

GIRD UP YOUR LOINS AND ARISE, AND SPEAK THE TRUTH!

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 1 & Ma'asei/Acts 4:1-31

11th of the 8th month 2020/2021

Shalom all,

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 1:17 “**Now, gird up your loins and arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Do not break down before their faces, lest I break you before them.**”

These were the words that יהוה spoke to a young Yirmeyahu and these are words that are still very much alive and applicable to each and every one of us today.

Words that are very alive, to us who are a called-out and chosen people, who are commissioned by our Master to be trustworthy ambassadors of the coming reign of our King! In these darkened days, where depravity is on the increase, we are to gird up our loins and speak the Truth and not be afraid to do so!

The phrase, ‘gird up your loins and arise’ is written in the Hebrew as:

תֵּאָזֶר מִתְּנַיִךְ וְקַמְתָּ
te'zor matheneyka veqam'ta',

This phrase comes from the following root words:

- 1) אָזַר azar – Strong's H247 which means, ‘to gird, encompass, equip, clothe’ and is metaphorical of strength!
- 2) מִתְּנַיִן mothen – Strong's H4975 which means, ‘loins, back, body, heart, hips, waist’.
- 3) קָם qum – Strong's H6965 which means, ‘to arise, stand up, stand’, and in the tense this is written in, it can render the clear meaning, ‘to rise, to become powerful, to stand firm, to be established, endure’.

This instruction that was given to Yirmeyahu, to ‘gird up his loins’, meant that he was to ‘brace himself for action’!

He would not be able to stand up, and be ready for action, if he had not been properly equipped in the Word!

יהוה had equipped him with His Word and now, he was to rise up, stand firm and endure, with his loins properly girded with the Truth!

This call to stand up and be girded with the Truth, is one that we are all to hear and diligently respond to, with great faith and in doing so, we are not get discouraged by alarming circumstances that may seem unbearable or unfavourable!

One translation has rendered the first part of this verse as,

‘But you, dress yourself for work, arise and say to them everything that I command you’

In a message called, ‘GIRD UP YOUR LOINS AND ARISE, AND SPEAK THE TRUTH!’ I want to encourage all of you to hear these belief equipping words of our Master and Elohim and be strong and courageous, in being bold ambassadors who obey the instructions of Elohim and are not afraid to speak the Truth, boldly in His Name!

As I considered this action of girding up one's loins and stand up for the Truth, I certainly was reminded of the image of the Armour of Elohim, that we are to be properly dressed in, in order for us to stand correctly and continue to stand, having girded our waist with Truth! Standing armed with the belt of Truth, is a militaristic type picture of one being a trustworthy soldier of Messiah, being dressed in righteousness and guarding His commands spotlessly!

This picture of standing up and being girded about, is also a great lesson of how we are to apply the Word that we hear, by belief.

As taught ones of the Messiah, there is a time when that which we have learnt, must be applied by belief, according to the clear instructions of the Word, without wavering through compromise!

We come to sit at our Master's feet, in order to learn and then, we are to stand up, being properly girded about with His Truth, which we have diligently learnt and then, be ardent in boldly proclaiming His Truth, in all we say and do, doing all in His Name, as trustworthy ambassadors of our righteous King, whom we joyfully represent!

Our Master tells us the following, in:

Luqas/Luke 12:35 "Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning"

This command, in itself, carries immense insight and instruction, when understood from a true Scriptural perspective. And as we look at the words that are contained herein, we are able to see why!

The Greek word that is translated as 'let' is ἔστω *estō* – Strong's G2077 which is the imperative of εἶμι *eimi* – Strong's G1510 which means, '*I exist, I am, stay, remain*'.

And so, what we see here, in this phrase, is the clear command to 'exist in' or 'stay' 'dressed for action'!!!

This instructs us to be in a continual ready state of complete service and obedience, with our 'loins girded' and our 'lamps burning'!

If we are not found to exist in the proper 'clothing': that of righteousness (which is our guarding to do all He commands us to) and are not 'dressed and ready for action', then we shall be rejected by Him and be told to depart from Him, as one that He does not know!

The Greek word for 'loins' is ὀσφύς *osphus* – Strong's G3751 which means, '*hip, loin, gird about*', and it literally refers to the lower region of the back, the hips, and the reproductive organs. And the term, 'to have loins girded', means '*to be in readiness for anything*'!

The expression "to gird up one's loins", means to belt the garment which is worn ungirded in the house or in times of relaxation, with a view to greater mobility for work, for travel, or for battle etc.

And here, we are able to see the clear lesson of how we are not to be 'relaxed', in our duties and responsibilities of a set-apart priesthood, but rather, we are to be continually **watchful** and alert, ready to fight the good fight of belief at all times.

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 1, is part of this week's Torah readings, where we will be going through **Bemidbar/Numbers 30:1-32:42**, and as we take a look at some of the very key instructions given to Yirmeyahu, as well as the passage from **Acts/Ma'asei 4**, we need to be reminded of our need to be watchful, awake, and armed in the Truth of our Master, properly dressed in the Torah, being girded about with His Truth!

In speaking of Messiah, we are told what His girdle is:

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 11:5 “And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and trustworthiness the girdle of His waist.”

Now, if this is His girdle, then it is our girdle, for we are His Body – for we are the ones who have been joined together in Him, as His Body and make sure that we stay in Him!

