

NOT ANXIOUS IN THE YEAR OF DROUGHT – BE STRONG AND DO NOT FEAR!

7th of the 6th month 2020/2021

Shalom all,

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 17:8 “For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and does not see when heat comes. And his leaf shall be green, and in the year of drought he is not anxious, nor does he cease from yielding fruit.”

In speaking of the blessing of the man who trusts in יהוה, these words ought to encourage us to keep trusting in our Master and Elohim, especially when we are facing extremely tough times.

For us, who are living in Cape Town and have recently been through a couple of years where the reality of being struck with a literal drought, was clear and strict water restrictions were put in place, due to dam levels reaching a critical point, these words need to be heard with hearing ears, as we literally faced the effects of having been through a drought season, where water supply rapidly decreased, giving us clear lessons on a metaphorical level on our need to be strong in the Master and not fear, as we see the anxiety and fear of many on the increase.

In a message called, ‘**NOT ANXIOUS IN THE YEAR OF DROUGHT – BE STRONG AND DO NOT FEAR!**’ I would like to remind and encourage you to keep trusting in יהוה and not allow anxieties and fears to cripple one from being able to continue bearing the fruit of righteousness in abundance.

The House of Yisra’el had been divorced and taken captive and nearly 100 years after the fall of the northern kingdom, The House of Yehudah had been permeated with idolatry. They were so entrenched in their sin and wickedness, which is described in **verse 1**, where we are told that their sin was written upon their hearts and on the horns of their slaughter places with a pen of iron, engraved with the point of a diamond.

This simply highlights how hard-hearted they had become, as they had let go of their inheritance, which is the Torah of Elohim.

In **verse 4** we are told that they had let go of their inheritance, and we know what the inheritance that they let go of is, as we are told in:

Debarim/Deuteronomy 33:4 “Mosheh commanded us a Torah, an inheritance of the assembly of Ya‘aqob.”

With hardened hearts, that had sin written all over them, we see how an idolatrous Yehudah had let go of the Torah and the words that followed, were to remind them of the clear distinction between blessing and curse, as we see the following:

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 17:5-8 “Thus said יהוה, “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart turns away from יהוה. 6 “For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and not see when good comes, and shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, a salt land that is not inhabited. 7 “Blessed is the man who trusts in יהוה, and whose trust is יהוה. 8 “For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and does not see when heat comes. And his leaf shall be green, and in the year of drought he is not anxious, nor does he cease from yielding fruit.”

These words would be used to remind an adulterous and hard-hearted people of the consequences for letting go of their inheritance and running to the things of the flesh. These words need to be heard today too, as we are able to clearly see how so many have sin written with an iron tool upon their hardened hearts!

How can we know this?

Well, we shall know people by their fruit, and the lack of the fruit of righteousness is clearly evident, in these last days, despite many claiming to have Elohim in their hearts!

Yehudah had turned their ears away from the hearing of the Torah and were therefore, in the stubbornness of their hearts, being lawless!

In a song of praise for Elohim who heard the psalmist prayer, we see in:

Tehillah/Psalm 66:18 “If I have seen wickedness in my heart, יהוה would not hear.”

This was the song and praise of a fearing servant of Elohim. A servant that looked intently into the Torah and walked accordingly. He knew that if he had seen wickedness in his heart, that Elohim would not hear his prayer!

The way we can see if there is wickedness in our heart or not, is by looking into the mirror of the Word and allowing the Word to wash away any dust of the world that we make have picked up on our journey!

Mishlê/Proverbs 28:9 “He who turns away his ear from hearing the Torah, even his prayer is an abomination.”

While this is not a truth that many want to hear today, we see it being made clear in the Renewed Writings:

Yoḥanan/John 9:31 “And we know that Elohim does not hear sinners. But if anyone fears Elohim and does His desire, He hears him.”

Sinners are lawless, in that the Truth is not in them and they do have not the Torah on their hearts, as their hearts have become hardened by the deceit of unrighteousness, because they did not receive a love for the Truth, in order to be saved!

It is a heart thing – and while we may, at times, think that our hearts are perfect, we must be careful to not fall into the same trap of so many delusional and lawless people, who use words such as, “**He knows my heart**”, as a vain reason to not submit and obey to the Torah!

The verses that follow in **Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 17** makes something that many refuse to acknowledge, very clear:

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 17:9-10 “The heart is crooked above all, and desperately sick – who shall know it? 10 “ו, יהוה, search the heart, I try the kidneys, and give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

The Hebrew word that is used here for ‘**desperately sick**’ comes from the root word אָנַשׁ anash – **Strong’s H605** which means, ‘**to be weak, sick, desperately sick**’ and pictures being in a state of being incurable, and is a word that is also used for a wound or grief, sickness or wickedness.

A derivative for this root is אֲנוּשׁ Enosh - **Strong’s H583** and means ‘**mortal man, mankind**’.

The root word translated as ‘**crooked**’ is אָקַב aqob – **Strong’s H6121** which means, ‘**insidious (that is ‘harmful and enticing’), deceitful, polluted, sly**’.

In other words, the heart of mortal man is harmful and enticing, and it will often draw one away to things that can pollute one’s life!

