

Complete Joy

Getting by with a little help from my friends!

For so many individuals discovering the Hebraic Roots of the Messianic faith ... the faith of YESHUA HaMashiach ... the destined faith of Israel, we find a very tangible connection to the past as truth upon truth ... revelation upon revelation is gifted to us.

We find that the perpetual search for the never ending truth within G_D's EVERLASTING WORD serves as the glue of our relationship with G_D and brings us comfort and delight.

We find that the simplicity of obedience to the ways of Torah ... yes the commandments most assuredly ... provides us with the foundation, direction, purpose and fulfillment that was so badly lacking in our lives.

We find that the Hebraic prayers, handed down for generations over thousands of years, provide us with clarity of mind and fundamental understanding of what it means to be a servant of ELOHIM.

We find that the mystery, glory, blessings and promises contained within the original Hebrew Festivals is boundless.

We find that the walk with Messiah YESHUA changes within us our thought processes, rhythms and very fabric in a manner that can't be explained unless experienced.

We find real meaning in being grafted into Israel as we realize the true nature of the barrier that separates us from the temporal world ... the olam hazeh.

But despite all of these wonderful and bountiful blessings in the face of "living in - but not to this world's devices", we were promised even more from our LORD ... we were promised complete joy ... in the here and now!

John 3:28-29 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Mashiach, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: **but the friend of the bridegroom**, which stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: **this my joy therefore is fulfilled.**

John 15:8-11 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. **These things have I spoken unto you, that MY joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.**

But how do we experience this complete joy ... this shalom? How do we experience the joy of YESHUA ... the joy of being the friend of G_D and the friend of the Israel?

Perhaps ... just perhaps the clues to the answer reside in the very passages from John's Gospel depicted herein.

When we look at these passages what do we see?

1) The Baptist (a cousin ... a brethren) of YESHUA depicts himself as a friend of the groom ... and as such would also know and logically be a friend of the bride!

2) YESHUA depicts himself as a "loved one" of the FATHER ... i.e. The FATHER's friend. A person that remains intimate with the FATHER. A person that obeys the FATHER. A person that has the FATHER's joy. A person that will provide to his servants the same joy ... a complete and intimate joy.

Hopefully it is intuitively obvious that the core components we are left with are: friend(ship); kinship (brethren) and love ... within a not to hazy backdrop of obedience and marriage.

Consequently let's begin this search for our answer adopting (as usual) a Hebraic approach.

What we find not surprisingly is that these three core concepts are in Hebrew intricately connected as can be seen in the three Hebrew words: rea'; 'ahab; and dowd!

#7453 רֵעַ rea' {ray'-ah}
or רֵעָא reya' {ray'-ah}
from H7462; TWOT - 2186a; n m

—Hebrew Word Study (Transliteration-Pronunciation Etymology & Grammar)

1) friend, companion, fellow, another person
1a) friend, intimate
1b) fellow, fellow-citizen, another person (weaker sense)
1c) other, another (reciprocal phrase)

—Brown-Driver-Briggs (Old Testament Hebrew-English Lexicon)

From H7462, an *associate* (more or less close):—brother, companion, fellow, friend, husband, lover, neighbour, X (an-) other.

—Strong's (Hebrew & Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament)

#0157 אָהַב 'ahab {aw-hab'}
or אָהֵב 'aheb {aw-habe'}
a primitive root; TWOT - 29; v

—Hebrew Word Study (Transliteration-Pronunciation Etymology & Grammar)

1) to love
1a) (Qal)
1a1) human love for another, includes family, and sexual
1a2) human appetite for objects such as food, drink, sleep, wisdom
1a3) human love for or to God
1a4) act of being a friend
1a4a) lover (participle)
1a4b) friend (participle)
1a5) God's love toward man
1a5a) to individual men
1a5b) to people Israel
1a5c) to righteousness
1b) (Niphal)
1b1) lovely (participle)
1b2) loveable (participle)
1c) (Piel)
1c1) friends
1c2) lovers (fig. of adulterers)
2) to like

#1730 דָּוַד {dode}
or (shortened) דָּד {dode}
from an unused root meaning properly, to boil; TWOT - 410a; n m

—Hebrew Word Study (Transliteration-Pronunciation Etymology & Grammar)

1) beloved, love, uncle
1a) loved one, beloved
1b) uncle
1c) love (pl. abstract)

—Brown-Driver-Briggs (Old Testament Hebrew-English Lexicon)

From an unused root meaning properly to *boil*, that is, (figuratively) to *love*, by implication a *love token*, *lover*, *friend*; specifically an *uncle*:—(well-) beloved, father's brother, love, uncle.

