

GOOD AND SET-APART BEHAVIOUR AMONG THE NATIONS!

11th of the 1st month 2022/2023

Shalom all,

Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 2: 11-16 “Beloved ones, I appeal to you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which battle against the life, 12 having your behaviour among the nations good so that when they speak against you as evil-doers, let them, by observing your good works, esteem Elohim in a day of visitation. 13 Be subject to every institution of man because of the Master, whether to the sovereign as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of doers of evil, and a praise for those who do good. 15 Because such is the desire of Elohim, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, 16 as free, yet not using your freedom as a cloak for evil, but as servants of Elohim.”

These words of Kěpha struck me greatly again this week, as I pondered on the state of the chaotic lawlessness and injustice that we see, being that which plagues the earth, as corrupt leadership is not governing mankind according to the Torah of Elohim, but is doing as they see fit in their own eyes, to the peril of the people!

How do we live in a society that does not submit to the clear standards of יהוה's righteousness?

To answer that, we need to take heed of the appeal that Kěpha makes to us, the chosen, royal and set-apart priesthood of Elohim!

When our Master comes again, He will establish His Reign here on earth and govern the earth according to His clear standards of righteousness, as outlined in His Torah. Until that time, we, His called-out ones, are to submit to His Torah, meditate on it day and night and walk according to it, so that we can be properly equipped to abstain from the corruption that defiles.

As ambassadors of His coming reign, we have a huge responsibility in doing what is right in the eyes of יהוה and, in doing so, we recognise that we may not always be well received by most in this world, as they do not submit to walking in the Torah of Elohim but rather, they do whatever is right in their own eyes!

Until He comes to establish His Reign on earth, we need to realise that we are **‘sojourners and pilgrims’** in a foreign land!

I love this passage of Scripture, as we are reminded that we are called out, we are chosen and we are His possession!!!

We belong to יהוה, for He bought us at a price and we are His!!!

And knowing this, we ought to live like it, even while we are 'in exile', so to speak, as we are not yet in The Land, He has promised us!

I felt it fitting to address the need for us to be reminded that we have been cleansed by the Blood of Messiah and have the vital responsibility of keeping clean and unstained, in a defiled world, as we keep our set-apart behaviour good among the nations, where we find ourselves sojourning until our Master and Redeemer comes!

As we look at the world around us today, it is plain to see that in almost every sphere, whether it is in politics, religion, medicine, education, the arts, sport or even family life, there is indeed an integrity crisis.

The once long accepted ethical codes of conduct are quickly being disregarded and this has given way to simple short-term pragmatics of ambition, profit margins and pleasure! In other words, morality and integrity has been, at large, thrown out of the window and replaced with the pursuit of self and selfish gain, no matter the consequences of one's actions.

What makes it even more shocking, is the mere fact that this 'lack of integrity', that we see today, no longer shocks anyone.

Instead, it is gaining popularity as a means of living, sadly so, as this is contrary to the words that we find in Scripture!

Business deals are riddled with corruption and many relationships are poisoned with compromise in varying degrees!

And so, in a 'dog eats dog' society, the main priority for most is to look out for self, as being the only seeming key to surviving today!

Governments have varying agendas that, in some way, diminish one group of people while favouring another, as equality and fair rights are being discarded under the banner of so-called reforms that only benefit the one's in power and their followers.

While we could go on and highlight various examples of this, the point I am trying to make is simply this: we are living in a world that does not respect, acknowledge, accept or adhere to the Torah and commands of יהוה El Shaddai, Creator and Ruler of the heavens and the earth!

Integrity is described as, 'a firm adherence to a code of moral or artistic values', which speaks of being incorruptible, complete, honest and undivided.

When facing an integrity test, the majority in the world today would certainly fail – how about you?

An excellent handbook for us, on how to live and maintain this set-apart life, while in exile, is the book of Dani'ël, as his life and character pictures for us a number of great lessons for us to follow, in carrying and displaying the character of set-apart living.

Please read **Dani'ël/Daniel 6:1-16**

This chapter can be a mirror for us, as we look intently in to The Word, in order to reveal how we look, as we are exposed to the life and character of Dani'el. In this chapter, Dani'el is around 80 years of age – for this was the 3rd king under whom he had faithfully served; and so, for many it may, in itself, be an eye opener that he was, in fact, about 80 years old when he was thrown in to the den of lions! He was not a little boy, as the world has erroneously portrayed in its attempt at diminishing the validity of the Truth of The Word of Elohim, into mere fables or 'nice stories'. No, these are real events of real people and they are recorded and written for us as warnings and instructions on how we are to live set-apart lives amidst a corrupt and wicked generation! Although we will not be looking at the lion incident in this message, we will be looking at the events that led to Dani'el being thrown in to the den with the lions – events that truly mark the great integrity and character of a man that was chosen by Elohim and one who was well equipped to endure to the end.

From this section that we have read, we are able to see 3 critical qualities being clearly displayed in his life! Qualities that, as we look into the mirror of this passage, ought to be in our lives today too! These qualities that Dani'el had, kept him strong and of good faith, amidst a very corrupt political system, and it got him thrown to the lions and he was delivered by the mighty Hand of Elohim!

Our Master יהושע tells us in:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 10:16 “See, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

He goes on to say that men will deliver you up to the authorities and that we should not fear what we should say, for the Spirit will equip us with that which we should speak, in belief!

He tells us that brother will deliver up brother and we will be hated by all for His Name's sake, but those who endure to the end shall be saved!

Well, we certainly see this happening more and more today – brother against brother – being hated for His Name's sake!