And with it being deceitful – well, deceit would not be deceit if it was known at the time!
Yirmeyahu goes on and writes in the next verse:

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 7:20 “יְהוָה, I, search the heart, I try the kidneys, and give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

When people say that commonly used expression, ‘He knows my heart’, what they do not realise, is that what they are saying is 100% correct – יְהוָה does know their heart!

The problem that we see happening, is that mortal man does not always know the state of his own heart!

This is simply due to their sin/lawlessness being written with an iron pen on their hardened hearts and without the Torah of Elohim, that brings back the being, our hearts can and will remain deceitful above all.

We need the Torah of Elohim to be written upon the fleshly tablets of our hearts, which The Spirit of Elohim does, when we are immersed in the Name of יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Messiah!

When the Pharisees accused the taught ones of our Master, by saying that they were breaking the traditions of the elders by not washing their hands before eating, He made it clear to them that they were breaking the commands of Elohim by holding fast to their traditions and then, He proceeded to tell them how their traditions have caused them to neglect the ‘called for obedience’ of honouring their parents and that they had nullified the Truth by their traditions, and He then said the following, in:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 15:8-9 “This people draw near to Me with their mouth, and respect Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. 9 ‘But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as teachings the commands of men.’”

When His talmidim (disciples) came and asked Him to explain these words to them, He made it clear that it was not the eating with unwashed hands that defiled a man, but that it was what comes out from the heart of man that defiles him:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 15:18-19 “But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and these defile the man. 19 “For out of the heart come forth wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, whorings, thefts, false witnessings, slanders.”

Once again, we are able to see the clear truth of how that which is your heart will come out and identify you as a servant of the Master or not!

The rest of the **Chapter 17** of **Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah** continues to highlight the need for us to not forsake the fountain of living waters, as our expectation is in Him, and those who forsake Him will have their names written in the earth, indicating that they have been blotted out from the book of life!

The urgent call to return is clear, along with the command to guard His Sabbaths, and not be like our fathers who disobeyed and hardened their hearts and necks!

While I have simply given a brief overview of the flow of this chapter, what we need to learn from these words is that we are to humble ourselves before our Master and Elohim and allow His Torah to be written upon our hearts, giving us the ability to walk in uprightness and be led in the light of His Word; and in doing so, we can be confident in putting complete trust in Him, equipped to bear fruit and not worry at all!

When one lets go of the Torah, then the natural fleshly thing to do, is to seek man for results and put their trust in what their own flesh can do, yet this will only have damaging results, whereas the man who puts his trust in יהוה and whose trust is יהוה, will be blessed.

The Hebrew word that is translated here as ‘blessed’ is בָּרַךְ – **baruk** and comes from the root word בָּרַךְ **barak** – **Strong’s H1288** which means, ‘**to abundantly bless**’ and literally carries the meaning, ‘**to kneel or bow down, to show respect, to bring a gift to another while kneeling out of respect**’.

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘cursed’ is אָרַר – **arur** which comes from the primitive root word אָרַר **arar** – **Strong’s H779** which means, ‘**to curse**’.

What we take note of from Scripture, is that curses can be understood as the absence of blessing, as we realise that when you are outside of the blessing of Elohim, then the effects of a lack of that blessing can result in curses becoming evident!

We are to trust in our Master and Elohim!

As a result of disobedience and the refusal for proper discipline and correction, the rebellious do not trust in יהוה!

The Hebrew root word used for ‘trust’ is בָּטַח **batah** – **Strong’s H982** which carries the meaning, ‘**to trust, be bold, confident, be secure, courageous**’.

Trust in יהוה – the very thing that every true believer must do at all times!

In saying that the blessed man not only trusts in יהוה, but also that the blessed man’s trust is יהוה, we are able to see that to trust in יהוה is not just something that we do as an active response to a particular circumstance, but rather it is who we are – we are ‘**trusters**’ – who are continually trusting יהוה in all things, amēn!

What then is true ‘**trust**’?

Trust is the assured reliance on the character, ability, strength or truth of someone or something. It is a dependence upon one, or one in which confidence is placed. It is the confidence, reliance and resting of the mind in the integrity/friendship of another person.

When you make the bold statement that you ‘**trust in יהוה**’, do you really mean it?

Or do you allow doubts and fears to come and cause you to waver in your ability to fully trust – especially when things do not seem to go your way?

Pure trust in יהוה results in the blessing of being stable and unshaken by unfavourable circumstances that we may find ourselves in.

As Yirmeyahu writes here: when יהוה is your trust, you will not get affected by the heat or pressures of life!

In other words, when the heat is turned up and the persecutions for righteousness sake are on the rise or difficult circumstances and trials are hitting you from all sides – the true ‘truster’ in יהוה stands unaffected!!!

Are you a true ‘truster’ in יהוה, or are you easily shaken like the rebellious that do not trust in יהוה?

Proper trust in יהוה reflects a true steadfastness, and we see in:

Tehillah/Psalm 125:1 “Those who trust in יהוה Are like Mount Tsiyon – It is not shaken, it remains forever.”

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘shaken’ is מוט **mot** – Strong’s H4131 which means, **‘removed, to waver, slip, fall, shake, totter’**.

We who trust in יהוה shall never be ‘shaken’ and never waver or slip or fall, or even totter as we stand firm in the Truth!

Those who are trusting and never shaken shall inherit the earth, while those who waver shall not dwell in the earth.

Mishlê/Proverbs 10:30 “The righteous is never shaken, while the wrong shall not dwell in the earth.”

