actions that have not been dealt with fully. There are so many walking wounded within the body of Messiah that should have been healed by now, but who is to heal them if no one believes they have spirits tormenting them? Why do we think that if we say a prayer and then believe, these spirits will simply flee? Think about it, why would they be afraid of a spiritual baby? Remember what happened back in the first century:

But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of Adonai Yeshua, saying, "I adjure you by Yeshua whom Paul preaches." Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Yeshua, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (Acts 19:13-16)

These men did not believe in the power of Yeshua, so their words meant nothing in the spiritual realm. Take a close look at the story above; the evil spirit in one man was able to overcome seven other men. I don't think that it was just because this man knew Karate or something; this was a very strong spirit that needed strong faith to be exercised. These men didn't have strong faith in the name they were attempting to use.

We can also see that, although it is not a popular teaching presently, the Jewish people have always had an understanding of spiritual warfare that we apparently are lacking. Could it be because they were going through so much tribulation at that time? With all of the tribulation that the Jewish people have endured in the last century, you would think that this topic would be in the forefront of discussions, yet it is woefully missing. Again, we must ask ourselves why.

There are many who believe that the two witnesses spoken of in the Bible are two bodies of believers: the Christians and the Jews. If this is the case, then let's take a look at these two witnesses in regard to this topic.

Both groups have been dealing with increasing tribulation in the last century. As a result of the current killings in mainly Muslim countries, there are more Muslims converting to Christianity than the other way around. Tell me, how many people converted to Judaism as a result of the Jewish reaction to the Holocaust? Please don't think that I'm trying to be harsh or belittle anyone; I am simply looking at the witness.

Let's look at two specific events, very much alike, but occurring at different ends of the US. First, we look at the shooting at a Jewish community center in California, second at the shooting at an Amish schoolhouse in Pennsylvania. Both involve the killing of innocent children, both attacks caused outrage, but what was the outcome of the two events? The first group has been behind many of the so-called hate laws that have been introduced in Congress, which many feel specifically target Christians. And what about the second group? They displayed love and forgiveness, rebuilt the school to help the victims heal, and have moved on with their lives, albeit a little further off the road. Of the two groups, which is the better witness?

Although the Jewish people have done a wonderful job of keeping the Torah safe all these thousands of years, they have not done a very good job of witnessing to the nations, which was God's purpose, right?

"You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, and there is no savior besides Me. It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, and there was no strange god among you; so you are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And I am God." (Isaiah 43:10-12)

And again:

"Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me. Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yes, let him recount it to Me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place. Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My

witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.'" (Isaiah 44:6-8)

Remember, when something is really important Adonai repeats it. Here Isaiah tells us that we are His witnesses three times, so that must mean something. Yet we have been woefully inadequate as such, since the whole world seems to be chasing after the enemy much more than Adonai. This is got to change if we are going to survive. He has warned us of the coming judgment in advance for a reason; let's not let the lesson pass us by.

When we cling to Him in our troubles, and speak His word to others going through their own trials and tribulations, we are witnessing more than a thousand preachers on a thousand Sundays. We must live a life of devotion, giving Adonai more time than we give the TV, our jobs, or any other aspect of our lives. We must be willing to believe what is written in the Bible, from cover to cover, specifically the words and teachings of Yeshua, if we are ever to be strong in our faith and able to withstand the attacks of the enemy.

"Take a scroll and write on it all the words which I have spoken to you concerning Israel and concerning Judah, and concerning all the nations, from the day I first spoke to you, from the days of Josiah, even to this day. Perhaps the house of Judah will hear all the calamity which I plan to bring on them, in order that every man will turn from his evil way; then I will forgive their iniquity and their sin." (Jeremiah 36:2-3)

Generations past have understood this principle; when calamity befalls us, it is due to our own sin. When the city of London burned in the 1600's it didn't take long for the entire city to come to its knees, repenting of the harm they had done to one another. A great revival burst forth, sending missionaries to the far corners of the world. Yet when folks began to even hint at the fact that 9/11 might be a judgment from God, did we repent? No, we did not. We instead attacked those who made the suggestions as being some how unpatriotic or even in cahoots with the enemy (whoever they may be.)

Only those who are prepared to do battle in the spiritual realm can win the battle. We are not ready for the battle that is virtually at our doorsteps, and we scoff at those who are preparing, claiming they have a lack of faith. This is how backwards we have become! We must pray and ask Adonai to give us the discernment we need so that we can see the schemes of the enemy from afar and avoid them. We need to continually place

ourselves in His hands, allowing Him to mold and shape us through the trials and tribulations of life. We need to focus on Adonai so that He can unify us, in love, to keep His commands and show the world that He is God, and there is no other besides Him.

Come, my people, enter into your rooms and close your doors behind you; hide for a little while until indignation runs its course. For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; and the earth will reveal her bloodshed and will no longer cover her slain. (Isaiah 26:20-21)

Enter your room, close the doors, and pray! Repent and weep over the deeds of our country and our world. Rend your heart over the abominations being done in the name of our God. Develop a lifestyle of confession and repentance, observing to do according to all that is written in the Word, and make it become a part of your very soul. Then go out and deliver the bound, heal the sick and give hope to the hopeless, just as Yeshua instructed. It is our only chance to survive.

Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger. (Zephaniah 2:3)

Bonnie

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Bondservant of Yeshua the Messiah

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