With these three words/concepts readily defined let us now proceed to the Torah (initially the TANAKH) to see if we can find a connection to the promises made to us by YESHUA.

2 Chronicles 2 20:5-7 And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court; and he said: 'O LORD, the God of our fathers, art not Thou alone God in heaven? And art not Thou ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? And in Thy hand is power and might, so that none is able to withstand Thee. **Didst not Thou, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham Thy friend ('ahab) forever?**

Isaiah 41:8-10 **But thou, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend ('ahab);** Thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the uttermost parts thereof, and said unto thee: 'Thou art My servant, I have chosen thee and not cast thee away'; Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I strengthen thee, yea, I help thee; yea, I uphold thee with My victorious right hand.

Sh'mot (Exodus) 33:10-11 And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent, all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. **And the LORD spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaks unto his friend (rey'ah).** And he would return into the camp; but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent. ... 34:29-30 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of the testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses knew not that the skin of his face sent forth beams while He talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face sent forth beams; and they were afraid to come nigh him.

Initially we can immediately see, despite the clear differences between G_D (divine) and man ... that there is most assuredly room in G_D's plan for man to be a "friend" of G_D ... that G_D desires close proximity to and intimacy with HIS creation.

Oh what an awesome, kind and loving G_D do we have!

But let us proceed deeper still and understand better the nature of friendship. Let us garner some advice and insights from Solomon the wisest of all men.

Proverbs

17:17 **A friend (rey'ah) loves at all times**, and a brother is born for adversity.

18:24 There are **friends (rey'ah)** that one has to his own hurt; **but there is a friend ('ahab) that sticks closer than a brother.**

27:10 **Thine own friend (rey'ah), and thy father's friend (rey'ah), forsake not**; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity; better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off.

27:6 **Faithful are the wounds of a friend ('ahab)**; but the kisses of an enemy are importunate.

27:9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; **so does the sweetness of a man's friend (rey'ah) by hearty counsel.**

27:17 Iron sharpens iron; **so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend (rey'ah).**

12:26 **The righteous is guided by his friend (rey'ah)**; but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

22:11 He that loves pureness of heart, who has grace in his lips, **the king shall be his friend (rey'ah).**

Well most assuredly we hear from Solomon regarding the importance of friends and friendship. We see where a friend:

Will never abandon;

Can become more important than even a blood relative;

Needs to be faithfully remembered and cared for;

Gives advice and counsel that are righteous, honest, truthful and meant for good;

Is gracious, pure of heart and is uplifting

Frankly it would appear from these declarations that Solomon knows a secret that water can be thicker than blood at the end of the day. Solomon knows that nearly all people are bound in kinship to someone else by blood. Conversely those that are bound to another in true friendship is greatly blessed indeed!

Through Solomon we get a clear idea as to what friendship means and how it can affect us people when we are blessed with true friendship. But let us move on still further and gain a better understanding of how friendship ... how love should make us feel.

Song of Songs

5:16-6:3 His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely. **This is my beloved (dowd), and this is my friend (rey'ah), O daughters of Jerusalem.** 'Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither hath thy beloved turned him, that we may seek him with thee?' 'My beloved is gone down into

his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, that feedeth among the lilies.

7:18 Come, let us take our fill of love (**dowd**) until the morning; let us solace ourselves with loves (**'ahab**).

Ezekiel 16:6-14 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee wallowing in thy blood, I said unto thee: In thy blood, live; yea, I said unto thee: In thy blood, live; I cause thee to increase, even as the growth of the field. **And thou didst increase and grow up, and thou camest to excellent beauty: thy breasts were fashioned, and thy hair was grown; yet thou wast naked and bare. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, and, behold, thy time was the time of love (dode), I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest Mine.** Then washed I thee with water; yea, I cleansed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. ... and thou didst wax exceeding beautiful, and thou wast meet for royal estate. And thy renown went forth among the nations for thy beauty; for it was perfect, through My splendour which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.