Sha’ul tells us in **Eph’siyim/Ephesians 4:14-15** that we are not to be as children that are tossed and borne about by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men, in cleverness, unto the craftiness of leading astray; but rather we are to be a people who maintain the truth in love growing up in all respects into Messiah, our Head!

Sadly, what we find today is a lot of ‘children’, so to speak, that when the first sign of trouble or shaking comes, they are tossed about by various teachings and opinions and are therefore never able to actually grow up and stand on their own two feet in Messiah!

To bring this home a little closer, we have to ensure that we, who claim to put our trust in יהוה, are in fact not being shaken in the face of trouble, and given over to compromise.

To fully trust in יהוה requires the need to believe and obey what His Word instructs us to do, no matter the circumstances that we find ourselves in or the consequences of our endurance of being steadfastness amidst a wicked people!

For example – when the Word clearly instructs us to guard the Sabbath and set it apart, and observe it as He instructs, then we are to do just that and trust יהוה for our full protection and provision.

Mishlê/Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in יהוה with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 Know Him in all your ways, And He makes all your paths straight.”

Mishlê/Proverbs 14:26 “In the fear of יהוה is strong trust, and His children have a place of refuge.”

Walking in the fear of יהוה is strong Trust, as you hear, guard and do His clear instructions (Torah) and find your refuge in Him, no matter the circumstances you find yourself in.

In the ancient pictographic script, the word **בַּתַּחֲבֵּת** **bataḥ** – Strong's H982 looks this this:



Beyt – ב:

The ancient script has this letter as , which pictures a tent floor plan and means, 'house' or 'tent'. It represents family and the importance of those who are inside the tent as opposed to the tent structure itself.

Tet – ט:

The original pictograph for this letter is , a container made of wicker or clay. Containers were a very important item among the nomadic Hebrews. They were used for storing grains and other items. Wicker baskets were used as nets for catching fish. The meanings of this letter are basket, contain, store and clay.

Het – ה:

The ancient script has this letter as  which is a 'tent wall', and carries a meaning of 'separation', as a tent wall separates two halves of the tent; or it can also reflect the outside walls that separate the people inside from that which is outside and so can also symbolise protection and security to those inside, while picturing a cutting off of those who are outside. Hence this letter can mean 'established, secure' as well as 'cut off, separated from'. As a tent wall we are also able to recognise the picture of stones being built up to make a complete wall.

When we look collectively at these pictographic letters that form this word, we are able to glean some valuable insight into the encouraging message that is being given through this word, as the following meaning can be rendered from these pictures:

THE HOUSE OF THE BASKET IS SAFELY ESTABLISHED!

Our Master and Elohim has firmly established the end from the beginning and for this reason, we are able to put our complete trust in Him and stay in Him, as He is coming to gather us to Himself and let His kingdom be firmly established forever, where He will rule and reign with His adorned and capable Bride!

When you grasp that He has firmly secured the House – His House – and all who are in it, then trusting in Him should be something we should do without hindrance.

As we stay in the One whom we trust and make Him our trust, we have the firm assurance that we shall continue to produce fruit and not fear the heat of troubles, nor allow anxieties to affect us when drought hits!!!

This is the blessing of the man who trust in יהוה and makes יהוה his trust!

How are you doing in trusting in יהוה and making Him your trust?

Do you find yourself overwhelmed by the heat of trials?

Do you find yourself panicking when there is a severe drought or lack of provision coming through?

Not being anxious in the year of drought, is what I want to take a closer look at, especially as we who are in Cape Town have indeed faced a drought type year.

The difference between trusting in יהוה and trusting in man is the difference between blessings and curses!!!

Though drought and heat may come, a tree that is planted by the water will flourish and remain green and bear fruit.

This figure that is given suggests to us the clear idea of a person who can endure life's adversities without anxiety and remains stable and productive, due to his trusting in יהוה and making יהוה is trust!

One translation renders the following, of one who trusts in יהוה:

“He is not concerned during the year of drought, nor does he stop producing fruit”

Does this mean that we are not to have concerns and cares?

Absolutely not!

We are to cast our worries or concerns upon Him, knowing that He is concerned about us.

In the midst of the heat of pressures or the anxiety of drought, we can either humble ourselves before Elohim and cast our worries upon Him and seek Him to lead us and strengthen us to keep bearing fruit, directing our paths in complete shalom; or we can harden our hearts and try to figure things out in a fleshly manner that sets aside the Word of Elohim.

The consequences of each of these choices will certainly have contrasting results!

The Hebrew word that is translated here in **Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 17:8** as **‘anxious’** comes from the root verb דָּאָג da’ag – **Strong’s H1672** which means, **‘to be anxious or concerned, fear, dread, full of anxiety, worry, sorry, take thought’**.

The two-letter parent root of this word is דָּג – which Jeff Benner explains in his AHLB (Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible) the following:



Dalet – ד



The ancient script has this letter as  and is pictured as a 'tent door'. It can also have the meaning of 'a back and forth movement', as one goes back and forth through a tent door and so speaks of an access point. It can also carry the meaning of 'dangle' or hanging as the tent door would hang from the roof pole of the tent. It speaks a great deal in terms of understanding the door of the tent of appointment as the only means of access.

