

Faith: The Better Way ~ Part 3

Messianic Jews 12:1-2

Letter to the Messianic Jews

In my last post, we concluded our topic on the **Definition and Illustration of Trust** by exploring the **Trust of the Judges and the Prophets in Messianic Jews 11:32-40**. In this post, we move on to a new topic entitled **Trust and the Believer** covering **Messianic Jews 12**. We begin with **Messianic Jews 12:1-2 - Yeshua ~ Our Example**.

"¹ So then, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us, too, put aside every impediment — that is, the sin which easily hampers our forward movement — and keep running with endurance in the contest set before us, ² looking away to the Initiator and Completer of that trusting, Yeshua — who, in exchange for obtaining the joy set before him, endured execution on a stake as a criminal, scorning the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." ~ Messianic Jews 12:1-2 (CJB)

Chapter 12 is one of the most significant, moving passages of the **Brit Hadasah**. In it, the author has given us a perfect summary of the **Messianic** life. In addition to completing the discussion of *trusting* he began at 10:35, verses 1-4 introduce the idea that Believers in **Yeshua** are *running in a contest against sin* (verses 1, 4), a competition which calls for *endurance* (verses 1-3, 7). Having endurance means regarding the pains, setbacks and troubles which are inevitable in a Believer's life (Acts 14:22, Yochanan 16:33) as *the discipline of Adonai* (verses 5-13 constitute a sermon on this subject ~ the text is verses 5-6, the three points are verses 7-8, 9-10, 11-13). Only then will we be displaying the *"trust-grounded obedience"* (Romans 1:5, 16:26) which is the goal of the **Besorah**.

The contest has been *set before us*; it is the *"life of good actions already prepared by God for us to do"* (Ephesians 2:10). **Sha'ul** used sports metaphors when he wrote to Greeks (1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Philippians 3:12-14, 2 Timothy 4:7-8), for whom athletic contests were an essential part of life. But the author of this letter is writing to **Messianic Jews**, for whom, at the time, such games smacked of Hellenistic paganism. The sports-metaphor language of verses 1-4 returns in verses 11-13, where the author compares believers with athletes in training who care for their injuries to remain active sportspeople.

Looking away, like a runner with his eye on the finish line, *to the initiator and completer of our trusting, Yeshua*. The theme of **Yeshua** as beginning and end, **aleph** and **tav** are found at Revelation 1:8, 21:6, 22:13. We are to emulate His *endurance*. He, *in exchange for obtaining* the reward of *the joy set before him, endured execution on a stake as a criminal, scorning the shame, sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*, i.e., *"in the place of honor by God's throne"* (Living Bible).

- In the **Messianic** life, we have a goal. We are all pilgrims forever moving toward the goal set before us. The goal is nothing less than to become like Yeshua.
- In the **Messianic** life, we have an inspiration. We have the thought of the unseen cloud of witnesses: and they are witnesses in a double sense. For they have witnessed their confession to **Yeshua** and they are now witnesses to our performance.
- In the **Messianic** life, we also have a handicap. If the greatness of the past encircles us, we are also encircled by the impairment of our sin. There may be habits, pleasures, self-indulgences, associations which hold us back. We must shed them as the athletes shed their tracksuits when they go to the starting-mark, and often we will need the help of **Yeshua** to enable us to do so.
- In the **Messianic** life, we have a means. That means is steadfast endurance. It is a determination, unhurrying and yet undelaying, which goes steadily on and refuses to be deflected. Obstacles do not

daunt it, and discouragements do not take its hope away. It is the steadfast endurance which carries on until in the end; it gets there.

- In the **Messianic** life, we have an example. That example is **Yeshua** Himself. For the goal that was set before Him, He endured all things; to win it meant the way of the Cross.
- In the **Messianic** life, we have a presence, the presence of **Yeshua**. He is at once the goal of our journey and the companion of our way; at once the one whom we go to meet and the one with whom we travel.

As Barclay has said: *The wonder of the **Messianic** life is that we press on surrounded by the saints, oblivious to everything but the glory of the goal and forever in the company of Him who has already made the journey and reached the goal, and who waits to welcome us when we reach the end.*

In my next post, we will move on to our topic of the **Trust and the Believer** by looking at **Messianic Jews 12:3-11 ~ Chastening for Spiritual Developments.**