And we know what will be coming in the days ahead: the identification or the mark of our worship becoming more evident, as those who are set-apart and clean will be more set-apart and clean while those who are filthy and corrupt will become more so!

Those who endure to the end, will hold fast to the keeping of the Sabbath and Feasts of יהוה, as the sign of who they submit to and worship, while many people will fall away to a 'Sun-day' observance enforced by man and fall away to breaking the Sabbath and commands just to get by and 'survive', so to speak!

Those who keep the Sabbath and do not adhere to the, soon to be enforced, 'sun-day' laws of worship and other mandated laws of man, will be delivered up for persecution.

Now, how ought we to be equipped in our sojourning, in order to face and handle these days?

This is where the life of Dani'el is a great mirror for us to measure up to, as we walk in Messiah and stay in Him.

As we therefore look into the mirror of The Word, let us take a closer look at 3 great qualities, or character traits, that Dani'el had, and as we look at these, this can, in effect, be an integrity test for each of us!

1 – PERSONAL INTEGRITY (6:4b)

“...they were unable to find occasion or corruption”

His fellow governors and viceroys did not like him, for Dani'el was 'too clean' for them. They tried all they could to find fault with his conduct of government affairs – always looking for some occasion where they could find a mistake or flaw and they were unable to do so and this frustrated them greatly!

Today it is the same, as you get those who are constantly trying to find fault with others – perhaps it is a way to steer away the focus of their own faults and insecurities!

Imagine, for a moment, coming under this kind of scrutiny – having your life come under the microscope and laid bare for all to see!!!

This is worse than the Paparazzi!

Let me ask you right now:

“If some serious questions arose about your life and your character was being ruthlessly challenged, how would you hold up?”

Would you be nervous and anxious as to what may be exposed?

Would there be some evidence that you may just like to burn or destroy?

Imagine being dissected by one and all in their attempt to find some flaw.

Well, the test of personal integrity is an ongoing occurrence, of how you handle yourself in your daily life, be it at work, at home or at play!

Yes, that is: in every area of your life.

Dani'el did not divide up his life, so to speak, and live differently in one area and another way in another – he did not 'wear different hats', so to speak, or divide what is commonly called today secular and sacred!

NO, he lived out his whole life in full obedience unto יהוה and in every area of his life he worked, and devoted himself, unto יהוה – giving the highest regard for excellence in every situation, as he served the King above all kings!

And this is simply the reason that they could find no corruption in him.

Let me make it very clear – when you live as Dani'el lived and you take a firm stand of integrity, that is in living in firm adherence to the instructions/Torah of Elohim in every area of your life – then know this: you WILL face opposition:

Timotiyos Bět/2 Timothy 3:12 “And indeed, all those wishing to live reverently in Messiah יהושע, shall be persecuted.”

Taking a stand of personal integrity, in Messiah, will result in opposition and trouble from your co-workers, colleagues, family and friends – especially if they are lazy and lack true integrity in the Word of Elohim.

They will naturally become envious of you and be extremely jealous of you and may even try to plot harm against you!

Let me ask you straight up – Are you a man or woman of integrity like Dani’ěl?

His name gives a great key to his adherence to living right according to the Torah of Elohim!

The name Dani’ěl – דַּנְיֵאֵל Strong’s H1840 means, *‘my El is judge, El is my judge’*

Dani’ěl knew who he had to give an account to and he lived accordingly and did not take lightly the instructions of Elohim!

Do you live out your life in giving your all – giving your 100% best unto יהוה, no matter where you find yourself and no matter what the circumstances might be?

Or do the circumstances that you find yourself in determine your attempted level of obedience?

Personal integrity is key to walking out reverently in Messiah, in our sojourning, right here right now.

Looking intently into the mirror of the Word and seeing the life of Dani’ěl – how do you look? Is there some adjustment needed?

For each one must work out their own salvation with fear and trembling!

How did Dani’ěl live out his personal integrity? – **Character number 2:**

2 – STEADFAST FAITHFULNESS (6:4c)

“Because he was steadfast, and no negligence or corruption was found in him.”

Whatever, and I mean whatever Dani’ěl did, he did faithfully – even at 80 years old, as he never tried to cut any corners!!!

He didn’t try to learn some **‘tricks of the trade’** in order to overlook or override that which is required!

He was **‘steadfast’** and there was no **‘negligence’** or **‘corruption’** in him!

Looking at these root words, helps us see and understand just how personal integrity in the Living Elohim is lived out fully:

A – Steadfast

The Hebrew word that is translated as **‘steadfast’** comes from the root word אָמַן aman –

Strong’s H540 which is the Aramaic word that corresponds to the Hebrew root word אָמַן aman – **Strong’s H539** which means, *‘confirm, support, be established, be faithful,, stand firm, trust, be certain, believe, be trustworthy and loyal, be reliable and dependable, be confident’* and is written in the causative action, which means it is actively present and consistent.

He was a trustworthy ambassador of Elohim!

A word that is derived from the root אָמַן aman – Strong’s H539, is the Hebrew word for ‘truth’, which is אֱמוּנָה emunah – Strong’s H530 which means, *‘firmness, steadfastness, faithfulness, stability, trust, truthful’*.


We serve a faithful and trustworthy Elohim – and in Him we find true stability, as we stand upon the Rock of Truth!