Gimel – ג



The ancient script has this letter as  which is 'a foot' and carries the meaning to 'walk, gather, carry', as clearly referring to the functions of a foot. It can also give the meaning of 'a gathering of people', and we know that 'feet' in Hebrew often speaks of one's walk and ability to keep the feasts of **יְהוָה**.

Combined, the meaning of these two letters, as a parent root, is:

“the back and forth moving of the foot”

In terms of the word derived from this meaning anxiety, we can get a clear picture of one who cannot stand still, as they rush back and forth, not knowing whether to stay or go, so to speak! This pictures for us one who is unstable in all his ways, as we take note of what Ya'aqob tells us in:

Ya'aqob/James 1:7-8 “For that man should not think that he shall receive whatever from the Master – s he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

The double-minded man is one who doubts the wisdom of the Word of Elohim!

Anxiety is normally fear or worry about something in the future.

According to the Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary the word **anxiety** means:

“painful or apprehensive uneasiness of mind usually over an impending or anticipated ill”

or

“an abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physiological signs (as sweating, tension, and increased pulse), by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat, and by self-doubt about one's capacity to cope with it”.

Anxiety is a killer!

So many people are gripped with anxiety and are becoming deeply depressed in the process, as they have no ability to see any sight of hope in their circumstances as all they seem to hear is negativity.

Mishlê/Proverbs 12:25 “Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes him glad.”

Here, Shelomoh highlights the importance of good words and the need for people to be encouraged on a daily basis!

Tas'loniqim Aleph/1 Thessalonians 5:11 “Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, as indeed you do.”

Ib'rim/Hebrews 3:12-13 “**Look out, brothers, lest there be in any of you a wicked heart of unbelief in falling away from the living Elohim, 13 but encourage one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened by the deceivableness of sin.**”

In years of drought, we need to be even more urgent in encouraging one another with good words – that is, words of Truth in the Master in whom we trust – bringing the Good News to the anxious!

The Hebrew word for ‘makes glad’ is שָׂמַח samah – Strong’s H8055 and means, ‘**to rejoice, be glad, be joyful, delight in and be elated**’, and can also carry the meaning ‘**to brighten up**’, and we can clearly see what causes a person to ‘brighten up’ – the Good News!!!

The typical Hebrew word that is often used to describe the Good News of our Master, redeemer and Elohim is the word בְּשׂוֹרָה Besorah – Strong’s H1309 which means, ‘**good tidings, news, reward**’, and comes from the root word בָּשַׂר basar – Strong’s H1319 which means, ‘**to bear tidings, to bring good news, messenger of good news**’.

The Hebrew word for ‘drought’ is בַּצְרָת batstsoresh – Strong’s H1226 and means, ‘**a dearth, drought, destruction**’ and is the intensive form of the word בָּצַר batsar – Strong’s H1219 which means, ‘**to cut off, make inaccessible, enclose**, as well as ‘**gather, gathers**’.

The intensity of a drought highlights for us the cutting off of that which supplies sustenance, and while we are certainly living in the days where the effects of drought can be seen literally as well as metaphorically, we need to be reminded of our need to be like trees that are planted by the waters!

The Hebrew word that is used here for ‘planted’ is שָׁתַל shathal- Strong’s H8362 which means, ‘**to transplant, planted**’, which in itself carries a great picture for us, in understanding the great and mighty work of our Master, who ‘**transplants**’ us into His Pure root, after having been far off due to sin!

This word is used 10 times in Scripture, and once again pictures for us the effect of being firmly rooted and grounded in love, which is being rooted in Messiah and guarding to do all He commands as a pure expression of our love for Him!

Tehillah/Psalm 92:13 “**Those who are planted in the House of יְהוָה flourish in the courts of our Elohim.**”

Our continued trust in יְהוָה, causes us to be ‘**transplanted**’ into His satisfying root system, and be able to sustain the pressures of the heat of trials that blow across our lives!

Yisra’el was planted in a good land, and positioned to bear much fruit and shine the light of the Truth of Elohim to the nations, yet they failed to do this:

Yehezqel/Ezekiel 17:8 “**It was planted in a good field by many waters, to bring forth branches, and to bear fruit, to be a splendid vine.**”

This was part of a stern rebuke to a rebellious House that had neglected to stay rooted in love!

Yehezqel/Ezekiel 17:10 “**See, it is planted, is it going to thrive? Would it not utterly wither when the east wind touches it – wither in the beds where it grows?**”

In יהוה's loving-commitment to His Covenant, He promises to 'transplant' a remnant of the rebellious House that withered under the heat of persecutions, temptations and trials:

Yehezqël/Ezekiel 17:22-23 "Thus said the Master יהוה, "And I shall take of the top of the highest cedar and set it out. And I Myself shall pluck off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs, and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. 23 On the mountain height of Yisra'ël I plant it. And it shall bring forth branches, and bear fruit, and become a big cedar. And under it shall dwell birds of every sort, in the shadow of its branches they shall dwell."

Yehezqël/Ezekiel 19:10 "Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard, planted by the waters, a bearer of fruit and branching, because of many waters."

Yehezqël/Ezekiel 19:13 "And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty land."

A nation who had been delivered from bondage out of Mitsrayim, and planted in a good land, rebelled and as a result were plucked out and planted in the Wilderness!

What we can learn from these passages that I have mentioned, is that we must do our utmost in ensuring that we continue to meditate on the Torah of Elohim, day and night, and walk not in wrong counsels, as we guard to do all He commands, lest we find ourselves being cut off due to unrighteousness and compromise.