The Hebrew root word that is used here for ‘girdle’ is אָזֶרֶת **ezor** – **Strong’s H232** which means, ‘**girdle, belt, waistband**’ and what we can clearly see from this, is that righteousness must be a belt of truth for us, which is properly strapped around our waist and loins, so that we continue to walk in righteousness and not stray, for after all, we know that it is righteousness for us, when we guard to do all that יהוה our Elohim has commanded us, as we are clearly told in **Debarim/Deuteronomy 6:25**.

Standing firm, in the Master, and having our loins girded, is a clear command that is given to us and is given for the clear purpose of proclaiming the Truth, no matter the circumstances that we may find ourselves in!

We cannot allow circumstances, good or bad, to dictate our ability to stand up and have loins girded with Truth, lest we find that unfavorable circumstances cause us to be incorrectly dressed, with the cloak of compromise that has loosened the grip that the belt of Truth ought to bring.

This is a call to be strong and not be discouraged!

Despite living amidst much rebellion to the Truth, we must not allow the girded belt of Truth to be loosened from our loins!

Listen to the words that יהוה our Elohim spoke to Yehezqël:

Yehezqël/Ezekiel 2:6-8 “And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions. Do not be afraid of their words or discouraged by their looks, for they are a rebellious house. 7 “And you shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious. 8 “And you, son of man, hear what I am speaking to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house, open your mouth and eat what I am giving you.”

Being girded about with Truth and armed in the Word of Elohim, we must not be discouraged by the rebellious, as we must be bold in speaking the Truth, even if they refuse to listen!

What we also take note of, is that with the boldness that we are to speak, we must make sure that our actions line up with what we speak and make sure that we are not found to be compromising the Word by faithless actions of compromise and sin.

We have such great examples that are given to us in the Scriptures, of mighty and bold servants of our Master and Elohim, as well as examples of many who were not as bold and faithful, as they should have been, and we need to learn from these, to ensure that we remain faithful and are therefore always able to stand firm in our Master, being bold and not silent, especially in the midst of much chaos, rebellion and conflict that we may often find ourselves!

We must always be ready to give an answer for the hope that we have in Messiah!

Are you?

Let us take a brief look at what Yirmeyahu was told, before being clearly told to gird up his loins, arise and speak the commands of Elohim.

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 1 opens up with a clear identification of who this bold prophet was

The Hebrew name of יִרְמְיָהוּ **Yirmeyahu – Strong’s H3414** means, **‘Yahweh has appointed/Yah loosens, Yah will rise, Yah will raise up and appoint’**.

He was the son of הִלְקִיָּאֵהוּ **Hilqiyahu – Strong’s H2518** which means, **‘my portion is Yah’**, who was one of the priests in אֲנָתוֹת **Anathoth –Strong’s H6068** which means, **‘answers to prayer’**, in the land of Binyamin.

This young Yirmeyahu, was being called by יְהוָה, to rise of and speak the Word of יְהוָה.

The word of יְהוָה came in the days of Yoshiyahu son of Amon, sovereign of Yehudāh, in the thirteenth year of his reign, until the exile of Yerushalayim in the fifth new moon.

Yoshiyahu was the 15th king of the House of Yehudāh and over a span of 40 years, the Word of יְהוָה came to Yirmeyahu, who stood up, from the time of him being called in his youth and he was bold in speaking the Truth of יְהוָה, during the reigns of the last 5 kings of the House of Yisra’ēl.

The example of Yirmeyahu, is one of trustworthy endurance, amidst many years of increased depravity and while most were turning their ears away from hearing the Torah, this trustworthy prophet did not let circumstances affect his call to speak the Truth!

At his initial calling to stand up, יְהוָה made it clear to a young Yirmeyahu, that יְהוָה knew him before He formed Him in the belly and clearly identifies Himself to this nervous teenager, that the Creator of all has called Him to be a bold ambassador.

What is abundantly clear, is that יְהוָה is the One who forms us in the belly and He is calling for those who respond to His clear functional design, to rise up and take a firm stand in the Truth of His Word.

Yirmeyahu’s initial response to יְהוָה, was one of inadequacy, thinking that he was too young to be used by יְהוָה. He said that he was just a youth and was told to not say that he was only a youth.

We see Sha’ul giving the same encouragement to a young Timotiyos, in:

Timotiyos Aleph/1 timothy 4:12 **“Let no one look down on your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in behaviour, in love, in spirit, in belief, in cleanliness.”**

One thing we can learn, is that ‘in the Master’, we are not to think that we are too young, or even, too old, to gird up our loins, rise up and speak the Truth.

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘youth’ is נָעָר **na’ar – Strong’s H5288** which means, **‘lad, boy, youth attendant, child’**.

We are told in the parables of Shelomoh, the following:

Mishlĕ/Proverbs 22:6 **“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he turns not away from it.”**

The Hebrew word used here for ‘train up’ is **הָנִיחַ** *hanak* – Strong’s H2596 meaning, ‘**to train up, dedicate**’, and the word for ‘child’ is **נֶעֱרַב** *na’ar* – Strong’s H5288.

Being a son of priest, we are able to see that Yirmeyahu was adequately trained up, now being able to be a bold prophet of **יהוה**, who would not turn away from the Truth that he was trained up in.

