

## **Hanukkah 2021**

### **Seasoned for This Season (Saturday night)**

#### **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**

**To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.**

1. If I were to summarize these verses it would be to say:
  - a. "Everything (and everyone) has a season and every season has a reason."
  - b. There is a purpose to be served by everything that God orchestrates or allows.
  - c. There is an obvious purpose for light but there is also a purpose for darkness.
  - d. Though it pains us to say, the darkness in the world serves a purpose.
  - e. At the very least, it serves to accentuate the light -- that which we are to be.
  
2. In the beginning, darkness (*choshekh*) preceded the light.
  - a. It is thus hinted that, in the end, there will be darkness upon the world.
  - b. And from which God will call forth the light (pattern).
  - c. Firm believer in patterns which are really prophetic in nature.
  
3. These "types and shadows" as some refer to them are a God-given template to work by.
  - a. Gave Moses a pattern for Mishkan to understand what to build (artisans/ChBD).
  - b. Gives us patterns (past events) so we know what to do today and in the future.
  - c. Some of them describe things that teach us what not to do.
  - d. 1 Cor. 10:11 -- written for our admonition, upon whom end of the age has come.
  
4. There is actually a pattern that provokes us to look at the patterns in Scripture.
  - a. Sons of Issachar considered to be tribe of scholars noted for the study of Torah.

#### **1 Chronicles 12:32**

**The sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command.**

5. How is it sons of Issachar had "understanding of the times" to instruct their brethren?

- a. Hebrew term *yodea'* ("intimate knowledge of") the times (plural).
- b. Implying they studied the times -- not just the present but the past.
- c. Term *binah* ("discernment") to compare the past with the present.
- d. Gave them a pattern to work with which helped them advise their countrymen.
- e. In Ecclesiastes 3, Solomon acknowledges cycle of seasons; goes on to say that:

**Ecclesiastes 3:15**

**That which is has already been, and what is to be has already been; and God requires an account of what is past.**

- 6. Body needs people who understand the times and know what to do in light of them.
  - a. Not a matter of simply knowing what the Bible says, as crucial as that is.
  - b. It's understanding how to apply the truths of the Word to the issues of our day.
  - c. To do that we must grasp the patterns that God has given us in Scripture.
  
- 7. Which brings back to the story of Joseph which is being studied during Hanukkah.
  - a. There must be a significant reason that it is highlighted in this season.
  - b. Joseph provides a pattern that has great bearing regarding Israel's future.
  - c. There is a purpose within his story that speaks to our purpose in this time.
  - d. In other words, not only about the Messiah but about the Body in the last days.
  
- 8. The sages teach that Joseph represented a transitional stage between the time of the Patriarchs -- Abraham, Isaac and Jacob -- and the establishment of the nation of Israel.
  - a. Though not regarded as being as great as those men, he was still a "*tzaddik*."
  - b. In fact, he was not just the forerunner of a tribe but of an entire nation.
  - c. There was a season for the patriarchs to lay the fundamental groundwork.
  - d. But Joseph -- what he represents -- considered to be foundational to the nation.
  
- 9. As a patriarch of sorts, it is said he exhibits the attribute of **יִסוּד** *yesod* -- "foundation."
  - a. This has always fascinated me and especially considering his "hidden" aspect.
  - b. Word **יִסוּד** *sod* means "hidden"; *yesod* hints at "He will be hidden/concealed."
  - c. A foundation is the part of the structure that is typically hidden.
  - d. Yet it is the necessary component that makes it possible for the others to exist.
  
- 10. In this case, Joseph is considered foundation to David's *malkhut* or "kingdom."
  - a. Joseph had to fulfill his purpose so that, in time, David could fulfill his.
  - b. Having fulfilled, "Joseph" relinquished scepter so rightful owner could take it.
  - c. Think of it this way: once the "foundation" was laid, the Temple could be built.

11. While the focus on David is appropriate -- and by David I mean the Kingdom of Israel that is to be restored by the Messiah -- what should not be overlooked is that, without Joseph, there would be no David.

- a. Making this more interesting is the fact Judaism acknowledges "two" Messiahs.
- b. Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach Ben David.
- c. Mashiach ben Yosef is identified as the suffering Messiah based on Joseph.
- d. He is also connected to the one who is "pierced" (Zechariah's prophecy).

