

# Confronting Doubt

How often, in spite of the knowledge of G\_D's glorious reconciliation plan and amazing gift of mercy and grace by, in and through Messiah Yeshua ... are we confronted with the inevitable and obvious reality that we remain imperfect in a temporal sense ... and fall short of the great calling ... fall short of walking in the footsteps of Messiah ... fall short of behaving in the manner we know to be correct ... fall short of properly stewarding this great creation ... fall short of heeding the call of HaRuach Kodesh (The Holy Spirit) within us?

How often, if at all, does our stumbling create within us a deep hurt as we struggle to understand how we even stumble at all ... knowing that we surely do not delude ourselves ... confident that we have genuinely turned aside from our sinful past responsive to redemption and adoption into the family of G\_D ... confident that HE has called us to the glorious hope of salvation when we will be made perfect in and through Messiah Yeshua?

How often do we strive against the onslaught of this olam hazeh (temporal world) ... strive with injustice ... strive with personal and communal difficulties ... struggle with discipline, refinement, chastisement ... struggle with life in general ... struggle within ourselves?

And as these struggles may be ... as these struggles at times are often enough seemingly overwhelming ... seemingly pointing us towards a scary and hostile wilderness wherein we seem alone ... where we seem unable to continue or cope ... where we seem unable to rest in the sure hope of what we already know and have experienced ... do we ever confront that dreaded of all enemies ... doubt?

Now of course we have received instructions within the Sacred Texts regarding the issue of doubt ... doubting of both G\_D's truths and doubting of ourselves:

Luke 12:28-30 If then ELOHIM so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, **neither be ye of doubtful mind.** For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knows that ye have need of these things.

1 Timothy 2:5-8 For there is one ELOHIM, and one mediator between ELOHIM and men, the man Mashiach Yeshua; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Mashiach, and lie not) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, **without wrath and doubting.**

Matthew 14:27-33 But straightway Yeshua spake unto them, saying, be of good cheer; it is I; **be not afraid.** And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Yeshua. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Yeshua stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, **o thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?** And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, of a truth thou art the Son of God.

As these few but pertinent passages from the Sacred Text reveal:

We should not fall prey to doubt when it comes to faith in G\_D's desire and power to give us provisions and bless us with the necessities of life ... to sustain us!

We should not fall prey to doubt and frustrations when it comes to faith and prayer within the context of our supplication(s) before G\_D!

We should not fall prey to doubt when our very belief in Messiah Yeshua is tested!

Naturally most believers know these passages from the Sacred Texts and just as well understand the core context and principles associated with same. Yet ... yet ... many of us from time to time will still find ourselves in a situation wherein we simply cannot figure out how or why we have "bottomed out" ... either emotionally, financially, health wise or perhaps even "spiritually"!

Now dear reader just perhaps this commentator is confessing/admitting a struggle ... a strife ... which is not the norm ... which is not typically experienced by believers? Then again this

commentator may not be alone in wondering how we approach the difficult testing that confronts us ... the difficult testing which at times is also used by the enemy (powers and principalities) to try and sew within us the seeds of doubt!

So now we come to the crux of the issue(s) ... that person we loved did not receive healing; that witnessing that we provided did not seem to bear any fruit or take seed; our desires to see a spouse or child come to know the LORD does not seem to be happening; our ponderings or studies of the Sacred Texts do not seem to be yielding the gifts normally received; our walk with Messiah is still resulting in too many errors on our part; that anticipated preparation of the upcoming New Moon proved useless as we let the event come and go without paying any mind to it; things within our home seem to be constantly breaking and we don't have the time or finances to readily care for them; that job we hoped for did not come through; we simply can't seem to shake the edge of anxiety ... you get the idea ... right ... we could go on and on in attempting to describe the difficulties of life?

Now in dealing with any or all of the issues we face, most people do probably not ponder enough the nature of the difficulties ... or perhaps on the opposite spectrum there are those of us who may over analyze the situations attempting to immediately discern G\_D's will in our lives ... **and of course the specific question posed herein boils down to an individual questioning whether they are even operating under G\_D's protection at all ... wondering even if they are actually in G\_D's family at all?**

Of course this commentator could proceed to open up the doors of exploration and conversation regarding all kinds of issues such as but not limited to false notions regarding: "various prosperity doctrines" ... "doing nothing and waiting for G\_D to simply work as you lie fallow" ... "praying without conviction" ... "praying for what a person thinks they need as opposed to what G\_D knows they need" ... etc.