There was no excuse that Yirmeyahu could make that would get him out of obeying the clear command to speak, and this account also reminds me of Mosheh, who when called by **יהוה** at the burning bush, made 5 excuses as to why he thought he could not go and call a people out of enslavement!

The Word of **יהוה** is the clear armour that we need, to be properly dressed and girded about our loins, and therefore, we would do well to learn from Mosheh, Yirmeyahu and Timotiyos, that we are not to have any excuses to our need to be bold ambassadors of the reign of our Master, as we take heed to obey His commission that He has given us, to go and make taught ones of the nations.... For the promise of His presence being with us wherever we go, ought to encourage us to be diligent to the call to gird up our loins and arise to speak with great zeal for the house of Elohim, which we are!

יהוה made it clear to Yirmeyahu that to everyone He sends him, he was to speak what **יהוה** had commanded.

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘send’ in **verse 7** comes from the root word **שָׁלַח** *shalah* - Strong’s H7971 which means, ‘**to send, dispatch**’, and in the LXX (Septuagint), which is the Greek translation of the Tanak (O.T.), the Greek word that is used for ‘send’ is **ἐξαποστέλλω** *exapostellō* – Strong’s G1821 which means, ‘**to send forth or away**’ and is a construct from the tow root words:

- 1) **ἐκ** *ek* Strong’s G1537 which means ‘**from, from out of, belonging**’ and
- 2) **ἀποστέλλω** *apostellō* – Strong’s G649 which means, ‘**to send forth, set-apart and send out (on a mission), ordered to go to a place appointed, send away**’, which is a technical term for the sending of a messenger with a special task.

When Sha’ul was giving his defense before a people who wanted to kill him for proclaiming the Good News, we see this word **ἐξαποστέλλω** *exapostellō* – Strong’s G1821 being used and translated as ‘send’, when he was making it clear that Messiah told him that He would send him to the nations:

Ma’asei/Acts 22:21 “**And He said to me, ‘Go, because I shall send you far from here to the nations.’”**

The crowds listened to his defense, up until these words, and then they could not hear anymore and sought to kill him.

What we can learn from the examples we have been given in the Scriptures, is that many may tend to listen to you, for a while, and once you make it clear that you are being bold in speaking the Master’s Word, according to His clear commission, most will not want to hear you anymore and may even become very hostile toward you.

This is where we are to hear the clear truth that we are not be afraid of what others will say, in our defense and witness of the Truth.

Don't back down, but gird up your loins and arise and speak the Truth!

In **verse 7** Yirmeyahu is clearly told to speak whatever יהוה commanded!

The Hebrew word that is translated here as 'I command you' is אֶצְוֶנָּךְ *atzaveka*, which comes from the root word צָוָה *tsavah* – Strong's H6680 which means, '*to lay charge, give charge, command, order, decree, i.e., state with force/authority what others must do*'.

This is clear militaristic style language, being given by the Commander of Hosts, to this young teenager, who was being called to his feet, in order to stand and speak the clear commands of Elohim!

The Hebrew word that is translated as 'speak' comes from the primitive root verb דָּבַר *dabar* – Strong's H1696 which means, '*to speak, command, counsel, declare, proclaimed, converse, warn, threaten, promise*' and a derivative of this word is also translated as '*speech, word, commandment/s, message*'.

This is written in the 'piel' verb tense which usually expresses the intensive or intentional form, highlighting for us, very clearly, that this was a clear command being given to Yirmeyahu, who was to go with great intensity and speak the commands of Elohim.

Having been told to go and speak, יהוה makes it clear to Yirmeyahu, before he could make any further excuses, that he was not to be afraid of those he was to go and speak to, for יהוה was with him, to deliver him from all fears!

This, in itself, is a clear encouragement for us today, on being bold, strong and courageous, in The Master, for we need not fear the response of others, when we stand up and speak the Truth!

יהוה then touched the mouth of Yirmeyahu and was told that the Word of יהוה was now in His mouth and he would be given what to speak!

This image of being touched by יהוה, reminds me of the account of Yeshayahu, who, after seeing יהוה seated on his throne, declared that he was a man of unclean lips. Yeshayahu's lips were touched by a coal from the slaughter place and his crookedness was taken away and his sin covered!

Yeshayahu's unclean lips were cleansed and his crookedness was taken away, as he received the refining fire of deliverance, straight from a live coal that was taken from the slaughter place, which shadow pictures the sacrifice of our Master, who entered into the Most Set-Apart Place in the heavens with His own blood, having obtained an everlasting redemption, and by His sacrifice, He can restore unto those who draw near and confess, a clean lip!

By His Blood, we are able to have our conscience cleansed from dead works, in order to serve the living Elohim!

With Yeshayahu having his unclean lips cleansed, we are also able to see a powerful shadow picture of our Master, restoring a clean lip unto the peoples, so that they can call upon His Name and serve Him perfectly:

Tsephanyah/Zephaniah 3:8-9 “Therefore wait for Me,” declares יהוה, “until the day I rise up for plunder. For My judgment is to gather nations, to assemble reigns, to pour out on them My rage, all My burning wrath. For by the fire of My jealousy all the earth shall be consumed. 9 “For then I shall turn unto the peoples a clean lip, so that they all call on the Name of יהוה, to serve Him with one shoulder.”

Yirmeyahu was told by יהוה that he had been set up by Elohim, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

Very clear words indeed, and what we can learn from these very descriptive words, is that in order for us to be properly built up and planted, we need to ensure that all crookedness is rooted out, pulled down, destroyed and overthrown!