Mattityahu/Matthew 15:13 "But He answering, said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted shall be uprooted."

This was in response to the hypocritical Pharisees who accused the talmidim (disciples) of Messiah of breaking the traditions of the elders and not washing their hands before eating!

יהושיע was making it clear here that those who hold fast to traditions and forsake the commands of Elohim are those who put on an outward show and draw near to Elohim with their lips, yet their hearts are far from Him, and teach as teachings the commands of men. These hypocrites are not the righteous ones, and they will be uprooted!

The picture of being firmly rooted trees, is a vital and very practical lesson for us to understand in guarding our obedience to Elohim – the fountain of living waters!

The effects of being planted by waters, will be seen in a trees ability to have green leaves and abundant fruit!

Leaves alone does not guarantee its fruit, as we are reminded of the fig tree that our Master cursed for not having fruit, teaching us a vital lesson that we are to bear fruit continually and be urgent in proclaiming the Word, in and out of season!

Timotiyos Bët/2 Timothy 4:2 "Proclaim the Word! Be urgent in season, out of season. Convict, warn, appeal, with all patience and teaching."

These words that Sha'ul commanded Timotiyos were very clear, especially as we consider the words that follow, where he tells us that in the last days many shall not bear sound teaching, but according to their own desires, they shall heap up for themselves teachers tickling the ear and turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to myths.

Why would people want their ears tickled?

Because of the heat of pressures and the years of drought and the resulting anxieties that comes when looking to the flesh to fix the problems.

Anxiety cuts off the life of the Word, just as our Master explains in His parable of the Sower where He describes the seed, which is the Word, that falls among thorns:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 13:22 “**And that sown among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the worry of this age and the deceit of riches choke the word, and it becomes fruitless.**”

The Greek word that is translated as ‘choked’ is **συμπνίγω sumpnigō** – Strong’s **G4846** which means, **‘to choke, pressed against, strangle completely – that is literally to drown and figuratively to crowd’**.

Have you ever felt like you are drowning in a sea of doubt and fear, or being crowded out by external pressures that are pressing hard against you?

Well this is what worries, riches and pleasure of life will do to you, if you are not careful in keeping the soil of your heart free from such thorns, and are not meditating, day and night, on the Truth, and not shining the light with confidence!

The Greek word that is translated as ‘worry’ is **μέριμνα merimna** – Strong’s **G3308** which means, **‘cares, worries, anxieties’**.

This Greek word can also render the understanding of, **‘being pulled in different directions’!**

Have you ever felt like you are being pulled in so many directions that you do not know which way to turn?

The sad reality, is that most of us tend to allow anxieties to consume us and when this does, then the very Word that has been deposited gets choked out!

Now, think about this for a moment: choking is not a nice experience!!!

Worries/anxiety choke out the good deposit of the Truth and when this happens, many do not get back to the Word and do what is required to change, but rather, they seek to have their ears tickled, in order to seemingly sooth away the crippling effects of anxiety.

We are to be on guard and watch, and be careful for this not to happen!

How many of you have worries?

Just think about it, we all have bills, bills, bills, and more bills – sometimes we even dread looking in the post box!

We all face the heat of pressures and the fiery trials of life!

We all face times of drought, be it physically or metaphorically in representing complete lack!

Yet, this we must be reminded of: when we trust in יהוה and make Him our trust, then we shall not see when heat comes and we shall not be anxious in the year of drought, but rather, we will be steadfast in continuing to bear the fruit of righteousness!

The Greek word that is translated here a **‘without fruit’** is **ἄκαρπος akarpos** – Strong’s **G175** which means, **‘unfruitful, barren, not yielding what it ought to yield’**, and this word is constructed from the two root words:

1) α alpha – Strong’s **G1** which is the first letter in the Greek alphabet that is used as a negative prefix, and

2) καρπός karpos – Strong’s **G2590** which means, **‘fruit, benefit, gain, harvest, produce’** and typically refers to fruit that has been plucked, rendering the figurative meaning of the labours, works or acts of those who have fitted themselves with every good work unto everlasting life.

Romiyim/Romans 6:22 “**But now, having been set free from sin, and having become servants of Elohim, you have your fruit resulting in set-apartness, and the end, everlasting life.**”

The fruit of our lives, as set-apart servants of the Most-High, must result in set-apartness, and this is an ongoing day to day process, which at the end will result in the promised everlasting life with our Master and Elohim!

What we can therefore clearly understand and establish is that our works of righteousness are vital in being evident in our lives, as we continue to produce much fruit of a people who are living pure and undefiled set-apart lives.

The Hebrew equivalent for this Greek word for fruit is פֵּרִי *peri* – Strong's H6529 which means, **'fruit, produce'** and comes from the word פָּרָה *parah* – Strong's H6509 which means, **'to bear fruit, be fruitful, flourish'**.

This word certainly speaks of the physical fruit of trees and shrubs that bear fruit in which there is a seed according to its kind, i.e., fruit with kernels, hence the fruit produces more fruit.

This word also is used figuratively of children, as being the fruit of the womb; yet what we also find as a repeated theme throughout Scripture, is that this term for fruit many times refers to the meaning of, **"the result of an action"**; or better understood as, **"works"**.