But these topics will not be the focus. Oh perhaps our expectations, coupled with a lack of understanding of G\_D's will in our lives, in most cases is the root cause of our anxieties ... but what we need to focus on and really understand at the end of the day is that doubt manifests in two primary forms. The first manifestation of doubt deals with doubting our LORD because we have somehow convinced ourselves that now, since we have turned away from our past sins ... things should be better! What we fail to understand is that things are

better for the creation but sadly we fail to realize the true blessings that are being bestowed upon us!

When this type of doubt creeps in we are challenging G\_D ... asking what gives ... what is with all of these problems ... should things not be going well for me ... as you have promised?

In the second instance our doubt often manifests at the other end of the spectrum wherein we challenge not G\_D ... but rather our own walk ... our own worthiness to the calling that has been bestowed upon us!

Unfortunately what we are confronted with in both scenarios is a doubt predicated upon the notion that somehow we have become integral to the selection by G\_D ... that somehow we actively impact G\_D's determination of personal righteousness wrought only in, by and through Messiah Yeshua. Our doubt is temptation rooted in the notion that it is somehow all about us as opposed to things being all about G\_D's good will and purpose first and foremost for creation and then His good will and purpose in our personal lives.

Well dear reader ... let me confess here and now that this commentator has at times been tempted on both spectrums, although discernment of these temptations during these events/situations may not seem clear at any particular time while in the midst of said difficulties. Often times the clarity comes later on!

Admittedly this commentator has been and will assuredly remain perplexed and ignorant in many instances regarding G\_D's good will and purposes ... in a temporal perspective ... simply because there is no wherewith all to see beyond my own scope of comprehension and understanding ... simply because I cannot see the bigger picture ... simply because I am not G\_D!

But this being our plight should not give room for doubt or in any way shape or form erode our trust or hope in G\_D's promises to Israel ... to us ... to me! We can be assured of our election ... as the Sacred Texts reveal:

Ephesians 1:3-14 Blessed be the ELOHIM and Father of our Lord Yeshua Mashíach, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Mashíach:

according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Yeshua Mashiach to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Mashiach, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will: **that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Mashiach.** In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Hebrews 2:11-15 For both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which ELOHIM hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; **that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage**

Romans 8:14- 17 For as many as are led by the Spirit of ELOHIM, they are the sons of ELOHIM. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of ELOHIM: And if children, then heirs; heirs of ELOHIM, and joint-heirs with Mashiach; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Philippians 3:2-10 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship ELOHIM in the spirit, and rejoice in Mashiach Yeshua, **and have no confidence in the flesh.** Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the

eight day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Mashiach. **Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Mashiach Yeshua my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Mashiach, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Mashiach, the righteousness which is of ELOHIM by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;**

Ephesians 4:25-32 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. **Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of ELOHIM, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as ELOHIM for Mashiach's sake hath forgiven you.**

Romans 11:17-21 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree; **Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bear not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou stands by faith. Be not high minded, but fear: For if ELOHIM spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.**

Philippians 2:12-16 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.** For it is ELOHIM which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputing: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of ELOHIM, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, **among**

whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Mashíach, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of ELOHIM.

2 Timothy 1:7-10 For ELOHIM hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of ELOHIM; Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Mashíach Yeshua before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Yeshua Mashíach, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

2 Timothy 2:19-26 Nevertheless the foundation of ELOHIM stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are his. And, let everyone that names the name of Mashíach depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strife. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if ELOHIM peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

So beloved children of G\_D regardless of our temporal difficulties ... tests ... etc.:

Do we believe and remain convicted that the revelation from G\_D about Himself is true and firm?

Do we remain in faith without shame of Messiah and the Gospel message of redemption or do we cloak our faith/belief as a private matter?

Do we still live without fear of death knowing the end game or do we pursue the desires of this world just to make sure that we don't miss out on those grand plans we fashioned in our youth?

Do we recognize our adoption into G\_D's family ... our adoption into Israel or have we succumbed to the notion that somehow Israel has been replaced ... that it is alright to be benign towards or even stand against the Jewish people ... G\_D's chosen people and the Everlasting Covenant?

Do we continue to hear from G\_D's Spirit ... exhorting and guiding us to remembrance of G\_D and striving for holiness and righteousness or do we simply blend in with the rest of the world?