When looking at אֱמוּנָה emunah – Strong’s H530 which means, *‘firmness, steadfastness, faithfulness, stability, trust, truthful’*, in the ancient pictographic script, we are able to learn the clear characteristic of trustworthiness, as it looks like this:




Aleph - אָ:



The ancient script has this letter as  and is pictured as *‘the head of an ox’*, and represents *‘strength’*, meaning *‘muscle’* as the ox is the strongest of the livestock animals. This also carries the meaning of *‘yoke’*, as an ox is placed in a yoke in order to plough or pull a heavy load in the right direction. This can also picture for us the *‘red heifer’* sacrifice, that יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Messiah fulfilled!

Mem – מָ:




The ancient script has this letter as  and is pictured as *‘water’*, and also carries the meaning of *‘chaos’* (from the storms of the sea) and can also picture that which is *mighty* or massive as well as the unknown.

We are also able to understand this letter as representing *the nations*, for the nations are often likened to the seas in Scripture.

This also carries for us the picture of washing, as we understand the function of water being that which cleanses us and sustains us, showing us how we are washed and sustained by the Living Waters of the Word!


Waw/Vav – ך:



The ancient script has this letter pictured as  , which is a ‘**peg or tent peg**’, which was used for securing or tying the tent or other items. The possibility of it having a Y-shape is to show that it prevents the rope from slipping off. The root meaning of this letter is ‘**to add, secure or hook**’.


Nun – ך:



The ancient pictographic script has this letter pictured as  , which pictures a ‘**sprouting seed**’ and gives the idea of continuation or an offspring or an heir, speaking of that which sprouts forth to be the heir of the promise of continuation, and represents one’s life expectancy.

Hey – ך:



The ancient script has this letter pictured as  , which is a ‘**man standing with his arms raised out**’. This word can also mean “**behold, look, breath, sigh and reveal or revelation**”; from the idea of revealing a great sight by pointing it out.

It also carries for us the meaning of surrender, as we lift up our hands and submit to יהוה as we lift our hands in praise, declaring His authority under which we humbly submit!

In the understanding of this word אֱמוּנָה emunah – **Strong’s H530** representing for us ‘**steadfastness and trustworthiness**’, we can clearly see from these pictures the following:

THE COMPLETE AND SURE STRENGTH OF OUR MASTER WHO WASHES US AND SECURES FOR US THE PROMISE OF EVERLASTING LIFE, AS WE SUBMIT TO HIM AND PRAISE HIM WITH OUR ALL.

Our ability and strength to remain trustworthy servants, comes as we allow The Word of our Master to wash us and secure us in Him, as we walk in total submission to Him, with hands lifted high in continual praise of our Master and Elohim.

Dani’el was completely steadfast and a trustworthy set-apart one of The Most-High And being steadfast, there was **NO** negligence or corruption found in him:

B – Negligence

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘negligence’ comes from the root word שָׁלוּ shalu – Strong’s H7960 which is the Aramaic word that means, ‘neglect, negligence, fail, offensive’ and corresponds to the Hebrew root word שָׁלַח shalah – Strong’s H7951 which means, ‘to deceive, be negligent, mislead’ and this word implies a carelessness in duty and failing to do what is required and expected!

Many people in the world today, are negligent of their required duties and will be deceitful in putting on an appearance of obedience, while being misled and even misleading others to being negligent too!

C – Corruption

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘corruption’ comes from the root word שָׁחַת shehath – Strong’s H7844 which is the Aramaic word that means, ‘corrupt, be lying, be untrue and falsified, morally corrupt and wicked’ and corresponds to the Hebrew root word שָׁחַת shahath – Strong’s H7843 which means, ‘destroy, ruin, spoil, pervert, corrupt’. Yeshayahu/Isaiah 1:4 “Alas, sinning nation, a people loaded with crookedness, a seed of evil-doers, sons acting corruptly! They have forsaken יְהוָה, they have provoked the Set-apart One of Yisra’el, they went backward.”

In the days of Noah we see the following:

Berēshith/Genesis 6:11-12 “And the earth was corrupt before Elohim, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And Elohim looked upon the earth and saw that it was corrupt – for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth”

The reason for me highlighting these two verses from Berēshith/Genesis, is to show how corrupt mankind was in the days of Noah!

And we know that our Master likens the last days to that of Noah, where men will be corrupt, yet we can take courage from the example of Noah, who was a righteous man in his generation, as well as Dani’el, in whom there was no corruption amidst a corrupt and wicked government!

Steadfast – and **no negligence** or **corruption** was found in Him!

WOW – that is a great description of Dani’el – a real steadfast man!

Mishlê/Proverbs 20:6 “Most men proclaim each his own loving-commitment, but who finds a trustworthy man?”

What Shelomoh is making clear here, is that while most will proclaim that they are exercising loving-commitment, the reality is that their assumption of their own standard of loving-commitment, may not necessarily measure up with true trustworthiness!

In the time of the judges (Shophetim), we find it being written twice that because there was no sovereign in Yisra’el, everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

Everybody exercised a different standard of what they deemed to be their own loving-commitment.

Today it is no different, as there are so many people who are claiming that their own standard of loving-commitment is good enough, even though they willingly break the Sabbath and various other clear instructions for righteousness, as they hold fast to false man-made traditions and forsake the commands of Elohim and claim that they are lovingly-committed to the Creator!

The clear question that Shelomoh asks here, is whether a trustworthy man can be found! Many people can talk a lot, yet their actions may prove otherwise and despite their claim at being lovingly-committed, their actions reveal that they are simply untrustworthy!

In a Psalm of Dawid we see the following:

Tehillah/Psalm 12:1 “Save, יהוה, for the lovingly-committed one is no more! For the trustworthy have ceased from among the sons of men.”