Our lives, as set-apart children of Elohim, ought to be bearing the fruit of repentance – which is a clear resulting action of turning away from all falsehood and wickedness, and turning to righteousness:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 3:8 "Bear, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance"

Understanding that fruits are the result of an action, we must also take heed that we do not bear bad fruit, which may be brought forth, as a result of wrong actions, such as disobedience or compromise or lawlessness and unrighteousness!

When we walk according to the Spirit, we will bear the fruit of the Spirit and not be given over to the desires of the flesh and have the fruit of fleshly living present!

Fruit does not just pop into one's life, it is a result of an action, and we are to be bearing good fruit, hence the clear understanding that we are to be 'doing' the good works of obedience that have been prepared beforehand for us to do – and that is to walk in the clear commands of Elohim, guarding to do all He has commanded us!

We are known, or rather shall be known by our fruit:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 7:16-23 "By their fruits you shall know them. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 "So every good tree yields good fruit, but a rotten tree yields wicked fruit. 18 "A good tree is unable to yield wicked fruit, and a rotten tree to yield good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, by their fruits you shall know them – 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Master, Master,' shall enter into the reign of the heavens, but he who is doing the desire of My Father in the heavens. 22 "Many shall say to Me in that day, 'Master, Master, have we not prophesied in Your Name, and cast out demons in Your Name, and done many mighty works in Your Name?' 23 "And then I shall declare to them, 'I never knew you, depart from Me, you who work lawlessness!'"

Many mighty works that many will claim as good works will be simply revealed as wicked works or rather wicked fruits, for wicked fruit is brought forth from the resulting actions of lawlessness, whereas the good fruit of righteousness is brought forth from the resulting action of complete obedience and set-apartness of walking in and staying in the commands of Elohim!

As the value of a tree is estimated by its products, so righteousness that is displayed in acts/works is a decisive standard for the just judgment of Elohim:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 3:10 “**And the axe is already laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, then, which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**”

The one who is unfruitful has been clearly warned of being rejected, and if this warning is not taken heed of, the clear sentence of being cut off is clear:

Luqas/Luke 13:6-9 “**And He spoke this parable, “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 “And he said to the gardener, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down, why does it even make the ground useless?’ 8 “And he answering, said to him, ‘Master, leave it this year too, until I dig around it and throw manure. 9 ‘And if indeed it bears fruit, good. But if not so, you shall cut it down.’”**

When we remain steadfast in walking in complete obedience to the Torah/instructions/commands of our Master and Elohim, we are guaranteed that we shall bear fruit that lasts!

Mishlê/Proverbs 11:30 “**The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is winning lives is wise.**”

As we bear the enduring fruit of righteousness, as the resulting action of our wholehearted obedience to our Master and Elohim, we become a source of life to many who may eat of our fruit and come to the knowledge of Elohim.

In other words, we ought to be bearing fruit that others may taste and see how good יהוה is!

Let me ask you at this point, do those who you interact with on a daily basis know that you love and serve the Living Elohim and Creator of all?

Can they see the fruit of unwavering righteousness in your life, that will cause them to desire to taste the goodness of set-apart living or not?

Now, while many may not desire to taste the fruit that you so display, as a resulting action of obedience, we recognise that we shall be the fragrance of life to life for some, but to others, we will be the fragrance of death to death.

Knowing this, must not cause us to shrink back in any circumstance or situation or company, but rather continue to have the resulting action of obedience and bear fruits of set-apartness for all to see, as we shine the light of the Truth in every way!

We also know that trees, in Scripture, are often a metaphor for men, and therefore as fruit bearing trees we ought to ensure that the soils of our hearts are continually kept free from that which can damage the roots of our lives in Messiah!

As we take time to consider the times that we are living in, and can clearly see the effects of heat and drought, both on a literal and a metaphorical level, we need to take time to assess our lives and determine, by looking intently into the Word of Elohim, whether we are producing fruit worthy of repentance or has anxiety caused us to become fruitless and, as a result, we find that we are simply living in survival mode, instead of flourishing in the Master, being equipped to endure as we make Him our trust!

Meditation and application of His Torah is vital for living and being fruitful every day!

In speaking of the man who delights in, and meditates day and night on, the Torah of Elohim, and who does not sit with scoffers, stand with sinners, nor walk in the counsel of the wrong, Dawid tells us in:

Tehillah/Psalm 1:1-3 “Blessed is the man who shall not walk in the counsel of the wrong, and shall not stand in the path of sinners, and shall not sit in the seat of scoffers, 2 But his delight is in the Torah of יהוה, and he meditates in His Torah day and night. 3 For he shall be as a tree Planted by the rivers of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither, and whatever he does prospers.”

The resulting action of daily meditating on the Torah, and delighting in it, while staying clear of falsehood and twisted lawlessness, will be the good fruit of righteousness that is needed at any given moment – no matter the season!

Not being anxious in a year of drought, is a clear characteristic of one who trusts in יהוה and has made יהוה his trust and whose mind is steadfast in the Truth through a proper meditation and study of the Torah that takes place on a daily basis!

Our fruit must be brought to perfection, through faithful endurance under all trials and pressures:

Ya’aqob/James 1:4 “And let endurance have a perfect work, so that you be perfect and complete, lacking in naught.”

As we consider the parable of the sower and the seed, may we recognise the clear and present danger of the wicked thorns of worries, riches and pleasures of life that will seek an opportunity to set in and choke out the Truth.

