

183 – The Father’s kindness, our accountability, and His severity

Exactly 4 weeks ago tonight, during LUTS, I departed from my main subject to take note of something in the context of a Scripture I had referenced from **Numbers 4:24**. I’m going to take a few minutes to look at this subject again, because it has led some of our family to stumble, and it is my intention – my pledge, actually – not to cause anyone to stumble, but to faithfully execute Paul’s instruction to Timothy:

2 Timothy 2:15

Endeavor to present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly cutting the word of truth.

How many times have I gone to great pains to declare that when I share something that I am seeing in the Scriptures, I am giving you my take, and I am NOT saying, “Thus saith the Lord?” How many times have I urged within these studies, everyone who listens to them MUST fact-check for himself or herself, verify, and most importantly, check your own spirits for a confirming witness; and to throw out what does NOT bear witness to you.

I have said many times that I do not purport myself to be in some position of final authority – like a priest or a pope – over what the Scriptures mean. YaHoVeH Elohim ALONE is the authority and each of us has direct, bold access to Him, because He makes his home with us, His Spirit, the Ruach haKodesh has filled us and operates in us, and the Messiah Yeshua lives IN us! If you had the time or took the time, you could uncover the treasures in the Scriptures for yourself; it just happens to have been my passion since 1972, and the Father compelled me to begin these studies in April, 2010.

So, for the record, before you, the Lord Yeshua, and the Father YaHoVeH Elohim, I declare again: you are accountable to fact-check for yourself, to check your own spirit for confirmation of the truth of ANYTHING I share with you. Anything that does NOT bear witness to your spirit, you are free before the Father and the Lord to throw it out, and you are welcome at any time to bring any subject to my attention with which you find disagreement in either fact or perception between what I said and what the Scriptures say. If you think for a second that I would be upset by such challenges, you are mistaken – I crave them; I would prefer NOT to be the only voice every week. We tried inviting others to investigate and to share the results of their own studies, as the Lord would reveal to them. That didn’t last long, probably because it’s my job and not yours; so, I am,

as far as I am aware, faithfully discharging the accountability I have been given by the Father, to pour over His word and share it with you, leaving it behind for others to consider when I'm gone.

Now, surely that is a big enough notice or disclaimer for everyone listening to take responsibility for what he or she hears during "*Light Up the Scriptures.*" Didn't the Lord Himself advise the same, in **Mark 4:24**: "**Beware what you are hearing!**"?

During our 179th study, entitled, "*The time has come,*" I referred to a 5-week missionary trip that Barbara and I made to New England in the fall of 2011, when I believe this ecclesia – specifically, those of you listening live tonight – was truly established. With that as a setting, let's go back to the section of that study that has led some to stumble:

Everyone who was there at the birthing and is still listening, has seen miracles, signs and wonders occur over and over again, while undergoing massive change; and some are still in that most uncomfortable process, because, the Scripture says, in **Hebrews 12:29**, "**Our God is also a consuming fire.**" The author of Hebrews was quoting **Numbers 4:24**. Look at what this says, beginning with verse 23:

*Guard your selves lest you forget the covenant of Yahweh your Elohim that He contracted with you, and so you make for yourselves a carving, a physical representation of anything, against which Yahweh your Elohim had instructed you; 24 for **Yahweh your Elohim, He is a devouring fire, a jealous El.***

The Father's "purpose of the eons," as Paul stated it, is to head up the all in the Christ – in the Messiah – both that in the heavens and that on the Earth, and to be All in all at the consummation. I'm now going off the reservation here to say that so long as we have "*a physical representation of anything, against which Yahweh your Elohim had instructed [us],*" we will rob ourselves of true and profound intimacy with Him. What I am trying hard Not to say is that I believe that our crosses, our statues, our pictures or portraits of the Lord, are included in the injunction I just read from Numbers and they keep us distant from the Father.

I *never* intended to go here tonight, when I read the Scripture in Numbers, I was struck to my core. I am well aware that the Numbers 4 Scripture applies specifically to Israel and the pagan idols they carried with them and fell victim to throughout their history. I grant the context, but I cannot escape the principle that in the faith of the Lord Yeshua HaMashiach, the Father makes His *home* with us, as Yeshua said in John 14. He does so because of what Yeshua accomplished when He gave up His life; and what the Father accomplished when

He raised Yeshua out from among the dead into a body that was beyond the reach of death, took Him up into the heavens, and seated Him at His right hand.