In Hebrew, the word that is translated as ‘loving commitment’ is חֶסֶד *hesed* – Strong’s H2617 which means, ‘*goodness, kindness, deeds of devotion, faithfulness*’.

Mishlë/Proverbs 3:3 “Let not loving-commitment and truth forsake you – bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart”

Loving-commitment and Truth: two very powerful words that are often neglected to be carefully considered by so many “wanna-be believers”, who think that they can do whatever they want and still claim that they love Elohim.

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘truth’ is אֱמֶת *emeth* – Strong’s H571 which means, ‘*truth, firmness, faithfulness*’, and this word carries an underlying sense of certainty and dependability – and we know that The Word of יהוה is truth:

Tehillah/Psalm 119:142 “Your righteousness is righteousness forever, and Your Torah is truth.”

Tehillah/Psalm 119:151 “You are near, O יהוה, and all Your commands are truth.”

Tehillah/Psalm 119:160 “The sum of Your word is truth, and all Your righteous right-rulings are forever.”

Anyone who claims to serve יהוה, without walking in and giving heed to follow His Torah, commands and instructions, are not serving in Truth, and those who claim that the Torah/Law of Elohim has been done away with, are sadly riddled with the leaven of the hypocrisy of man’s theologies and dogmas that seeks only to serve self rather than the Giver of Life, while claiming the opposite!

When a true servant, who fears יהוה, serves in perfection and in truth, then the putting away of the falsehood that had been inherited from the past, is done with urgency and without hesitation!!!

And in order to do that, we need to recognise that **loving-commitment** and **truth** must go hand in hand!

In fact, when we look a little closer at the word for '**loving-commitment**', in the Hebrew, we are able to clearly see that true loving-commitment is and it can only be connected with the pure truth of the Word!

Many may claim their own loving-commitment, yet it is not the loving-commitment that Scripture requires!

This clear and wise instruction given, in **Mishlě/Proverbs 3:3**, to not let loving-commitment and truth forsake you, is vital in realising that they go hand in hand; for we are able to realise that loving-commitment without truth can quickly degenerate into sentimentalism, and truth without loving-commitment can calcify into legalism.

I would like us all to be reminded of our need to be a trustworthy hearing, guarding and doing people of the Truth, as our loving-commitment toward יהוה is seen in our obedience to His truth, as we walk faithfully in His Torah with great joy!

I will simply run through, a little more in-depth, into what this Hebrew word for '**loving-commitment**' - חֶסֶד **hesed** – Strong's H2617 – is all about and how important it is for us to realise our need to not forsake it!

The Hebrew root word חֶסֶד **hesed** – Strong's H2617 appears 248 times in 241 verses in the Tanak (O.T.), and is closely linked to another Hebrew word that is often also translated as '**kindness, favour, grace**' – and that is the word חֵן **hen** – Strong's H2580 which means, '**grace, adornment, favour, gracious**' and comes from the primitive root verb חָנַן **hanan** – Strong's H2603 meaning, '**show favour, be gracious to, dealt graciously with, given to them voluntarily, shown favour**'.

These two words, חֵן **hen** – Strong's H2580 and חָנַן **hanan** – Strong's H2603, are collectively used 141 times in the Tanak (O.T.).

The common term '**grace**' which is often interpreted as meaning '**unmerited favour**', is often understood in the Hebrew as the word חֶסֶד **hesed** – Strong's H2617 which means, '**goodness, kindness, deeds of devotion, faithfulness**' and appears 248 times in the Tanak (OT) – **5 times more than the Greek word translated as 'grace' in the Renewed Covenant (N.T.)!!!**

In Hebrew, the concept of חֵן **hen** – Strong's H2580 and חֶסֶד **hesed** – Strong's H2617 goes hand in hand, in understanding our loving relationship with יהוה.

The root word חֵן **hen** – Strong's H2580 can best be described as '**a gracious and favourable action passing from a superior to an inferior**' and is an action that cannot be forced upon or demanded!

This, in many ways, carries the same concept of the ‘Christian’ idea or concept of ‘grace’, as understood through the Greek word **χάρις charis** – **Strong’s G5485** meaning, **‘grace, kindness, blessing, favour’**.

In Hebrew, **חֵן hen** (favour) is poured out as a gift to a people who have no ‘claim’ to it, as it is given freely and so, we see that this certainly is not a ‘new’ concept, as it is a continuous theme right through the Scriptures, in describing the Loving-Commitment that is extended by **יהוה** to Yisra’el, His Covenanted people!

What we must understand though, is that both **חֵן hen** – **Strong’s H2580** and **חֶסֶד hesed** – **Strong’s H2617** are uniquely related, in terms of understanding the fullness of our relationship with our Creator.

Although these two words are closely linked, in relation to walking in a relationship with our Saviour, we note that **חֶסֶד hesed** – **Strong’s H2617** is different to **חֵן hen** – **Strong’s H2580**.

We find both these words being used together in:

Berēshith/Genesis 39:21 “But יהוה was with Yoseph and extended kindness to him, and He gave him favour in the eyes of the prison warden.”

יהוה extended **חֶסֶד hesed** – **Strong’s H2617** to Yoseph and gave him **חֵן hen** – **Strong’s H2580** in the eyes of the prison warden.

What we find in Scripture, is that **חֶסֶד hesed** – **Strong’s H2617** is used only where there is a prior relationship bond, be it through family, marriage or kinship, and it is used in regards to a bond or relationship that produces in the bond itself a requirement or an obligation for action, where both parties share **חֶסֶד hesed** – **Strong’s H2617** and can expect from each other and even demand in a sense, reciprocal responsibilities, and so **חֶסֶד hesed** – **Strong’s H2617** is not a free gift!