Do we share in the pain of others ... mourn with them and conversely rejoice with them in their own joy ... or do we let it pass without impact?

Do we look upon all people as being a creation of G\_D ... no better or no worse than ourselves or anyone else ... or do we continue to make overarching judgments regarding persons and people groups?

Do we still recognize the awesome power of G\_D and tremble in referent fear, worship and adoration or has the knowledge of our purported salvation left us nonchalant and complacent?

These issues dear reader seem to be what the Sacred Texts surface as benchmarks or tell-tale signs that we can use to gauge our relationship with G\_D.

Can we then realize that suffering ... struggling ... being tested is part of the path ... part of the refining process as we suffer in, through and with Yeshua?

Can we then realize that having been expunged of anger, wrath and pride ... replaced with humility, passion and a desire to be perfect ... is the work of Messiah's Spirit within us ... and not us!

Ultimately can we then realize that doubt is the temptation of the evil one who seeks to pervert our pure and holy fear of G\_D?

Yes beloveds ... personal concern over our own individual walk ... or perhaps our shortcomings should not be shunned ... should not be ignored because it is G\_D's own Spirit that rebukes, disciplines and guides us towards righteousness. We all must remember it is the humble who feel chastisement but it is also true that G\_D only rebukes those whom He loves! When we become perhaps even disgusted with our temporary lack of faithfulness to G\_D it is because the Spirit of Messiah is both grieving and rebuking on our behalf!

So yes indeed we do get concerned when HaRuach brings conviction upon us! Yes indeed we are laid low knowing that G\_D is G\_D and that we are mere mortals! Yes indeed we should acknowledge and respond to G\_D's discipline. ... But herein we also know that we remain in a relationship with G\_D through our beloved Messiah ... When we strive we do so predicated upon the knowledge of G\_D and in effect exercise the beginning of wisdom ... fear of the LORD!

As the Sacred Texts referenced herein depict, we are confronted with the seemingly incongruent nature of The WORD ... in this case "do not doubt or fear" and on the other hand "be wary and humbled while working out salvation in fear and trembling"!

From this commentator's perspective ... it appears that anxiety predicated upon the knowledge of G\_D ... predicated upon a relationship with G\_D, is not only normal but necessary in that these struggles actually confirm our election as G\_D continues to refine us closer towards the image and likeness of Yeshua!

Let us think for a moment and consider the fact that non-believers suffer no similar spiritual anxieties. Let us consider that many purported believers who cling to the notion of redemption and salvation without transformation suffer no similar spiritual anxieties. Let us consider that even many apparently zealous believers suffer no similar spiritual anxieties

because their dogma points to our sin being already gone as they profess their own election in irrefutable guaranteed terms while being blind to their own lack of: humility; brotherly love; godly living and a tender heart.

The point beloved children of G\_D is that our struggling ... our striving ... our anxiety serves many purposes. Our striving over the issue of personal election very well may be revealing:

That G\_D's Spirit is working within us ... refining us ... letting us know that we have work to do;

That we continue to understand the constraints of and battle against our temporal existence and long with fervent hope in the salvation to come ... in that day;

That we continue in humility ... remaining in awe of a perfect, righteous, holy and all powerful G\_D;

That we have not become complacent or taken for granted the revelation of truth and grace from G\_D ... that we are desirous of pursuing the way;

That we are in a relationship with G\_D ... Whose very Spirit stirs within us the remembrance of Messiah Yeshua!

Ultimately beloved brethren our struggles lead us to the inevitable quandary of life that we simply cannot answer ... "Why me LORD? ... What could you possibly see in me that you would even regard let alone select me?"

And we know that the response is simply "I don't know!" Certainly it is not because I love G\_D ... He loved me first! Certainly it is not because I repented ... He called to me and redeemed me while I was mired in the olam haze! Certainly it is not because of my good works and self-righteousness ... there is only One that is righteous and that is G\_D! ... Ultimately I cannot understand the reasoning!

And perhaps herein lies the root of doubt: could it be that since we can't logically deduce G\_D's rationale (in a human perspective) regarding election ... that of course it does not make any sense to us ... that it is all illogical?