No one in the first century would have imagined a cross to symbolize their faith. The cross was a fearful, terrorizing image, symbolizing the most horrific suffering and the most ignominious death. Early believers in Yeshua invented the symbol of a fish, not a cross!

Have we forgotten the Scripture that says, “*I will put my law within them, and I shall write it on their heart*”? Isn’t that what has happened to you and me because we have confessed our faith on the Lord, being baptized into His name, and received the Father’s Spirit into ourselves?

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹ Behold, the days are coming, averring is Yahweh, +when I will contract a new covenant `with the house of Israel and `the house of Judah ³² Not like the covenant which I contracted `with their fathers in the day I `held fast `i onto their hand to `bring them forth from the land of Egypt, which `covenant of Mine they themselves annulled +while I` was Possessor `i over them, averring is Yahweh. ³³ For this is the covenant which I shall contract `with the house of Israel after `those `days, averring is Yahweh:

I will ^gput `My law `i within them,
And I shall write it on their heart;
+ I will become their [>] Elohim,
And they` shall become My [>] people.

³⁴ + No^t ^{fr}longer shall they teach, each man `his associate,
And each man `his brother, [>] Saying⁻: Know `Yahweh!
For they` all shall know `Me,
[>] From the smallest of them + ^{fr}to the greatest of them,
averring is Yahweh;
For I shall pardon [>] their depravity,
And I shall not remember [>] their sin any ^{fr}longer.|

I promise you, it was not my intention to raise this issue, but now that I have, I believe it may be as close to the Father’s heart as Yeshua’s name, because we need no external symbol beyond the testimony of our lives to bear witness to His worthiness of all glory and honor and praise. What would happen if we gave up our “carvings” and our “physical representations of anything”? And while we’re at it, what if we pulled down every religious notion we were ever taught and simply give our hearts to the Father to put His law within us and write it in our hearts?

Ought not we, who know the Lord, go there first? Are we not accountable to demonstrate the Father's righteousness, because we embody His character, and therefore fulfill His law in our lives, because it was written on our hearts when we confessed our faith in the Lord Yeshua? If we look at an outward representation of anything, do we at the same time dull our recognition of what is inward? I would submit that at the Dais of Christ, we will bring no crosses; we will bring only our bodies, souls, and spirits, and receive our award not based on the number of outward symbols we had but on the presence of the Father in our hearts and minds as demonstrated by how we lived our lives. I pray we will be found amounting to more than Lot!

Now, some of our ecclesia took what I said and, before fact-checking for themselves, or worse, before seeking the Lord for confirmation within their own spirits, threw out their crosses; others put them away their pictures of Yeshua. One said that their reason for putting their picture away was they trusted me! You know what I told this person? "Don't trust me for anything – you'd better be trusting God. If you trust me over Him, He'll get me out of the way to get to you. Don't make that necessary, because I have too much to accomplish." I'm saying this to all of us now. I don't even trust myself – I trust that my Father will reveal what He desires for me to see and to understand in His word; and, as importantly, I trust Him to confirm my understanding in my spirit, as I seek Him continually for wisdom.

When the Father called Oswald Chambers, O.C. reported the word he heard was, "I call on you for extreme sacrifice, with no complaining on your part and no explanation on mine. Others may, you cannot." I understand that kind of walk with the Lord. Barbara does to; we are called where others are not required to go – and even she and I walk different though parallel paths. That Scripture from **Numbers 4:23** about the father's injunction to Israel against making "*a carving, [or] a physical representation of anything,*" reached right into my spirit, because I don't have ANY image or carving around me; I just don't like them and I've always wondered why my spirit recoils from them. No one listening tonight should wonder by now that I can hardly stand any symbol of Christianity; yet, when Barbara travels and we look together what she may wear, I'll often choose a cross over some other piece of jewelry to compliment an outfit. I can't explain why anything she wears *never* insults my senses or offends my spirit, except that our love for one another looks through *every* outward appearance, to recognize the Father's presence in each of us.

So, I pray this brief side bar to our main study tonight brings some greater light to us and encourages each of us to seek the Father for ourselves in everything.

AMEN? AMEN!

Now, let's look together at **Titus 3:4-7**

Yet when the kindness and fondness for humanity of our Saviour, God, made its advent,
5 not for works which are wrought in righteousness which we do, but according to His mercy, He saves us, through the bath of renascence and renewal of holy spirit,
6 which He pours out on us richly through Yeshua the Messiah, our Saviour,
7 that, being justified in that One's grace, we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of the allotment of life eonian.