Now, we see that over and over **חֶסֶד hesed** – **Strong’s H2617** is used to describe and express **יהוה**’s relationship with Yisra’el, His Covenanted Bride and that includes all who are brought near and grafted in to these Covenants of promise, by the Blood of Messiah!

We must understand therefore, that **חֶסֶד hesed** – **Strong’s H2617** is a word that is often associated with the understanding of obligation and commitment and does not just simply mean unmerited favour alone!

Yisra’el and **יהוה** are obligated to each other, in marriage, as a result of the Covenants made by **יהוה** with Abraham, Yitshaq and Ya’aqob!

יְהוָה חֵן – Strong’s H2580 certainly is the primary reason behind the establishment of the Covenants of Promise, however the moment the Covenants were made, obligation became attached to it by both parties.

And while Yisra’el constantly broke their obligation to the Covenants we see how lovingly committed יְהוָה is by extending His favour to us, an undeserving people and by His יְהוָה חֵן – Strong’s H2580 (being gracious toward us and adorning us with favour in His eyes) He has extended to us His Loving-Commitment - חֶסֶד חֵן – Strong’s H2617 – His loving-commitment to the Covenants which He remains faithful to, in being obligated and fully committed to; and thus because of His יְהוָה חֵן – Strong’s H2580 which is freely given to us, we too are now by our acceptance of His free gift also required to express true commitment in understanding our obligation to guarding the Covenant!

How we do that, is by walking ‘in’ His Torah (often translated as ‘law’).

The Torah (law) of יְהוָה is His instructions for us on how we walk in His חֶסֶד חֵן – Strong’s H2617, and so the Torah (instructions) of Elohim is the articulation of the obligation we have to the Covenants of Promise by which we are freely and graciously grafted in to by the Blood of Messiah!

We did not earn the right to this Covenant – יְהוָה made the Covenant out of יְהוָה חֵן – Strong’s H2580, and therefore, we understand that the יְהוָה חֵן – Strong’s H2580 freely given, entails חֶסֶד חֵן – Strong’s H2617, which now both parties are to be committed to and both have an obligation to keep its requirements.

If we reject the obligations and requirements of the Covenant, we are in fact rejecting the loving-commitment - חֶסֶד חֵן – Strong’s H2617 – and by doing so, are rejecting יְהוָה’s bond to us, given freely by His Own Blood!

To put it plainly, we could say that יְהוָה חֵן – Strong’s H2580 is ‘**grace/favour poured out**’ and not חֶסֶד חֵן – Strong’s H2617.

Most of Scripture speaks clearly of חֶסֶד חֵן – Strong’s H2617 as a result of יְהוָה חֵן – Strong’s H2580; and even in the Renewed Writings (N.T.), we see a constant and continual thread of the understanding of the mutual obligations and requirements that are entailed in a ‘bonded’ relationship with יְהוָה, by the Blood of יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Messiah.

חֶסֶד חֵן – Strong’s H2617, in the Hebraic mind-set, characterises our identity as being a part of, and walking ‘in’, the Kingdom of Elohim!

So, when understanding the concept of 'grace' and 'favour', we find that it is not a new concept, as we see that in the truest sense, in the Hebraic understanding, it entails giving the correct response of obedience in response to the free gift of life extended to us by the Hand of our Creator, and not just a receiving of the gift alone!

The Torah gives us the clear instructions how we respond to His free gift and how we are to live in Him, as a people who are in Covenant with Him!


As we consider these two very powerful words in the ancient pictographic script, we can grasp a better idea of what it means for us to be 'saved by grace (favour)' and our responsibility to responding to the 'favour and loving-commitment' of Elohim!

In the ancient pictographic script, the Hebrew word **חֵן** **hen** – Strong's H2580 meaning, '**grace, adornment, favour, gracious**' looks like this:



Het – **ח**




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, and represents a '**boundary**', or better understood as our '**boundaries**' in recognising the need to walk within the boundaries of the Torah and not step outside of that which has been prescribed for us!

Nun – **נ**:



The ancient pictographic script has this letter pictured as , which pictures a '**sprouting seed**' and gives the idea of continuation or an offspring or an heir, speaking of that which sprouts forth to be the heir of the promise of continuation, and represents one's life expectancy.

By the clear loving-commitment of our Master, Saviour and Elohim we have been saved by His favour (grace) and when looking at this word in the pictographic symbols we are able to see that we are:

SEPARATED, BUILT UP AND ESTABLISHED BY THE SEED – WHICH IS MESSIAH!

The covenants of promise that we were once far off from us, as we were without Messiah and excluded from citizenship in Yisra'el, have been brought near by the Blood of Messiah! Eph'siyim/Ephesians 2:11-13 **“Therefore remember that you, once nations in the flesh, who are called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is called ‘the circumcision’ made in the flesh by hands, 12 that at that time you were without Messiah, excluded from the citizenship of Yisra'el and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no expectation and without Elohim in the world. 13 But now in Messiah יהושע you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah.”**

Galatyiim/Galatians 3:16 **“But the promises were spoken to Abraham, and to his Seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Messiah.”**

Realising how we have been separated by The Seed, through the favour He has shown us, we also need to realise that, as living stones being built up in Messiah, that we are to make sure that we do not let loving-commitment and truth forsake us!


Mishlê/Proverbs 3:3 **“Let not loving-commitment and truth forsake you – bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart”**

In the ancient pictographic form, the Hebrew word for ‘loving-commitment’ - חֶסֶד *hesed* – Strong's H2617 looks like this:



Het – ח



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’.