So many believers begin well and begin to bear fruit, yet the thorns of life come along and choke out the very life that can cause the fruit to be borne to perfection.

And so, while we, like many trees that may look like they have begun to bear fruit, must not stop tilling the soil of our heart and find that the fruit dies due to compromise, fears and worries of the pleasures and luring lusts of the flesh, but rather, we are to be on guard in breaking up the ground each and every day, meditating of the Torah day and night, so that we bear much fruit in and out of season, always ready to give a bold answer for the hope we have, bearing the fruit of that hope as a result of the action of complete obedience.

Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 3:15-16 “But set apart יהוה Elohim in your hearts, and always be ready to give an answer to everyone asking you a reason concerning the expectation that is in you, with meekness and fear, 16 having a good conscience, so that when they speak against you as doers of evil, those who falsely accuse your good behaviour in Messiah, shall be ashamed.”

The danger of the soil that has thorns, represents those who hear the Word, and do not guard to do what it says, due to the inability to weed out the luring pleasures of the flesh that seeks to consume us.

My urgent call, in this year of drought, so to speak, is to be encouraged with the Truth and bear the fruit of endurance, as we eagerly await His soon return.

Has anxiety gripped you in a season of drought?

Hear these encouraging words from:

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 35:3-4 “Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the weak knees. 4 Say to those with anxious heart, “Be strong, do not fear! See, your Elohim comes with vengeance, with the recompense of Elohim. He is coming to save you.”

Yeshayahu was told to speak up and tell those who were anxious in heart to be strong and not to fear!

The Hebrew word translated here for ‘anxious’ is מָהָר mahar – Strong’s H4116 which means, **‘to hasten, act quickly, prepare, rash, be anxious, make speed’**.

The use of this word here, gives us the understanding of those who were being too hasty in their weakened state, showing signs of a heart that was fluttered with agitation.

Think about it for a moment – those with anxious hearts cannot sit still for a moment, and they get irritated very quickly and lack patience and endurance, and get flustered by waiting.

In the process, they may act in haste and only later see that they acted irrationally, before thinking about what they should have done!

Those with an anxious heart, will also seek to agitate a crowd and stir up a disturbance, all because their hearts are fluttered with anxiety and are unable to be at peace in waiting on Elohim!

Does this sound familiar to any of you?

If so, then this word is certainly for you today, just as it was for those anxious hearts back then!

In encouraging the anxious to be strong and not to fear, Yeshayahu was told to tell them some much needed ‘good news’. A ‘good news’ that would cause them to have their eyes and ears opened, and cause them to be strengthened in their walk, and cause them to be refreshed with the Living Waters of Truth, enabling them to walk in total set-apartness!

And the message was this:

“See, your Elohim comes with vengeance, with the recompense of Elohim. He is coming to save you.”

This is good news!!!

Why do I say that?

Well, we can see here in this chapter of **Yeshayahu/Isaiah 35**, a clear progression in the words being spoken.

Yeshayahu was told to ‘say’ these words, and the result would be an awakening to the Truth. ‘Say’ these words, ‘then’ the eyes of the blind shall see, the deaf shall hear, ‘then’ the lame shall leap like a deer and the dumb sing!

How and why?

‘Because’ waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams would flow in the desert!!!

Do you see the construct of this passage?

This news, to the weakened and anxious, that the vengeance and recompense of Elohim is coming, would cause them to be strong and courageous and stand firm in the truth and walk in it, as faithful sojourners who are waiting for their coming King!

These words will strengthen the weak to hear-guard and do the clear commands of יְהוָה, and walk in the Way of Set-Apartness and find the True Living Waters that sustain, causing one to be strengthened and not be anxious in the times of drought.

We who are in **יהושע** Messiah, and stay in Him and walk as He walked, shall walk in the true way of set-apartness, and as the ransomed ones of our Master, having been redeemed through His Blood and continuing to stay in Him, by walking in righteousness, shall return and enter into His coming reign, because we never forsook the fountain of Living Waters, our Expectation and Saviour!!!

The truth of these words really gripped me again this week!

In a time when most are hearing but not understanding and seeing but not perceiving, the question for us who have the Truth is often one of **‘What do I say?’**.

And right here, in **Yeshayahu/Isaiah 35** we are given the clear answer as we **‘prepare the way in the wilderness’** for the return of our Master, Redeemer and King!

While many may not see the power of these words, simply because they just want to hear ear tickling tales, it is these words that will cause people to wake up and hear!

The message of the coming vengeance and recompense of our Elohim will strike an awakening into the hearts and minds of the anxious and weak!

We must speak the truth and it is the Truth that will set people free – and the Truth of the matter at hand, is that the **יהוה**, our Elohim, is coming with great vengeance!!!

The message of this fact ought to strike the fear of **יהוה** into the hearts of the weak and anxious, causing them to walk in total set-apartness!

Yehudah had turned their backs on **יהוה** by walking in disobedience and were facing the discipline because of their sins.

The nation was under attack by the brutal Assyrian army and the people were terrified and obviously concerned about their future; and in the midst of these difficult and trying circumstances, Yeshayahu stands before them, as a prophet of comfort and hope, encouraging them with what is to come and the road they must walk – and that is: to return to **יהוה** and the proper hearing of His Torah in order to walk in obedience to it, for there is a Day coming where **יהוה** would deliver them and cause them to live in peace in the land He had Promised.