Our Master has appointed those within His Body, to equip His body unto maturity, and we are His Dwelling Place, being built up in Him. But in order to be properly planted in His House and built up in complete set-apartness, we need to recognise the urgency of destroying all compromise and falsehood, making sure that there is no room for bitterness and depravity to come sprouting up, trying to choke out the Truth, through worries and deceit of riches etc.

This charge to go and root out, pull down, destroy, overthrow, build and plant, required precision and alertness. He could not sit idly by, but was called to rise up and be awake and watchful. In making this clear, יהוה asks Yirmeyahu what he saw, to which he responded that he saw an almond tree.

The Hebrew root word for ‘almond’ is שָׁקֵד *shaqed* – Strong’s H8247 which comes from the root of the same spelling שָׁקַד *shaqad* – Strong’s H8245, which means ‘*to watch, keep watch, and lie awake*’.

We see the use of this word being used as a play on words in:

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 1:11-12 “And the word of יהוה came to me, saying, “What do you see, Yirmeyahu?” And I said, “I see a branch of an almond tree.” 12 And יהוה said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to do it.”

Almond tree here in the above **verse 11** is שָׁקֵד *shaqed* – Strong’s H8247 and ‘**watching over**’ in **verse 12** is שָׁקַד *shaqad* – Strong’s H8245.

We are to be awake and watching, guarding the Torah and not be found to be sleeping and unable to bear the fruit of righteousness.

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘tree’ is מַקְלֵל *maqel* – Strong’s H4731 which means, ‘*rod, staff*’ and it is used in the following verse:

Shemoth/Exodus 12:11 “And this is how you eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Passover of יהוה.”

The reason I mention this verse, is that we can also recognise that in the Pēsah of יהוה, we need to realise that because of the work of Messiah, we are to be urgent in our walk and urgent is how we ‘eat’ as instructed, always ready to walk in the true shalom of His Word, under the authority of His Torah, which is to be in our hands!

In other words, we are to be 'doing' the 'good works' of His Torah!

We know from Scripture, that it was the rod of Aharon that budded ripe almonds, highlighting יהוה's choosing and call and shadow pictures for us the need to submit to the clear authority of our High Priest and King, יהושע Messiah.

We also know that the Lampstand (Menorah) was made with 22 almond blossoms, signifying the complete Word of Elohim, as the Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters.

In order for us to be sober, alert and watchful children of light, we are to submit under the clear Torah of Elohim, guarding to do all he has commanded us to, as well as stand up and speak what has been commanded!

Therefore, whether in word or in deed, all must be done in the Name of יהושע Messiah.

יהושע continually reminds us to be an 'awake people' that 'watch':

Mattithyahu/Matthew 24:42 "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Master is coming."

Mattithyahu/Matthew 25:13 "Watch therefore, because you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Adam is coming"

Mattithyahu/Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into trial. The spirit indeed is eager, but the flesh is weak."

Ḥazon/Revelation 3:2-3 "Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete before Elohim. 3 "Remember, then, how you have received, and heard. And watch and repent. If, then, you do not wake up, I shall come upon you as a thief, and you shall not know at all what hour I come upon you."

Marqos/Mark 13:33 "Take heed, watch and pray, for you do not know when the time is"

Luqas/Luke 21:36 "Watch then at all times, and pray that you be counted worthy to escape all this about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Adam."

Two words in the Greek are used here for watch and the word used here for 'watch' in the first 4 passages that I have quoted here above is: γρηγορέω grēgoreō – Strong's G1127 and means, 'to be awake, alert, keep watching, stay alert' and comes from the primitive verb ἐγείρω egeirō – Strong's G1453 which means, 'to waken, to raise up, awaken'.

And the Greek word that is translated as 'watch', in the last 2 verses above, is: ἀγρυπνέω agrupneō – Strong's G69 which carries the meaning, 'to be sleepless, wakeful, keep on the alert, keep watch'.

We need to always be awake and alert and watchful, and just as Yirmeyahu was being called to keep watch, so too are we, as the body of Messiah, that shines the Light of the Truth, before a very darkened people!

Yirmeyahu was then shown a boiling pot that was coming out of the north and this was a clear picture of the judgement of יהוה that was coming upon the wicked and disobedient.

It was after seeing this vision of the coming judgement that he is told:

GIRD UP YOUR LOINS AND ARISE, AND SPEAK THE TRUTH!

This was not a time to sit by and watch, as things progress... this was time to get up and speak the Truth, to a rebellious people who would most likely reject the truth!

Yirmeyahu is once again given the assurance that יהוה is with Him and that he need not fear the people he was to speak to and he was warned against being afraid of how they would look at him.

He was basically told that if he broke down before them, then יהוה would break him!

This same message applies today... if you are going to be too afraid to stand up and speak the Truth, being girded with the Truth, then you will be destroyed along with the wicked!

Our Master tells us, in:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 10:33 “**But whoever shall deny Me before men, him I shall also deny before My Father who is in the heavens.**”

The Greek word that is translated as ‘deny’ is ἀρνέομαι arneomai – Strong’s G720 which means, ‘**contradict, deny, reject, renounce, disown**’, and this word can have a twofold meaning for us, as we are to renounce and disown all works of darkness and lawlessness, yet we are not to disown or deny our Master as we guard to do all He has commanded us to do – for this is our righteousness!