The commands that are to be written upon the doorposts, are there to remind us that we are to submit to the rules of the House and remember that His rules He has written upon the tablets of our hearts!

And as we recall to mind the חֶסֶד *hesed* – Strong's H2617 of יְהוָה, we can be comforted and encouraged to remain lovingly-committed to walking in and guarding His Covenant with us, unhindered by the empty threats and ridicule of others!

BACK TO DANI'ĒL 6

Dani'ěl certainly understood the loving-commitment and favour of יְהוָה!

Dani'ěl did not need to proclaim his own loving-commitment – his life of reverent obedience declared it in his trustworthiness!

The answer to that proverb of Shelomoh, is typically: **'rarely do you find a trustworthy man'**!

But Dani'ěl was one – a *'rare breed'* if you will.

Rarely will you find people who will actually do what they say or follow through on what they commit to; or one who 'hangs in' and does not give up when the going gets tough – may we all be part of an assembly of 'rare' ones – called out, chosen and set-apart ones, amēn!

Are you trustworthy and steadfast in Messiah?

Can people count on what you say?

Can they count on you getting the job done that is required of you?

As you 'rub shoulders', daily, with the world around you and come across multitudes of corrupted people, people you may even work with, or know personally, and interact with – how do you live?

Do you remain trustworthy unto Elohim – are you faithful to your Maker and Saviour?

Can you be counted upon in getting done the job that is required of you, to the esteem and praise of יְהוָה?

Or do you find yourself easily influenced by corruption and compromise and end up only giving half-hearted efforts in order to merely scrape by?

Being steadfast in our daily walk in Messiah is critical and vital.

Dani'ěl remained steadfast amidst the opposition and persecution.

How about you?

What do you do when people begin to ridicule you about your Torah walk – your life of obedience unto Messiah?

What happens when you are ridiculed and mocked and challenged about keeping Shabbat?

What happens when you are ridiculed because you no longer watch the rugby or other sporting event or attend those party braais and socials on Shabbat?

What do you do when you are mocked and laughed at, because you do not eat that which is not classed as food – things that you may previously have indulged in, but now is an abomination to you – like pork, crayfish to name a couple – what do you do – do you shy away or give in – or do you remain steadfast and trustworthy with His Word now living in you?

What about when people laugh at your tzitzit – when they see these ‘threads’ hanging off your clothes and ask questions in a derogatory manner – what do you do?

Do you answer them with boldness or do you try to hide and avoid any forms of confrontation?

These are just some basic examples that may not bother any of us – although I am sure at first, they may have, yet walking steadfast in integrity according to the Word, one only becomes stronger and more courageous.

Compromise in the life of a believer is not an option!!!

Dani’el’s accusers could not find fault with him and so, they devised a plan in order to trap him by making a law that is contrary to his flawless life of steadfast faith.

A decree was issued, declaring that for 30 days no one was allowed to petition or pray to any ‘mighty one’ or any other man other than king Dareyawesh (Darius).

Anyone found to be petitioning any other would be thrown into the den of lions.

What does Dani’el do?

He remains steadfast to יהוה and continues to pray and make petitions daily – not to Dareyawesh, but unto יהוה – just as the men expected Dani’el to do.

What is important to realise here, is that Dani’el didn’t try to go into hiding – he remained steadfast and did what he had always done and his whole life reflected whom he worshipped and served!

The men sought a way of finding something in the Torah of the Elohim of Dani’el that would interfere with the agenda of the Babelonian culture and tried to use his obedience unto יהוה, against him.

Dani’el remained steadfast, committed to serve and was without corruption!

The third character trait we see here in his life is:

3 – AUTHENTIC SPIRITUALITY (6:10c)

“...As he had done before”

His prayer life was consistent – he did not only pray when there was a need or a crisis or when there was panic!

In fact, he did not panic; for His trust was in יהוה the Living Elohim.

As he had always done, he went up to his room, got down on his knees and prayed and gave thanks to יהוה – as he had always done – business as usual!

Dani’el was not flaunting his prayer life – he simply did as he had always done and this is a very powerful lesson for us – a critical lesson on how to not get side-tracked by the enemy’s agendas, but rather, do as we always do in our life of obedient worship.

This is authentic spirituality – this is real spirit filled living – the spirit of excellence was on him.

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘**excellent**’, in **verse 3**, comes from the root word **יָתִיר** **yattir** – **Strong’s H3493** which means, ‘**exceptional, outstanding, pre-eminent and extraordinary**’.

It can also carry the connotation of ‘**shining**’ or ‘**visible from afar**’.

An excellent spirit was in him and he let that shine!

This, in itself, is a great image that we can learn from, especially as we consider that we are called to shine our light before men!

Dani’el walked by the Spirit and not the flesh and it was abundantly obvious; and his prayer life reflected this very excellent spirit that was in him.

Dani’el knew the decree and that did not cause him to panic, he knew that he would possibly be handed over to the king for persecution – and that would be another opportunity to witness for Elohim!

How is your prayer life?

What does it take for you to get on your knees - a tragedy or a crisis or even a physical lack?

Dani’el’s prayer life was habitual – that is: it was a part of his daily life – a good habit.

Prayer is vital for us and we would do well to have a good habit of daily prayer and quiet time, no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in.

How many times, when asking someone how they are, do you find attached to their response the addition of, “**...I am trusting Elohim for breakthrough in...**”?

Although it is a great confession, as we are to trust Him totally, but how about just giving Him esteem and thanks – it is not all about you!!!