12. Though Judaism recognizes this figure, He is very mysterious -- "hidden."

- a. Babylonian Talmud (Succah52a): Process of redemption initiated by his death.
- b. He will die and be eventually succeeded by Messiah ben David.
- c. Thus "Joseph" will fulfill his purpose and make possible the reign of "David."

13. Ultimately, this points us to Yeshua who, as the suffering Messiah ben Joseph, laid the groundwork for His return as Messiah ben David.

- a. Like Joseph who found a home among gentiles, He is embraced by the nations.
- b. Also, Joseph as ruler was assisted by the Egyptians as he revealed himself.
- c. Likewise, we of the nations are to "assist" Him as He reveals Himself.
- d. By "assisting" I mean we are to play our role -- be His witnesses.

14. So consider that Judaism sees Joseph as a forerunner of sorts.

- a. He prepares the way.
- b. Furthermore, his story is considered to be a pattern for the future.
- c. Sages teach it will be necessary for "Joseph" to lead in the last days.
- d. Will have to play his part in order to usher in the era of the King Messiah.
- e. i.e. To make the crooked paths straight and prepare the way of the LORD.

15. This thinking brings this conversation around to us -- the Body.

- a. Understanding that Joseph is a picture of the Messiah.
- b. Yeshua fulfilled the role of suffering Messiah and set the stage for His return.
- c. But what about the possibility that Joseph might be picture of the Body as well.
- d. Whatever pertains to the Head will permeate the Body.

16. Before I discuss the idea that Joseph is a picture of the Body need to stress the "purpose" and not the person.

- a. In other words, not talking about things in flesh and blood terms.
- b. Flesh and blood won't inherit the kingdom so not focusing on temporal things.
- c. This is not an argument for "British Israelism" and other such *fnb* theories.
- d. By identifying the Body with Joseph not focusing on one segment in Body.

17. I was raised on grits and greens -- I'm not Jewish; not trying to be or look Jewish.
  - a. Nevertheless, in Messiah, I am the "seed of Abraham and heirs of the promise."
  - b. As such, I and all those like me, are part of this Kingdom, belong to same King.
  - c. Should be striving for the same thing -- His purposes.
  
18. Again, we are looking at the purpose, not the person whether it be Joseph or you.
  - a. The purpose, regardless of the times, outweighs the person.
  - b. Esther told "You have a purpose but if you don't fulfill, God'll raise up another
  - c. His purpose will be performed.
  
19. In speaking of Joseph as a pattern -- not only of the Messiah -- as it relates to the Body, "Joseph" represents those ... "Called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28).
  - a. Again looking to Joseph as pattern, adversity prepares us for that purpose.
  - b. If living in the time we believe we are, we are being seasoned for a purpose.
  
20. Therefore, it is important that in the smaller tests we show ourselves faithful because, in time, greater hardships may come.
  - a. If we don't learn to run with the footmen, how will we contend with the horses?
  - b. If we show commitment to do right, God will give other opportunities.
  - c. Because we have shown a past tendency to do what is right.
  
21. Ex: Joseph displayed inclination to do what is right while in Jacob's house.
  - a. In time he was given opportunity to do even greater good in Pharaoh's house.
  - b. Three Hebrews purposed in their heart not to drink king's wine.
  - c. Given opportunity to demonstrate in presence of king their commitment to God.
  - d. In the past, they all had been seasoned in preparation for another greater season.
  
22. So a person -- or a people -- who seek His righteousness, in time, can expect to be positioned in a place of honor and/or influence to do further good -- advance the purpose.
  - a. Not evidence they are better but have striven to be recognized as meritorious.
  - b. Liken it to fact that hard working and talented people "make their own breaks."
  - c. They strive for success and persevere until the opportunity materializes.
  - d. These kind tend to find themselves in the right place at the right time.
  - e. Apples and oranges but the concept should be clear -- we must persevere.
  
23. In both scenarios mentioned -- whether Nebuchadnezzar forced to acknowledge God's greatness, or with Joseph, for God's people to be delivered -- God's purpose comes to light in the midst of great adversity.

24. So then, if there is to be a season of "breaking down, mourning, tearing" (adversity), there must be those who are the agents of such things.