Timotiyos Bět/2 Timothy 2:12-13 “**If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also shall deny us. 13 If we are not trustworthy, He remains trustworthy, it is impossible for Him to deny Himself.**”

To deny the Master and His mighty like power that has given us all we need for live and reverence will result in Him denying us! If we do not endure, we shall not reign with him!!! Lack of endurance under pressure reveals a denial of the Master!

As I mentioned, the Greek word for **deny**, teaches us what we are to deny and what we are not to deny. We are able to learn from Mosheh:

Ib’rim/Hebrews 11:24 “**By belief, Mosheh, having become great, refused to be called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh**”

The Greek root word translated here as ‘refused’ is ἀρνέομαι arneomai – Strong’s G720, and so we see a great example of how Mosheh ‘refused’ or for purposes of this message, ‘denied’ being identified with Pharaoh, which teaches us how we too must deny any association or identity with the world and fleshly ways, lest we end up denying the Master! We must deny the flesh, yet not deny the Master!

This Greek word, we see being used in the LXX (Septuagint – Greek translation of the Tanak):

Berěshith/Genesis 18:15 “**But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh!”**”

Sarah denied the fact that she would have a son and so she denied the promise of life by the Word of Elohim!

When Sarah did give birth she said, “**Elohim has made me laugh, and everyone who hears of it laughs with me.**” (Berěshith/Genesis 21:6).

And in many ways, we see the restoration of her denial at the birth of the promised seed!

The Hebrew word used here for ‘denied’ is כָּחַשׁ kahash – Strong’s H3584 which means, ‘**to be untrue, to lie, deny, disown, fail**’.

This is the first time that this word is used in Scripture, and we see this word being used in:

Mishlê/Proverbs 30:8-9 “Remove falsehood and a lying word far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me my lawful bread; 9 lest I become satisfied and deny You, and say, “Who is הַיְהוָה?” and lest I be poor, and steal, and seize the Name of my Elohim.”

Iyob/Job 31:24-28 “If I have put my trust in gold, or called fine gold my refuge; 25 if I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gained much; 26 if I have looked at the sun when it shines, or the moon moving in brightness, 27 so that my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand – 28 that too is a punishable crookedness, for I would have denied Ĕl above.”

Iyob made it clear that if he had in any way put his trust in the wealth, riches and ways of this world then he would have denied Elohim.

Works of unrighteousness, which is to do works without the proper boundaries of the Torah and commands of Elohim, is a denial of Him.

Many people may be doing many great works, yet when done from a base of lawlessness, that is – when done from a base of foundational teaching that teaches that the Torah is no longer valid and is done away with, then their works are in vain and they shall be denied by the Master!

Luqas/Luke 13:25-28 “When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Master, Master, open for us,’ and He shall answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ 26 then you shall begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ 27 “But He shall say, ‘I say to you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of unrighteousness.’ 28 “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Yitshaq and Ya‘aqob and all the prophets in the reign of Elohim, and yourselves thrown outside.”

These are very serious words indeed, as the Master is clear – those who work unrighteousness are not known by Him and therefore shall be denied by Him, despite their claims to have ate and drank in His presence and that He taught in their streets!

By their own confession they will declare that He did teach, but their unrighteous works will prove that they did not listen and therefore denied Him before man, to which He too will therefore deny those who are lawless!

Mattithyahu/Matthew 7:23 “And then I shall declare to them, ‘I never knew you, depart from Me, you who work lawlessness!’”

Yirmeyahu was being called to stand up, be armed in the Truth and speak boldly... or else!!!

The same encouragement, call, warning and woe is given to us today!

How are you responding!

We know what is coming, for the revelation of our Master has been made clear to those who have turned to Him and responded to His call to come out and be separate! With that same call, we are also given the clear commission to gird up or loins, arise and speak the Truth, or else!!!

In this message, I also want us to look at the boldness and courage of some of the early emissaries/apostles, and learn from their example, of how we too must be bold and of good courage, no matter what we may be facing or who we may be speaking to.

As good and faithful soldiers of our Master and Elohim, יהושע Messiah, we must be willing to stand and after having done all... keep standing, girded with the Truth and not turn back from living in complete set-apartness, especially when the battles that we face get tough!

Our Master tells us that the one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is not fit for the reign!

The French foreign legion has a motto that states:

“If I falter, push me on; if I stumble, pick me up; if I retreat, shoot me!”

This statement certainly carries much boldness in it as the motto emphasizes the fact that retreating or giving up is not an option.

Their motto echoes the kind of boldness that we see Sha’ul writing about, in:

Ib’rim/Hebrews 10:38-39 “But the righteous shall live by belief, but if anyone draws back, my being has no pleasure in him.” 39 But we are not of those who draw back to destruction, but of belief to the preservation of life.”

While the French foreign legion may have a very inspiring motto, we take note of the inspiring examples of the men and women of faith that we have been given, to equip us to not retreat from set-apartness and our need to be continually girded in the Truth!

Let us take a closer look at one such example, whereby we can learn some key lessons of how we are to be faithful in standing firm always!

Please turn with me to **Ma’asei/Acts 4:1-31** (read).

Now, we know that Kěpha and Yoħanan were not part of the French foreign legion, but they certainly are an example for us, of those who demonstrated the determination of not backing down from doing what a true ambassador of Messiah ought to do, after all they were enlisted in to a greater army – that of our Master and Elohim.