It is about the esteem of His Name – yes present your petitions, but with thanks – be thankful and filled with great awe for the One who has called you out and set you apart for a possession – you are His **סְגֻלָּה** **segullah** – **Strong’s H5459**– His treasured possession: **(Debarim/Deuteronomy 14:2)** – give Him thanks that we are His, amēn!

Many people today, will even have the lame excuse that they just do not have the time to pray and quite frankly that is a whole lot of rubbish!!!

Dani’el was one of the top government officials of an entire nation, yet he made it his priority to make the necessary time for prayer, without neglecting his duties, as they could find no fault in him!

Too many people today, want to use work and rough schedules as an excuse for their lack of authentic living, according to the spirit, while others will, at times, try to use their fake spirituality as an excuse for their lack of performance at work, by blaming their lack of performance on ‘spiritual matters!!!

For far too many people today, a productive prayer life is simply not a priority and it is very clear that the evidence of this is seen in the lives of those who struggle to remain steadfast, faithful and committed.

What is also sad to see, is the seeming repetition of recited prayers – that is: a rhyming off of lines of prescribed prayers that have been devised and constructed by man and are simply learnt by recital, without the actual application of one's heart and mind interacting with יהוה.

This is often done as a means to make one feel good about having done one's prayers, as a means of their religious duty, yet the relationship with יהוה, evidently becomes cold and loveless and so, they rarely get to extract issues of the heart and accredit true thankfulness and praise unto יהוה.

יהושע taught us **how** to pray – He did not give us a recital to memorise and recite in a parrot like fashion – He gave us a clear guide and instruction on the manner of how we ought to pray.

Let me ask you at this point: when your life gets busier and busier, does your prayer life and quiet time decrease?

Don't let it, but rather let your prayer and reading of Scripture increase, even as your daily life demands more of you!

As pressure increases around you, increase your prayer and reading time!

For some of you, just continue to do as you always have done – although I am sure that most of us would admit that prayer and quiet time could most certainly increase – and believe me, you will need it!!!

יהוה has called us, set us apart and chosen us, to live in Him and He has called us to a life of integrity.

Dani'el is a great example for us to learn from – he was a man who was committed to walking upright in the integrity of the Living Word, even when the world's systems tried to find fault with him.

Do not compromise your walk and confession of belief in any way.

Let the character of set-apart living be evident and let it bud forth in your life, with fruit that lasts, as you sojourn here as foreigners who are faithfully waiting for our King's return!

As we reflect on these accounts, as recorded in Dani'el's life, may we be encouraged to stand firm!

What it comes down to is our worship.

Will we remain steadfast in our worship or not?

Through this great example and clear mirror of His Word, let us realise that, as we walk in Messiah, in this world we will face trouble, but we are to take courage for He has overcome the world and so, let us be about our Father's business and let His character be shaped in us, unto completion in Him.

It is all about choice!

Dani'el had a choice or rather, was often was faced with many choices and he continued to make the right choice.

We have the choice to walk in obedience to His Torah, which is life to us, or in lawlessness, which results in death.

Debarim/Deuteronomy 30:11-20 **“For this command which I am commanding you today, it is not too hard for you, nor is it far off. 12 “It is not in the heavens, to say, ‘Who shall ascend into the heavens for us, and bring it to us, and cause us to hear it, so that we do it?’ 13 “Nor is it beyond the sea, to say, ‘Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, and cause us to hear it, so that we do it?’ 14 “For the Word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart – to do it. 15 “See, I have set before you today life and good, and death and evil, 16 in that I am commanding you today to love יהוה your Elohim, to walk in His ways, and to guard His commands, and His laws, and His right-rulings. And you shall live and increase, and יהוה your Elohim shall bless you in the land which you go to possess. 17 “But if your heart turns away, and you do not obey, and shall be drawn away, and shall bow down to other mighty ones and serve them, 18 “I have declared to you today that you shall certainly perish, you shall not prolong your days in the land which you are passing over the Yarden to enter and possess. 19 “I have called the heavens and the earth as witnesses today against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. **Therefore you shall choose life**, so that you live, both you and your seed, 20 to love יהוה your Elohim, to obey His voice, and to cling to Him – for He is your life and the length of your days – to dwell in the land which יהוה swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Yitshaq, and to Ya‘aqob, to give them.”**”

Walking in Torah – walking in Messiah – The Living Torah – leads to life!

Walking outside of Him and in rebellion to His Torah leads to death.

Dani'el chose life and he lived!!!

He chose:

1 - Discipline over disorder

He maintained a steadfast commitment to יהוה, amidst the temptations to quit and follow the ‘disorder’ of man’s temporary rules for self-gain.

Man’s rules may come and go and even change at intervals to suit self-gain, but The Word of Elohim remains forever.

Governments will change their laws and policies regularly, but the Word of Elohim remains!!!

2 – Love over ‘lust’

He chose obedience over compromise due to fleshly threats.

Love is obedience to Elohim’s commands, as opposed to the world’s portrayal of ‘living it up’ by chasing after the lust of the flesh

3 – Character over comfort

Character is built through endurance and perseverance through trials, as opposed to the world's comfort of fitting in or keeping up with the joneses.

Is the true character of set-apart living evident in your life?

In **verse 3** we are told that Dani`ël distinguished himself above the governors and viceroys, because an excellent spirit was in him.

The word that is translated as 'distinguished' comes from the Aramaic root word **נִצָּח** **netsah** – **Strong's H5330** which means, '*to distinguish oneself*', and corresponds to the Hebrew root word **נָצַח** **natsah** – **Strong's H5329** which means, '*preeminent, enduring, continual, ongoing, overseer, chief singer, choirmaster*' and implies a reputation of excellence among a peer group, and is often translated as 'choirmaster' in many of the Tehillim/Psalms.