- a. Stephen's statement about the "king who didn't recognize Joseph.:
- b. Because it was approaching time when God would keep promise to Abraham.
- c. If harm is to be done, God doesn't find a good man.
- d. He allows for the one who has made himself available to do wrong.

25. Therefore just as He allows opportunity for those who do good to do greater good, it seems He allows evil men to do greater evil seeing they have conditioned themselves to do evil.

- a. Initially, Pharaoh hardened his heart; in time God hardened it for him.
- b. This is the pattern so we should expect it in this day and time
- c. When evil men come to power it might be that the season for such is upon us.

26. If there are certain leaders we think are doing evil, and wondering why they are being allowed to do it, consider it is because they have conditioned themselves to do this by past deeds and tendencies.

- a. And, perhaps more importantly, that the time has come for such.
- b. But if that is so, then it also means that God's people are being seasoned.
- c. There is a purpose taking shape and His servants are being prepared.

27. Heard me say, because God has always worked through people, and that Yeshua said the time before His coming would be unlike anything the world had seen or would ever see, it stands to reason that there must be a people unlike anything the world has seen.

- a. I believe that we are that generation and that we are those people.
- b. If these are the days of Elijah, then we must be empowered in same way.
- c. We are being called to make the crooked paths straight.
- d. We are being called to prepare the way of the LORD.

28. As it was with Joseph, when we fulfill our role, I believe wholeheartedly that the stage will be set for the King to take up His Holy Throne.

- a. We are living in the days of Redemption.
- b. On that note, it is He who will redeem and deliver; we won't deliver ourselves.

29. Two thousand years ago, Yeshua told that generation they would see Him no more until they would say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD."

- a. Which is interesting considering a crowd had said that days before.
- b. However, the leaders rebuked those who said it, denying its message.

30. Taken from Psalm 118 -- preceded by *Hoshiana* -- "Save now O LORD!"

- a. They wouldn't see Him until they acknowledged they couldn't save themselves.
  - b. Trump can't save you; Fauci and the CDC won't save you.
  - c. No one can save you or me from what is coming upon the earth.
  - d. The only one who can save is the One whose name means "Salvation!"
31. Nevertheless, we must still play our role in His plan and so:
- a. There is a reason Joseph had to endure the hardships he was subjected to.
  - b. It was so that in overcoming, he would be seasoned to function in his purpose.
  - c. He was to be in a situation so as to lay groundwork for what would come later.
  - d. Joseph was a forerunner of those who would follow.
32. So in looking at Joseph, consider that those who are destined to lead are given the tools they need.
- a. Might be talent, skills and sometimes wealth and property.
  - b. But God certainly gives an anointing to His people to do what they are to do.
33. This can provoke jealousy/hatred in others towards those God has chosen.
- a. Those striving to be more spiritually mature might annoy those who aren't.
  - b. Those God is using will incite the baser instincts in those who are carnal.
34. Using Joseph as the pattern, the person or the people who seek to fulfill God's purpose and who stand for His truth will be considered nuisance, an enemy of the people.
- a. That is what Joseph and Jacob had to suffer; Joseph (brothers) & Jacob (Esau).
  - b. Must find the resolve to endure if we are going to follow Yeshua all the way.
  - c. There is a reason we have had to endure certain things.
  - d. Season us for what is coming -- to prepare the ground for those who will follow.
35. In the days ahead, must remember that the true arena of our struggle with the Adversary (personified in Esau) is not the battlefield but the soul.
- a. At Hanukkah we remember those who took up the sword and said, "Enough."
  - b. There are things to which I say, "Enough" -- No I won't bow to your idol."
  - c. We must discern the season; is it time to kill or heal; break down or build up?
  - d. We need to discern the season and which sword we are to use.
  - e. Because, in the end, the battle is the LORD's -- We can't save ourselves.
36. So as we approach the climax of Hanukkah season, we sense that we are approaching the climx of another season, and with that, the advent of the greatest of seasons.
- a. On that note, close with words uttered by Jacob when he blessed Dan:
  - b. Genesis 49:18 -- "I have waited (expect) for your salvation, O LORD."
  - c. "...for your salvation" is לישועתך *lyshuatekha* or "Your Yeshua."