After being used by Elohim to heal a man who was crippled from birth and then teaching and preaching to a crowd, they were arrested, jailed, threatened and warned never to speak in יהושע’s Name ever again!

What was their response to this?

They made it clear that it is impossible for them to not speak of what they had seen and heard as they responded to the elders with a clear choice of whether they thought that it was right in the sight of Elohim to listen to them more than Elohim!

Putting their response into today’s terms, I would suggest that their answer could have been rendered as something like this:

No way – were gonna keep on; there’s no question about it! We will not stop!

We all need to learn from the example of their choices to stand firm and we must follow their example and learn from the Word of Elohim how to remain steadfast in the face of trouble and persecution.

In standing firm, as faithful ambassadors of our Master, we can learn some vital lessons of Truth, from the events that took place in this Chapter, in regards to the strength and steadfastness of the early believers; and be able to apply these truths to our lives, in our own effort to continue to stand firm, be bold and not be silent in the midst of conflict!

In this message, I would like to highlight 6 lessons that we can learn from the example of Kěpha and Yoḥanan, on how to stand firm, as a faithful witness of our Master, Elohim and Saviour, **יהושע** Messiah.

1 – WE SHOULD EXPECT MIXED REVIEWS

As believers in Messiah, who stand firm with loins girded in the Truth, we must realise that we are often going to be misunderstood, mistreated and even ganged up on at times!

Have any of you ever felt like you have been misunderstood, mistreated or ganged up on, for simply standing firm as you walk in **יהושע** Messiah and stay in Him?

In **verse 3**, we see Kěpha and Yoḥanan being seized and put in jail for the night, with the hope of shutting them up!

Sometimes we are treated wrongly purely because of a misunderstanding.

Let's face it, whenever we communicate there is always place for misunderstanding.

A philosopher once said, **"I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realise that what you heard is not what I meant."**

They may have been misunderstood, but that was because those who refused to hear the Truth were rebellious and denied Messiah.

When one refuses to hear the Truth and submit to it then they will never understand the Truth, which will cause them to misunderstand those who proclaim the Truth and in doing so will react harshly to the Truth!

People who misunderstand you, when you are simply speaking the Truth, will get nasty and harsh, in word or deed or in both!

There are going to be people who misunderstand us and the truths of the Good News because of their background; and the efforts of our enemy, Satan, who is the author of confusion, who will always be trying to work against us and the witness of our lives!

Often, people will distort what we say, distort our motives and reject our witness.

How many times have you had someone twist what you say and then try to tell others that you advocate what you do not?

Still, at other times, when people are confronted with a message they don't like, they tend to resort to violence or passive aggression, which can at times be even more dangerous!

As a believer and ambassador of Messiah, we must expect to have mixed responses to the message that we are living out in our witness and lifestyle, as we do all, whether in word or deed, in the Name of **יהושע** Messiah!

Do not let mixed reviews discourage you from standing firm in the Truth!

What we take note of here in this Chapter, is that despite the negative reviews of a misunderstanding people there were many who heard the Truth and believed!

Take note that there will be some who will hear your message and respond in the right way, no matter how many may misunderstand you!

2 - WE SHOULD LEARN TO SEE OPPOSITION AS OPPORTUNITIES

How we view things, in many ways, determines what we deem to be reality, for outlook often determines outcome!

If you look at this event that we are discussing today, through the view that the glass is half empty, you could easily find yourself focusing on the emissaries' discomfort and mistreatment. After all, they were arrested for speaking the Truth and boldly proclaiming the reign as our Master commanded!

They were mistreated for obeying יהושע!

They spent a night in an uncomfortable jail cell!

Then they came face to face with the same people who sentenced יהושע to death!

A whole lot of negativity to focus on, if that is what your focus is on!

Our attitude however needs to be different; we need to see it as יהודה opening an opportunity to present the Good News: יהושע Messiah – the very Name that most do not want to hear!

They were given a one on one, face to face opportunity to present the Good News and Truth, to the very leaders who had, within their own man-granted authority, the ability to help in opening the door for the Good News to be told to others.

Kěpha and Yoħanan were unlearned, ordinary men who were now given an opportunity to speak with the elite in the land.

We must always see the opportunities יהודה enables us to have when facing opposition; instead of trying to bail out and give up!

We are to stand firm, be bold and witness and not be afraid of the faces of the rebellious!

Kěpha and Yoħanan were not stupid!

What the elite of the land saw was two men who were unschooled in their rabbinic system, yet these two men were very learned in the Torah of Elohim, having sat under the proper teachings of יהושע Messiah, the Author and Perfector of our faith and His Torah!

We must never be intimidated by those who are learned in the theologies and dogmas of man, but must exercise boldness in our study of the Torah that we meditate upon day and night upon, and not be afraid to speak the Truth that our Master teaches and equips us with through His Word, as we are led by His Spirit!

We must see any opposition, that is brought by those who claim to be learned in the theologies and doctrines of man, as opportunities to plainly witness the clear Truth!

3 - WE NEED TO LET יהודה DO THE WORK THROUGH US

Kěpha wasn't speaking "on his own"; but was being led in what to say by the Spirit of Elohim.

The prophetic words of יהושע in **Mattithyahu/Matthew 10:17-21** was being fulfilled!