Our character of set-apartness ought to cause us to be distinguishably different to the rest of the world, which will certainly bring about a hatred toward us.

May we learn from the example of Dani`ël, that we are to be distinguishable different and be steadfast in doing so, allowing the clear character of our Master and His set-apartness be reflected through us, in all we say and do.

Let me read again the words of **Kěpha/Peter**

Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 2: 11-16 "**Beloved ones, I appeal to you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which battle against the life, 12 having your behaviour among the gentiles good so that when they speak against you as evil-doers, let them, by observing your good works, esteem Elohim in a day of visitation. 13 Be subject to every institution of man because of the Master, whether to the sovereign as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of doers of evil, and a praise for those who do good. 15 Because such is the desire of Elohim, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, 16 as free, yet not using your freedom as a cloak for evil, but as servants of Elohim.**"

Rise up and be the Dani`ël's of today – the remnant few that will remain steadfast to walking in integrity, revealing a true authentic life of walking according to the Spirit; as His excellent Spirit in within you.

He remained faithful and trustworthy in service to Elohim, while still being subject to every institution and when the judgement from man-made institutions came upon him, he was protected by Elohim!

We can be steadfast, amidst a wicked generation, and we can have our set-apart behaviour good among the nations, no matter how corrupt the systems and governments of the world get!

We can walk according to the Spirit, amidst a fleshly world and we can abstain from fleshly lusts which battle against the life, as we stay in the Master and guard righteousness and be unaffected by the increase of lawlessness and corruption!

Do not worry what others will say – just hold fast to the integrity of the Word of Our Master and Elohim, so that you can be found to be one who is as Dani’el was:

STEADFAST AND IN WHOM THERE WAS NO NEGLIGENCE OR CORRUPTION!

Perhaps your life is full of old skeletons in the closet, so to speak!

Give it over to יהושה׳ and confess your sin/lawlessness to Him and as His Word promises, He is faithful and just to cleanse you from all unrighteousness!

His Blood cleanses us from all sin and allows us to stand up and be counted worthy to serve Him as Dani’el did.

There may be some tough times ahead – some ‘lion’s dens’ that we may have to face, especially as worldly rulers are seeking to make unrighteous rulings that will seek out those who refuse to bow down to corruption of false worship of the beast and his image – and the key to being able to face anything, is having the character of set-apart living being evident here and now.

I will close with the words of Sha’ul:

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 15:57-58 “But thanks to Elohim who gives us the overcoming through our Master יהושה׳ Messiah. 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Master, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Master.”

The Greek word for ‘steadfast’ is ἕδραϊος hedraios – Strong’s G1476 which means, ‘*steadfast, firm*’, and comes from the word ἕδρα hedra which means, ‘*seat, chair, base*’, and therefore, carries the understanding of ‘*being settled and steady*’.

It is used metaphorically, in referring to the mind and purpose of a man, that is secure and firm!

The Greek word that is translated as ‘immovable’ is ἀμετακίνητος ametakinētos – Strong’s G277 which comes from two words:

1) - α alpha – Strong’s G1 used as a negative prefix, and

2) – μετακινέω metakineō – Strong’s G3334 which means, ‘*to move away, removed*’.

In recognising that Messiah, having died for us, has given us the overcoming through Himself, we are able to understand why Sha’ul then urges us to be firm in our position in our Master and not be moved from our steadfast position in our Master and Elohim, The Rock of our deliverance, as we sojourn here as faithful ambassadors of His coming reign!

Being steadfast and immovable, we are to make sure that we are not only to be doing what has been commanded for us to do, but that we are always excelling in doing what has been commanded!

To excel in something, implies ‘surpassing others’ and does not just give an average performance, but rather, exceeds all standards!

How are you at excelling in the Master?

Do you get sluggish in doing what is required, because you find the intensity of the battles and pressures you are facing, as something that is too much to bear?

With Messiah making clear to us, through His life, death and resurrection, the full proclamation of the Torah and the Prophets, He calls us to a 'higher standard', if you will, or rather, He calls us to excel still more – and this is what Sha'ul makes clear to us as well, as he calls us to do so, in:

Tas'loniqim Aleph/1 Thessalonians 4:1 **“For the rest then, brothers, we beg you and call upon you in the Master יהוה, that as you received from us how you should walk and to please Elohim, you should excel still more”**

We are not to simply just 'go through the motions', and try to do just enough to get by, so to speak.

We are to excel in our set-apartness and to do so, takes great effort and care and a continued stand, of a firm and steadfast faith, that is not moved by any form of compromise, but rather, is steadfast and immovable, in order to overcome.

The Greek word that is translated as 'excel' in **Tas'loniqim Aleph/1 Thessalonians 4:1** is **περισσεύω perisseuō** – **Strong's G4052** which means, **‘to be over and above, to abound, exceed, surpass, increase’** and this word is used in:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 5:20 **“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the reign of the heavens.”**

We cannot be putting on a show before others, while not properly guarding the Word at all times.

The Word is our life and we are not to add or take away from it in order to satisfy the demands of the flesh.

Our righteousness needs to exceed that of the religious, who are not guarding righteousness at all times!

As the mirror of His Word is before you today – how do you look?

Do not walk away and forget what you look like – look intently into His Word that you may reflect Him in every way, as His Word teaches us, Amēn!

As steadfast, diligent and uncorrupted servants of Elohim, keep your set-apart behaviour good!!!

יהוה bless your 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