16:15-35 But thou didst trust in thy beauty and play the harlot because of thy renown, and didst pour out thy harlotries on every one that passed by; his it was. ... Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto Me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Were thy harlotries a small matter, ... And it came to pass after all thy wickedness--woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD-- ... Behold, therefore I have stretched out My hand over thee, and have diminished thine allowance, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, ... How weak is thy heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of a wanton harlot; ... Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD! {P}

16:36-63 Thus saith the Lord GOD: Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness uncovered through thy harlotries with thy lovers; and because of all the idols of thy abominations, and for the blood of thy children, that thou didst give unto them; therefore behold, I will gather all thy lovers, unto whom thou hast been pleasant, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them against thee from every side, and will uncover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. 16,38 And I will judge thee, ... And they shall burn thy houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee ... So will I satisfy My fury upon thee, and My jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted Me in all these things; ... Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD. For thus saith the Lord GOD: I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, who hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant. **Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant** Then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder sisters and thy younger; and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not because of thy covenant. **And I will establish My covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD; that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth anymore, because of thy shame; when I have forgiven thee all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.'**

Commentary:

Despite the fact that the Song of Songs can readily bring us to a state of blushing we must look past our temporal state and look at the broader picture where we see G_D's desired relationship with his bride ... his friend ... the love of his life ... Israel!

There can be no doubt at all that what G_D has in store for Israel is amazing and wonderful. G_D has declared and promised that servitude to HIM will result in the most fantastic experience ... although presently we can only pant and gasp at what this might be for no mind can imagine what is really in store for HIS bride.

And though Israel is unfaithful and unworthy in the here and now it is G_D's perfect friendship that advises, rebukes, counsels, disciplines and ultimately wins back the desire of HIS heart.

As we can see from just this extremely brief review there is most assuredly a deep connection between friendship; kinship and love ... and just as clearly we can see within the TANAKH that these concepts inevitably point us toward the great marriage of G_D and Israel!

So now let us take a look at this dynamic in a New Testament (B'rit Chadasha) perspective and focus on the use of: philos; adelphos and agapao.

#5384 φίλος philos {fee'-los}
a primitive word; TDNT - 9:146,1262; adj

—Greek Word Study (Transliteration-Pronunciation Etymology & Grammar)

- 1) friend, to be friendly to one, wish him well
 - 1a) a friend
 - 1b) an associate
 - 1c) he who associates familiarly with one, a companion
 - 1d) one of the bridegroom's friends who on his behalf asked the hand of the bride and rendered him various services in closing the marriage and celebrating the nuptials

—Thayer's (New Testament Greek-English Lexicon)

Properly *dear*, that is, a *friend*; actively *fond*, that is, *friendly* (still as a noun, an *associate*, *neighbor*, etc.):
—friend.

#0080 ἀδελφός adelphos {ad-el-fos'}

from G0001 (as a connective particle) and delphus (the womb);
TDNT - 1:144,22; n m

—Greek Word Study (Transliteration-Pronunciation Etymology & Grammar)

- 1) a brother, whether born of the same two parents or only of the same father or mother
- 2) having the same national ancestor, belonging to the same people, or countryman
- 3) any fellow or man
- 4) a fellow believer, united to another by the bond of affection
- 5) an associate in employment or office
- 6) brethren in Christ
 - 6a) his brothers by blood
 - 6b) all men
 - 6c) apostles
 - 6d) Christians, as those who are exalted to the same heavenly place

#0025 ἀγαπάω agapao {ag-ap-ah'-o}

perhaps from agan (much) [or cf G5368]; TDNT - 1:21,5; v

—Greek Word Study (Transliteration-Pronunciation Etymology & Grammar)

- 1) of persons
 - 1a) to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly
- 2) of things
 - 2a) to be well pleased, to be contented at or with a thing

—Thayer's (New Testament Greek-English Lexicon)

Perhaps from ἄγαν [[agan]] (*much*; or compare H5689); to *love* (in a social or moral sense);—(be-) love (-ed). Compare G5368.

Matthew: 5:43-48 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love (**agapao**) your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren (**adelphos**) only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 12:46-50 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren (**adelphos**) stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren (**adelphos**)! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother (**adelphos**), and sister (**adelphos**), and mother.

Matthew 11:16-19 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend (**philos**) of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Matthew 23:5-8 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Mashiach; and all ye are brethren (**adelphos**).

Luke 15:3-7 And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends (**philos**) and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Luke 21:16-19 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren (**adelphos**), and kinsfolks (suggenes-blood relatives), and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls.