The call to strengthen the weak hands and make firm the weak knees, was an urgent call and command to return to obedience, amidst the oppressive captivity under which they had been exiled to.

This was a call to live according to **יהוה**'s covenant stipulations.

These same words and call to be strengthened are seen in:

Ib'rim/Hebrews 12:12-13 **“So, strengthen the hands which hang down and the weak knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned aside, but instead, to be healed.”**

This is a call to renew spiritual vitality!

If you want to run with endurance then you need to strengthen the weak!

The Greek word for ‘strengthen’ is **ἀνορθόω** – **anorthoō** - **Strong’s G461** which means, **‘to make straight or upright again, lift up, restore, strengthen’**.

It is time to make straight that which has been twisted and has caused many to become weakened!!!

This is written in the '*plural imperative*' which simply means that this requires a joint effort. We need to strengthen one another!

The Hebrew word in Yeshayahu for 'strengthen' is **חָזַק** *hazaq* – Strong's **H2388** and carries the meaning, '*to grow firm, fasten upon, strengthen, take firm hold of*' and can have the concept of '*grasp between your ears, get a firm handle on the matter*', and is also written in the '*plural imperative*'!

There is no place for '*lone rangers*' in the body – we are to strengthen each other and realise that you cannot do it alone – you will need the strengthening of others!

This concept of helping each other is seen right through *Ib'rim/Hebrews*:

Ib'rim/Hebrews 3:13 "but encourage one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened by the deceivableness of sin."

Ib'rim/Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us be concerned for one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging, and so much more as you see the Day coming near"

Weak hands and weak knees, are a picture of one who does not have a handle on the truth, and is unable to grasp with confidence the Truth of guarding to do all that Elohim has commanded, for they have forsaken the fountain of Living Waters and allowed the anxiety of the drought of His Word in their lives to cripple their ability to stand firm.

With weak knees, one is not stable in their walk of faith, as their legs will buckle under the pressures and trials they might face, as the deceitfulness of wealth and the worries of this life choke out the Word, causing them to lose their stability and confidence in being a bold ambassador of the Truth!

In **verse 3 of Yeshayahu/Isaiah 35** we have two different Hebrew root words that are translated as '*weak*'.

The first Hebrew word translated as '*weak*', as in '*weak hands*' is **רַפְּהוּ** *rapheh* – Strong's **H7502** which means, '*slack, exhausted, weak*', and pictures for us a people who had grown tired of '*doing*' what is right and commanded and had become lazy in their required obedience. As a result, their good works of righteousness were non-existent and they were no longer able to be a witness.

They were not walking as children of light, nor were they shining their light before men, in order that their good works be seen, and result in praise unto our Father who is in the heavens.

The second Hebrew word translated as '*weak*', as in '*weak knees*', is **כָּשַׁל** *kashal* – Strong's **H3782** meaning, '*stumble, totter, stagger, bring down, failing, weakening*'.

They were stumbling in their required work – why?

Because of false threats and messages from the enemy that will twist and manipulate the truth in order to cause people to fail in their obedient worship unto Elohim!

Today, we recognise that the false lies and traditions of men, that is being taught by false ear ticklers, who have turned away from the Torah, are causing many to stumble and become weakened in their faith, to do all that is commanded; and many will say today that it is impossible to keep the Torah – which is an absolute lie from the enemy, who simply wants to discourage the masses into thinking that they are unable to!

Our Master is coming!

How are you standing?

Are your feet rooted firmly in His love and firmly planted in His Truth, equipped to stand and not stumble or waver under pressure, heat or drought?

Blessed is the man who delights and meditates, day and night, in the Torah of יהוה, trusts in יהוה, for he shall:

NOT BE ANXIOUS IN THE YEAR OF DROUGHT!

So, hear the clear message:

BE STRONG AND DO NOT FEAR!

May these words bring much needed encouragement to keep trusting in יהוה and cause you to be bountiful in producing good fruit of righteousness that lasts!

This message is done with the clear purpose of causing us all to be strengthened in the Truth and stripped away of any anxious hearts, in order that we may stand firm and walk in the way of set-apartness, knowing that, as we sojourn here in our wilderness journeys, we shall have sufficiency in Messiah, as we drink of the Living Waters of His Truth. And in our proper walking in confident obedience to Him and His Torah, we shall be sufficiently enabled to continually sing praises to our Elohim, who is coming with vengeance and recompense, for He is coming to save us!!!

This is the message we are to be speaking to the weak and anxious!!!

For this is the message that will bring the healing truth to the blind, deaf and lame!

Will you too speak these very words of truth – that is: our Elohim is coming with vengeance, with the recompense of Elohim. He is coming to save us!

For this reason, our trust in Him can be secure in our knowledge of Him, as we guard His commands and bear witness of His deliverance in our lives, as we work out our deliverance with fear and trembling, not being anxious, but are rather having ears to hear what His Spirit says, so that we are strengthened in Him and He is our strength and our trust!

Be strong and do not fear – and speak up and proclaim for the reign of the heavens has drawn near, and in calling many out of Babel, we need to speak these words!

יהוה bless you and guard you; יהוה make His face shine upon you and show you favour;

יהוה lift up His face upon you and give you Shalom!