We have gone over this text many times before, but it is one of my all-time favorite Scriptures, and I love reading it and letting the words sink into me afresh.

Notice, "**the kindness and fondness for humanity of our Saviour, God.**" The Father is our Savior is in the 4th verse, which the Apostle Paul switches to, "**Yeshua the Messiah, our Saviour,**" in verse 6. How often in the Old testament have we seen YaHoVeH declare, as in **Isaiah 43:11**, "**I, I am YahHoVeH, and there is no savior apart from Me.**" Lest we become confused by this, or use it as evidence to support the Christian doctrine of "*the deity of Christ*" or the trinity, look at the actions, which the Apostle ascribes to the Father versus the Son:

The Father, Paul writes, "**saves us ... [according to His mercy] ... through the bath of renascence and renewal of holy spirit, which He pours out on us richly through Yeshua the Messiah.**" How the Father DOES the saving, Paul says, is "**through Yeshua the Messiah.**" The Son is His Father's agent. This should surprise no one, since Yeshua himself said, "**I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one is coming to the Father except through Me**" (John 14:6). The RESULT of the Lord's agency is three-fold, according to **Titus 3**:

1. **Salvation:** "through Yeshua the Messiah, our Saviour ... we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of the allotment of life eonian"
2. **Justification:** "being justified in that One's grace" – we studied justification at length in December, 2011, during a study titled, "*We are not just forgiven, we are justified.*"
3. **Renascence and renewal:** "He saves us, through the bath of renascence and renewal of holy spirit" – we've been over this also many times in the past; however it is worth repeating tonight:

Renascence: Moral renovation, regeneration, the production of a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better. Commonly: the restoration of a thing to its pristine state, its renovation, as the renewal or restoration of life after death.

Renewal: Making new again

So, follow this trail now:

Every one of us who believe on the Lord is *saved*, according to the Scriptures. The Father DOES it THROUGH Yeshua's agency. We are only awaiting, as Paul wrote, "**the deliverance of our body.**"

Romans 8:22-23

For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now.

23 Yet not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our body.

This is why we are partakers of the "**earnest of the allotment.**" We yet await the fullness of the allotment of our salvation, which Yeshua "**procured**" through His sacrifice.

Ephesians 1:13-14

*In Whom you also -- on hearing the word of truth, the evangel of your salvation -- in Whom on believing also, you are sealed with the holy spirit of [the] promise
14 (which is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, to the deliverance of that which has been procured) for the laud of His glory!*

We are not ONLY saved, we are also justified (exonerated and vindicated, declared guiltless) IN the Father's grace THROUGH the Messiah.

Romans 3:24 (look at **verses 21-26**)

Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets),

22 yet a righteousness of God through Yeshua the Messiah's faith, for [INTO] all, and on all who are believing, for there is no distinction,

23 for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God.

24 Being justified gratuitously in His [the] grace, through the Messiah Yeshua's deliverance [this is how the Greek could read, because the presence of the definite

article – THE – indicates that this deliverance is specific and exclusive to that which Yeshua alone makes possible.]

25 (Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory shelter, through [the] faith in His [the] blood, for [into] a display of His [the] righteousness because of the passing over of the penalties of sins which occurred before in the forbearance of God),

26 toward the display of His [the] righteousness in the current era, for Him to be just and a Justifier of the one who is [out] of the faith of Yeshua.

Finally, the Father finishes us off by making us new – that’s what “**renewal**” means; He *morally renovates and regenerates* us: – smart, don’t you think, given our otherwise altogether sorry state! Notice too that the **bath of renascence** produces or includes in its definition, a “*radical change of mind.*”

Does this *radical change of mind* remind you of any other phenomenon that we have studied extensively? Does the word, **repentance** ring a bell?

This passage began with “*The kindness of God.*” See what the kindness of God also brings:

Romans 2:4

Or are you despising the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, being ignorant that the kindness of God is leading you to [into] repentance?

This Scripture speaks to me of our own fickleness – a less generous term would be our own stupidity – with which we regard the Father’s kindness. Whether it’s a purely human trait or not, it is ugly to me, and when I am guilty of it, I hate it and I despair of growing beyond it. I observe – and perhaps you do too – that we are no sooner the recipients of our Father’s superabounding kindness than we lapse into a kind of stupor and dullness in our sensitivities. Just in this past week, we have witnessed the most astonishing, miraculous display of the Father’s kindness, only to find ourselves, not 24 hours later, mired in the realization of our own failures to exercise our accountability for what His kindness has brought into our lives.