Listen to this:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 10:17-20 "But beware of men, for they shall deliver you up to sanhedrins and flog you in their congregations. 18 "And you shall be brought before governors and sovereigns for My sake, as a witness to them and to the gentiles. 19 "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it shall be given to you in that hour what you shall speak, 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking in you."

When we faithfully walk according to the Spirit, which is to walk in the Truth according to the Word without compromise, then we shall always be ready to be given what we shall speak.

These two men could speak of what they knew and what they had learned from the Master, yet their boldness came from being filled with the Spirit of Elohim!

We too must always be ready to speak up and not be afraid that we will not know what to say.

As we meditate on His Torah day and night and make His Word our daily study, then the Spirit of Elohim will give us His Truth to speak and quickly bring to remembrance the Truth that we have learned!

How often have you found that when you are witnessing to others that the Truth just flows and afterwards you stand amazed at how you could remember all the things that you spoke?

This is what happens when we are bold in proclaiming the Truth and allow His Spirit to lead us and bring to remembrance His Word that is to be upon our hearts and in our mouths, to do it!

When confronted with questions of the Truth, do not fret about what you should say but be at peace and stand firm in the knowledge that our Master will give you what you need to say!

What we must also recognise here is that those who are not making the Word of Elohim their delight and who neglect to study and meditate upon it will not have boldness to be led in Spirit and Truth, for the Truth is not in them!

4 – WE MUST NEVER COMPROMISE

Compromise is a dangerous thing.

Our approach may vary but our message must always be the same.

Kěpha and Yoħanan did not compromise their message of the Truth in any way, when confronted by the elders!

They did not back down or water down their approach in order to appease the ears of their accusers!

We can never compromise the Good News in fear of offending anyone who is listening!

So many remain silent when they ought to stand up and be firm and bold, in proclaiming the Truth and this is not an option for a true ambassador of the reign!

We have been given a purpose and that is to proclaim the reign of our Master and keeping silent for fear of what others may say is nothing more than compromising one's witness and renders one unfit to be called a witness of the Good News!

Kěpha and Yoħanan did not compromise their message just because they stood before the elders and those who accused them for doing good!

Kěpha's message to the elders and rulers was the same as what he gave to the crowds, which was simply this:

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ is the Messiah that you have been waiting for, there is no other! You are the reason that He died! He was raised from the dead! We are witnesses of Messiah and our lives have been changed because of Him! He is the Only Deliverer and it is only in His Name that men can be saved!

The message may certainly have contained more details, when talking to the seeming intellectuals of the day, yet the message of salvation was the same.

We can never compromise the pure message of our Master by compromising our witness in any way.

We cannot and must not change our witness, whether in word or deed, before others who may try to intimidate us!

5 - WE MUST CONTINUALLY SEEK יהוה TO STRENGTHEN US WITH BOLDNESS AND NOT BREAK DOWN BEFORE THE REBELLIOUS!

What you will notice, is that Kěpha and Yoħanan were noticed by their accusers, for their boldness in **verse 13**, then after they had been released and had reported back to the other believers what the elders had said to them, they prayed to יהוה and asked that He give them boldness to speak His Word and then, in **verse 31**, we see that all the believers were filled with the Set-Apart Spirit and they spoke the Word of Elohim with boldness!

Do not rely on 'past victories', but always rely on יהוה, continually seeking Him with your all, in order to be strengthened with His joy to boldly proclaim His Word!

Boldness is one of the key elements that we see in this chapter and the Greek word that is used here for 'boldness' is **παρρησία parrēsia – Strong's G3954** which means, '*freedom of speech, confidence, boldness, publicly*'.

Boldness (**παρρησία parrēsia – Strong's G3954**) is possible as a result of our guilt having been removed by the blood of Messiah:

Ib'rim/Hebrews 4:16 "Therefore, let us come **boldly** to the throne of favour, in order to receive compassion, and find favour for timely help."

Boldness is not arrogance!

It is confidence in the Master and is an active expression of our belief and trust in Him!

Eph'siyim/Ephesians 3:12 "in whom we have **boldness** and access, with reliance, through belief in Him."

If our trust and belief/faith is weak, we will not be equipped with a proper boldness, to speak His Word and perhaps one of the reasons why so many lack the courage and boldness to speak the Truth, is that their belief/faith in the Master is weak, especially as they get intimidated by unfavourable circumstances or the threatening presence of unbelievers!

For this reason, it is important that we pray for each other, to be filled with much boldness in speech and word, as we take note of Sha'ul's words in reference to the Armour of Elohim that we are to take up, be girded in and stand firm in:

Eph'siyim/Ephesians 6:17-20 "Take also the helmet of deliverance, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of Elohim, 18 praying at all times, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching in all perseverance and supplication for all the set-apart ones; 19 also for me, that a word might be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to be bold in making known the secret of the Good News, 20 for which I am an envoy in chains, that in it I might speak boldly, as I should speak."

Having the helmet of deliverance speaks of our confidence in the Master's redemptive work in our lives and having a secure mind in the Master equips one to pray and watch with perseverance. We take note of the responsibility we have to pray for one another, so that we all may be bold in proclaiming the secret of the Good News!

Sha'ul proclaimed the Master with much boldness, no matter what he went through and we take note of the last two verses in the book of Ma'asei/Acts:

Ma'asei/Acts 28:30-31 "And Sha'ul stayed two entire years in his own rented house, and was receiving all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the reign of Elohim and teaching about the Master יהושע Messiah with all boldness, unhindered."