John 3:25-31 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Mashiach, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend (**philos**) of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

John 15:9-15 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love (**agapao**); even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love (**agapao**). These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love (**agapao**) one another, as I have loved (**agapao**) you. Greater love (**agapao**) hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (**philos**). Ye are my friends (**philos**), if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants;

for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends (**philos**); for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

John 20:17-18 Yeshua saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren (**adelphos**), and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my G_D, and your G_D. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

John 21:21-23 Peter seeing him saith to Yeshua, Lord, and what shall this man do? Yeshua saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren (**adelphos**), that that disciple should not die: yet Yeshua said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

Commentary:

As we can see directly from the Gospel accounts YESHUA is most assuredly into the divine pattern of G_D to human friendship which we encountered in the TANAKH. Just as Abraham was chosen ... and Moses. We see from Holy Scripture how the disciples were chosen as well.

Additionally we see YESHUA setting the record straight regarding the importance of "friends" ... again even to the point where "brethren" are defined as those people united in doing the "will of G_D".

We see where YESHUA has (according to the declarations within Proverbs) befriended HIS disciples and withheld nothing from them.

We see where YESHUA has defined this great love. A love so strong that it overcomes mortality and the drive to cling to life at all costs; a love that can be so great that a friend will lay down their life for the sake of others.

But before we lose sight of YESHUA ... before we lose sight of G_D, let us also pay attention to the other side of the coin. YESHUA discusses finding the lost sheep ... and befriending sinners and publicans ... and loving the enemies; **for the purposes of bringing them into the fold of covenantal compliance through both belief and obedience (faith).**

YESHUA reveals to us the same pattern as we see depicted within the TANAKH ... G_D calls people to HIM ... People respond and become HIS servants ... G_D befriends HIS servants ... making them brethren!

So ... is this an understanding that was lost on YESHUA's disciples? Hmmm!

Acts 2:37-39 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren (**adelphos**), what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yeshua Mashiach for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our G_D shall call.

Galatians 1:1-5 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Yeshua Mashiach, and G_D the Father, who raised him from the dead) And all the brethren (**adelphos**) which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from G_D the Father, and from our Lord Yeshua Mashiach, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of G_D and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Galatians 4:26-28 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband. Now we, brethren (**adelphos**), as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-4 We give thanks to G_D always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Yeshua Mashiach, in the sight of G_D and our Father; Knowing, brethren (**adelphos**) beloved (**agapao**), your election of G_D.

1 Thessalonians 4:7-10 For G_D hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but G_D, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. But as touching brotherly (**adelphos**) love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of G_D to love (**agapao**) one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren (**adelphos**), that ye increase more and more;

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren (**adelphos**), by the name of our Lord Yeshua Mashiach, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

In fact a review of Holy Scriptures will reveal that Paul (Sha'ul) the apostle does not in his letters to the communities use the word "philos". For Paul it seems clear that there is only brethren ... that in and through YESHUA there is only; servitude, citizenship and family.

We also see Paul providing the expected backdrop of friendship/kinship ... we see faith, patience, covenantal inclusion, promises and doing the will of G_D! There appears to be no disparate message!

So ... what about the chasing ... what about the great love affair between G_D and Israel

Matthew: 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, **how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!** 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 23:39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Mark 2:18 And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? 2:19 And Yeshua said unto them, **Can the children of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.** 2:20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

Romans 11:25-27 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. **And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away unG_Dliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.**

Revelation 21:1-3 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. **And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from G_D out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.** And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of G_D is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and G_D himself shall be with them, and be their G_D.

Oh yes indeed children of G_D ... the bridegroom (who is the progenitor) ... YESHUA is calling, chasing, working and interceding after having won the victory so that not one of HIS will be lost.

And this of course we know ... but can this knowledge bring us the complete joy that we've been promised in the here and now?

Perhaps the answer lies in the indwelling of YESHUA's RUACH (spirit). Just perhaps everything that is revealed to us points to something that is quite simple to comprehend ... but only if we are driven to "love one another"!

Now of course as we've seen by the Scriptural definition of a friend ... this does not necessarily mean that we are "nice" and "smiley" and "politically correct" with each other. What it means is ...

Colossians 3:15-16 And let the peace of G_D rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Mashiach dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace (soul melodies) in your hearts to the Lord.

It means that we have friends ... true friendship ... true bonds! It means that the Body of YESHUA is real and we long for each other because it is within each of our friends/brethren/beloveds that we see the manifestation of YESHUA in our temporal/physical lives.

It is through our friends that we get to experience the love that the disciples shared with YESHUA ... that Abraham shared with YESHUA. It is through our friends, who are being molded into the perfect bride, we get to see the sum parts of the total.