I’m being deliberately general here, I know, but for those with spiritually discerning eyes, we will recognize ourselves, our actions, and also our own foolish thoughtlessness in this description. Paul’s question is entirely appropriate today:

are you **despising** – are you treating with contempt, disdain, thinking little or nothing of – the **riches** – the abundance that enriches you, the fullness, the plentitude – of His **kindness** – His moral goodness, integrity, and benignity – and

forbearance – His toleration; a quality of holding back, which is not the same as the next quality Paul lists – and **patience** – His endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance, longsuffering, and slowness to avenge wrongs (indeed, He has replaced vengeance with grace, not because we've earned it – far from it – but because He chooses patience – being **ignorant** – not knowing or understanding, or worse, knowing perfectly well, but disregarding, as Paul used it often – that the **kindness of God** – His moral goodness, integrity, and benignity – is leading you – by laying hold of and accompanying you to a place; He is attaching Himself to you as an attendant, guiding and directing you – to [into] repentance – INTO a change mind?

Now let's read the whole thing again, using all these definitions, if by any means to apprehend in our hearts the thrust of the Father's revelation through the Apostle Paul:

Are you treating with contempt and disdain, thinking little or nothing of the abundance that enriches YOU; the fullness, the plentitude of the Father's moral goodness, integrity, and benignity; His holding back; His endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance, longsuffering (and Lord knows how insufferable we are in our pitiful whining and foolishness), and His slowness to – indeed, His refusal to – avenge wrongs? And why are you failing to value the Father's kindness, forbearance and patience? Could it be that you are not knowing or understanding – or worse, that you do understand but choose to disregard – that His kindness is laying hold of and accompanying you; that the Father has attached Himself to you as an attendant, guiding and directing you – if, indeed you WILL BE guided and directed – INTO the change of mind that His bath of renascence and renewal of Holy Spirit provides!

Remember that **renascence** means, *Moral renovation, regeneration, the production of a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better*. Think of the bath of renascence as preparing us or providing the foundation for the change of mind we so desperately need to make!

Now, look at **Titus 3:4-7**, tacked onto the end of Romans 2:4

Yet when the kindness and fondness for humanity of our Saviour, God, made its advent,

5 not for works which are wrought in righteousness which we do, but according to His mercy, He saves us, through the bath of renascence and renewal of holy spirit,

6 which He pours out on us richly through Yeshua the Messiah, our Saviour,

7 that, being justified in that One's grace, we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of the allotment of life eonian.

Romans 2:4

Or are you despising the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, being ignorant that the kindness of God is leading you to [into] repentance?

Paul wrote in Romans 2:4, that “**the kindness of God is leading you to repentance.**” What will you and I do today with the Father’s leading? Who among us even knew what that really meant until tonight? How many among the 7 billion have the first clue that through the agency of His Son, Yeshua the Messiah, the Father has attached Himself to them and is accompanying them, if they will but turn toward Him, INTO a *radical* change of mind for the better, into which He has already bathed them, but which they don’t know about, because these principles – these truths – have been lost among the thorns of religious pomp and circumstance, which more people than not reject out of hand as unworthy of reason and intelligent beings.

We cannot fail to recognize, yet we do, far too often, it seems to me, that on the heels of the Father’s kindness is His severity.

Romans 13:22

Perceive, then, the kindness and severity of God!

Severity is, literally, “*From-Cutting,*” meaning *roughness* or *rigor*; Synonyms of rigor include *strictness, exactness, precision, harshness, tenacity, rigidity, intolerance, and sternness*, among others.

To me, linking the Father’s kindness with His severity, as Paul does, imparts an understanding of the Father’s Agape and Holiness, which are ruthlessly uncompromising. To think anything less of Him and act in any way disregarding of Him is more than simply foolish and far more than disrespectful; it is insulting, and were it not for grace, would be worthy of instantaneous destruction. Perhaps that is the reason for the lake of fire and the second death, because these people have withstood all of the clear evidence of Who the Father is, and steadfastly refused His kindness.

Let’s close tonight by reading the context of **Romans 13:22**, which includes **verses 13-33**. It begins with an entreaty, not unlike that which I find myself making week by week in our Scripture studies!