Could it be that the enemy works on us through the same delusion as always ... which weakens us when WE can't figure things out on our own ... when WE can't get to the correct answer? ... But rest assured that we are being tempted to turn away from the Holy One when we need to just cling to the truth that:

We believe and remain convicted that our revelation from G\_D about Himself is true and firm;

We remain in faith without shame of Messiah or the Gospel message of redemption;

We still live without fear of death knowing the end game;

We remain connected to G\_D's family ... to Israel;

We continue to hear from G\_D's Spirit ... exhorting and guiding us to remembrance of G\_D;

We continue to remain humble acknowledging the great and awesome power of G\_D;

We war with the old person attempting to rise up from the grave within us;

We strive as we long for our perfection!

Yes indeed struggling is part of being alive and despite the discomfort, inconvenience, testing and even the temptation that comes from the enemy ... there is nothing that will separate the true believer from the love of G\_D ... nothing! And on this truth we must put our trust in G\_D!

At the end of the day our struggles testify to our faith and election! Our struggles in no like fashion represent G\_D's revocation of us due to our temporary movement towards

personal human unrighteousness since we have no self-righteousness in the first place. We may have to consider however that there are still consequences for transgression and G\_D is righteous and that despite the grace and forgiveness gifted to us through Messiah Yeshua ... there are still consequences to sin!

The fact that we are anxious however testifies to our relationship with G\_D. The fact that we are tempted to doubt reveals who we ultimately belong to ... and it assuredly is not the one doing the tempting!

So remain strong beloved children knowing that the Sacred Texts have revealed for us the balance between not doubting and not fearing versus being wary, anxious and working things out in fear and trembling!

Oh I do know that many purported believers may object with the outcomes of this commentary ... in as much that our "old man" has been put down and that we are in fact a "new creation" already ... that all things have been accomplished from before the creation of the world ... that we should not concern ourselves with the uncomfortable prospects of "election"!

But I will leave you all with the following inspired scriptures to ponder:

1 Peter 5:6-11 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of ELOHIM, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the ELOHIM of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Mashiah Yeshua, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

2 Peter 1:4-8 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience G-dliness; and to G-dliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these

things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Yeshua Mashiach.

Romans 8:22-25 For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Yes beloveds ... let us realize that we will groan and travail in pain together ... but ... let not our hope be stolen by the seeds of doubt tossed at us by the adversary ... let not our hope be tarnished by the onslaught of this temporal world ... let not our hope be eroded by attempting to carry our burdens alone. Let not our hope be replaced by complacency rooted in a notion that we humans fully understand the mysteries of G\_D's election ... for individuals that may pass the benchmarks pointing towards election today may not in the future ... and individuals that may pass the benchmarks pointing towards election from a human perspective may simply be missing the mark if we could see inside their hearts ... and individuals seemingly lost today can be saved tomorrow!

Beloved children of G\_D ... the intent herein is not to frighten anyone ... or create doubt but to remind us all that fear of the LORD is an absolute prerequisite for the humble and therefore absolutely mandatory for all of us ... regardless of the duration or strength of our personal walk.

So the next time someone professes their election to us with irrefutable authority ... let us ask them if they could take a peek into the Book of Life the next time they have access to it ... and check to see if our name is in there ... or ask them what type of script and font is used in the Heavens.

Oh most assuredly the names of those elected by G\_D have been there from before the beginning ... and most assuredly those names in the Book of Life cannot falter or those souls un-elect themselves! This truth however should only result in even more love and

adoration for our G\_D ... for Mashiach and conversely never translate into a state for a believer wherein they lose the capability to struggle ... where they stop striving in humility!

So let us wait in steadfast faith for that which we do not see ... knowing that His promises are assured and that G\_D knows what He is doing ... even if that entails the seemingly inconceivable idea of selecting the likes of us for glory and honor in and through Messiah Yeshua!

Let us keep in mind that Jacob had his own name changed to Yisrael (a combination of the words: "struggle" and "G\_D") and in like terms keep in mind the story of Job while realizing that the entire B'rit Chadasha (renewed covenant) corpus, like the Tanakh itself, depicts the continual striving between the creation and the Creator ... Who has determined that His creation is worth restoring ... Who has proven how great His love for us really is by gifting to us Messiah Yeshua ... G\_D's Salvation!

So chazak, chazak ... be strong and brave beloved children of G\_D ... fly unto our Messiah and let Him be our strength in our weakness! Let us embrace the changes that He has begun within us through His own Spirit and remember that the call from our old man ... our old person ... is just a residual pang that wells up within the recesses of our minds. If we give over the power to the One within us however these pangs will be subdued and Messiah's Spirit will conquer all!

Shalom Aleichem ... P.R. Otokletos