Can we grasp this? Can we realize that our desire for one another as friends stems from the fact that it is the desire to be in close proximity to our beloved YESHUA!

With this being the case how can we not desire and pray for our friends that YESHUA fill them up ... grow them ... make them successful beyond all imagination? As our friends grow we see more and more of YESHUA emerging ... it is YESHUA's manifestation that is the source of shalom ... our complete joy! Just as HIS joy was complete in the knowledge that HE had given himself over completely to the "will of the FATHER" ... that YESHUA saw the FATHER manifesting in this olam hazeh!

1 John

2:1-6 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Yeshua Mashiach the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. **But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of G_D perfected: hereby**

know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

3:13-16 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. **We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.** He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. **Hereby perceive we the love of G_D, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.**

4:7-11 **Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of G_D; and every one that loveth is born of G_D, and knoweth G_D. He that loveth not knoweth not G_D; for G_D is love.** In this was manifested the love of G_D toward us, because that G_D sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. **Herein is love, not that we loved G_D, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if G_D so loved us, we ought also to love one another.**

You know brethren ... I lament at times because even within the most vibrant and seemingly sanctified communities of faith we can find truth ... and we can find genuine prayer ... and we discern genuine hearts for G_D ... and we can find good teaching ... and we can find common ground BUT it is really hard to find love ... it is really hard to find friendship. It is really hard to find the face and eyes of YESHUA looking into your own wondering how you are really doing ... exhorting you to reach out and extend yourself ... supporting you while knowing that you remain imperfect ... reminding you that HE is in you and that you have been given a wondrous gift ... singing soul melodies to you.

So now the great confession my friends in YESHUA! I've much to learn (wow what a surprise ... 😊) because it is only recently that this great void in my heart ... in my soul is beginning to get filled up!

I've been blessed abundantly through the years and have experienced great joy ... but I've not understood in full the gift that is awaiting us in the here and now because I've been looking to close to my own heart and mind for the answers ... instead of looking into the eyes of others ... looking for YESHUA to be looking back at me!

Just as imperfect am I ... so too are the brethren! But just as importantly if the grace of G_D be in me ... then so too is the grace of G_D in my brethren. And this can't be some philosophical concept ... this must be real because our LORD is real. As such it is only with my friends that I can interface with my LORD in the flesh ... yes in the flesh!

After years of searching, struggling, studying, changing ... being blessed ... hoping against all odds through G_D that I might really get to know HIM ... really get to experience HIM; I've come to the conclusion that this can only be achieved with the help of my friends ... with the help of YESHUA (the best friend) WHO resides in each of the brethren.

After years of recognizing the glory of G_D through: the amazing works of creation; those moments of SPIRITUAL experiential connection; the never fading desire for and bond with YESHUA ... I've come to realize that I can be with G_D in a less ethereal and very human context ... if I can simply put down my guard and love the brethren ... as YESHUA loved the brethren.

So simple at the end of the day ... but a very hard lesson to learn ... at least for this man! In the end it is all about G_D ... yet at the same time it is all about friends ... in high places ... and in the places one might least expect to look!

So ... moving forward it is this man's mission and desire to:

1) Find and Love the brethren ... be bold enough and humble enough to let the guard down ... to care for them enough to get to know them ... to befriend them ... to be yoked to them in a far more intimate manner than simply sharing a common belief or place of worship;

2) Look for YESHUA within the brethren because all brethren have been called by the same MASTER and all brethren serve to compliment the entire Body ... none are ill equipped for HIS purpose and all serve to bring together what is lacking by individual elements of the Body;

3) Shine the light of YESHUA outward to the world ... let the world see my best friend YESHUA in action;

4) Pray that the communities of Messianic believers come to the realization that there is no community without true friendship ... without love for the brethren ... without real equality in and through YESHUA

Like it always is beloved brethren ... just when I think I might be getting to a place of "better standing" ... of "greater stability" ... G_D throws me a huge curve reminding me that I am just a simple runner participating in the great race!

Little did I know that in many respects that this race is one continual "relay race" wherein the goal is to win as a team and not as a person!

So ... in conclusion please take a look around you and ask yourself if you have any real friends ... friends that can be counted in a Biblical sense ... friends that reside in high places (G_D) and friends that reside in the lowest depths of mortal existence!

It is very important because somethings are true ... "I get by with a little help from my friends"!

Shalom Aleichem,

P. R. Otokletos