Romans 11:13-33

13 Now to you am I saying, to the nations, in as much as, indeed, then, I am the apostle of the nations, I am glorifying my dispensation,

14 if somehow I should be provoking those of my flesh to jealousy and should be saving some of them.

15 For if their casting away is the conciliation of the world, what will the taking back be if not life from among the dead?

16 Now if the firstfruit is holy, the kneading is also; and if the root is holy, the boughs are also.

17 Now if some of the boughs are broken out, yet you, being a wild olive, are grafted among them, and became a joint participant of the root and fatness of the olive,

18 be not vaunting over the boughs. Yet if you are vaunting, you are not bearing the root, but the root you.

19 You will be declaring, then, "Boughs are broken out that I may be grafted in."

20 Ideally! By unbelief are they broken out, yet you stand in faith. Be not haughty, but fear.

21 For if God spares not the natural boughs, neither will He be sparing you!

22 Perceive, then, the kindness and severity of God! On those, indeed, who are falling, severity, yet on you, God's kindness, if you should be persisting in the kindness: else you also will be hewn out.

23 Now they also, if they should not be persisting in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if you were hewn out of an olive wild by nature, and, beside nature, are grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much rather shall these, who are in accord with nature, be grafted into their own olive tree!

25 For I am not willing for you to be ignorant of this secret, brethren, lest you may be passing for prudent among yourselves, that callousness, in part, on Israel has come, until the complement of the nations may be entering.

26 And thus all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written, Arriving out of Zion shall be the Rescuer. He will be turning away irreverence from Jacob.

27 And this is my covenant with them Whenever I should be eliminating their sins.

28 As to the evangel, indeed, they are enemies because of you, yet, as to choice, they are beloved because of the fathers.

29 For unregretted are the graces and the calling of God.

30 For even as you once were stubborn toward God, yet now were shown mercy at their stubbornness,

31 thus these also are now stubborn to this mercy of yours, that now they also may be shown mercy.

32 For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all.
33 O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How
inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways!

The knowledge that you and I share together throughout these studies and in our relationship with one another over these years, brings a fearful accountability that we dare not miss; for in missing it, which, frankly, we seem to do regularly, we slap our Father square in His face and despise the Lord's sacrifice. When we heave our huge sighs of relief in our moments of bathing in the Father's kindness, it would be wise to recognize that the greater the gift, the greater the accountability to reverence and guard it.

2 Timothy 1:14

The ideal thing committed to you, guard through the holy spirit which is making its home in us.

Father, may we ask ourselves, in all honesty and humility, craving correction and desiring true repentance, what have we dishonored, disrespected, disdained and thought little of? Where have we treated you with little or no regard, because we failed to regard others whom You sent into our lives. Where have we been ignorant, not as NOT knowing, but as knowing, yet disregarding.

May we come now before you in the realization and exercise of our accountability for recognizing, accepting, and agreeing with Who You are, what You have accomplished, and what You are yet accomplishing. Father, I pray that we would knowingly, deliberately, and continually take Your hand – that we would exhaust ourselves, if need be, in searching for Your hand – as You have attached Yourself to us, to guide and direct us.

Holy Father, may we never again disdain Your kindness, forbearance and patience – none of which we deserve! – but fall flat on our faces in abject gratitude and agreement that apart from You there is no Savior.

I pray that each of us would awaken every day in the clear, certain, and unwavering consciousness that in Your kindness, we are enriched; in Your forbearance we are protected; in Your patience we are brought into the radical change of mind for the better – that we must adopt and exercise continually.

You have bathed us in renascence and renewal through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. May we regard our salvation, our justification, our moral renovation, regeneration, and the renewal or making new, as holy as You regard it. And I pray that we would guard all that You have committed into us, including Your own Spirit within us, bought with such a price that we cannot comprehend, but which we surely must honor and regard as holy.

Father, forgive us, I pray, for all our failings. We are without excuse and stand before You, relying on Your mercy as well as Your kindness, forbearance and patience. May we experience it more and Your severity less, but may we always remember and regard Your severity as much as Your kindness.

We give You praise tonight, Holy Father, for You alone are worthy of all praise, honor and glory, in the name of Yeshua the Messiah. Amen.

Jude 24

*Now to Him Who is able to guard you from tripping, and to stand you flawless in sight of His glory, in exultation,
25 to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might and authority before the entire eon, now, as well as for all the eons. Amen!*