Nothing hindered his boldness in proclaiming the reign of Elohim and teaching about our Master יהושע Messiah!

Nothing should hinder our boldness in doing so too!

We too can have boldness in our walk and witness if we feed on the Word, pray and serve and worship the Father in Spirit and Truth!

When we display true confidence and trust in Messiah, we can make a difference and be bold in our proclamation of Him and His coming reign, however, when we allow circumstances and people to hinder our confidence and faith, then we will not be as bold as we should and have no effect on others!

Do you display confidence and trust in the Master or do you allow trials and tough situations get you down?

Is your belief/faith in the Master evidently seen in your life or do others not know what you believe?

We can make a difference through our character, and guess what – trials develop character, praise יהוה for them!

Do people notice the character of Messiah in you, especially as you go through trials?

We can be bold in presenting the truth – why – because it is the truth!

We must never back down, be silent or timid in our presentation of the truth, and this is true for every area of your life.

Stand firm, be bold in Messiah and do not be silent!

6 - WE NEED TO REJOICE AT THE VICTORIES יהוה BRINGS

I think that one of the most important things that is often overlooked and neglected is the proper praise and rejoicing that we ought to have in the victories that our Master brings!

All too often we may find that troubles and hardships become the focus of our attention which causes us to overlook the victories that should be rejoiced in!

It is important for us to stop and thank יהוה for the victories and blessings He brings.

We must always have an attitude of gratitude.

Tas'loniqim Aleph/1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in all circumstances give thanks, for this is the desire of Elohim in Messiah יהושע for you."

There was much to celebrate, in the events that we see taking place, here in this Chapter 4 of Ma'asei/Acts!

A man who was over 40 years old and had been crippled from birth was healed!

Kěpha and Yoħanan got the opportunity to proclaim Messiah before the elders and intellectuals of the day, and did so with much boldness!

They did not focus on the hardships but rejoiced and prayed and went with much boldness and declared the Truth and were willing to die for it!

When we neglect to rejoice and give thanks to יהוה the danger of allowing the circumstances and threatening looks of others to affect us can cause us to compromise our need to be bold and our obedience can be hindered!

When commanded not to speak in the Name of יהושע, they did not get discouraged but remained strengthened in the Truth of obeying Elohim who calls us to proclaim His Name, make known His Name and boast in His Name!

In the next chapter, we again see Kěpha and the other emissaries speaking with boldness and declaring that they have to obey Elohim rather than men!

Ma'asei/Acts 5:29 "And Kěpha and the other emissaries answering, said, "We have to obey Elohim rather than men."

We cannot allow the fear of man to grip us and cause us to be silent!

An example that we can learn a vital lesson from, in this regard, is from the poor example of the wicked king Sha'ul, who disobeyed the voice of יהוה because he feared the voice of man and did not obey the instruction of putting all Amalēq under the ban, but kept the sovereign of Amalēq, Aḡaḡ, alive and kept the best of the sheep, and the cattle, and the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not put them under the ban.

But all goods despised and worthless, that they put under the ban.

Sha'ul claimed that he had kept the best to slaughter to יהוה in an attempt at excusing away his disobedience to the clear instructions of יהוה.

Shemu'el Aleph/1 Samuel 15:22-26 "Then Shemu'el said, "Does יהוה delight in burnt offerings and slaughterings, as in obeying the voice of יהוה? Look, to obey is better than an offering, to heed is better than the fat of rams. 23 "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as wickedness and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of יהוה, He also does reject you as sovereign." 24 And Sha'ul said to Shemu'el, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the command of יהוה and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. 25 "And now, please pardon my sin, and return with me, and let me bow myself to יהוה." 26 But Shemu'el said to Sha'ul, "I do not return with you, for you have rejected the word of יהוה, and יהוה does reject you from being sovereign over Yisra'el."

Sha'ul feared the people and compromised his obedience and this rebellion is as the sin of divination! I often think that many do not realise just how wicked compromise is; for if they did then they would not get flustered by the fear of others and compromise their obedience, but would stand firm, be bold and speak and do the Truth unhindered!

Kěpha and Yoḥanan had gone through a difficult experience, but they came through it stronger than ever, why? Because they stood firm through the conflict; they realised that they would have mixed reviews; they learnt to see opportunities in opposition; they allowed יהוה to work through them in confident and bold faith; they never compromised; they were confident in יהוה's ability above their own and they rejoiced in the victories that יהוה brings and made known the Name of יהושע Messiah!

As we consider the boldness of Kěpha and Yoḥanan, Sha'ul, Yirmeyahu and Yeḥezqēl, to name a few, along with the example of rebellion displayed by king Sha'ul, let us take care in recognising our need to:

GIRD UP OUR LOINS AND ARISE, AND SPEAK THE TRUTH!

Will you be a faithful taught one of the Master and gird up your loins and arise and speak His Truth!

The harvest is plenty and the workers are few.

Will you be bold, strong and courageous, in proclaiming the Truth, being properly dressed and girded in the TRUTH and not let anything or anyone cause you to compromise your message, in word or deed?

Will you pray for the other set-apart ones and continue to give thanks to Elohim and obey Him without compromise?

Then...

GIRD UP YOUR LOINS AND ARISE, AND SPEAK THE TRUTH!

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

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