

November 16, 2013

VAYISHLACH (And he sent)

We, here in the United States, live in troubled times. Many have lost their jobs because of down-sizing and government cut-backs. If certain laws are passed, we may lose some of our basic freedoms. There is so much to be worried about - - or is there?

Abraham was told to kill his beloved son, Isaac. Was he worried? He trusted HaShem and believed that Isaac would be returned to life. I guess he wasn't too worried. The children of Israel walked through the divided parts of the Red Sea. Weren't they afraid that it would come crashing down on them unexpectedly? By trusting, they made it to the other side - safe and sound. But all of this sounds too much like the "Faith Chapter" found in Hebrews. Let's fast forward a few hundred years to the city of Philippi. When the Paul and Silas were there, the local mob was angry with them. After being beaten, they went "directly to jail." They did not pass "go" and they certainly did not collect \$200. While awaiting their trial, do you think they were worried? Well, let's see - they were praying and singing hymns. When the earthquake shook the foundations of the prison and opened all of the cell doors, do you think they were worried? Because they trusted, they did not run away when the perfect opportunity presented itself. Instead, they spoke to the jailer about Yeshua. Then the jailer and everyone in his household came to trust in the Messiah.

In this week's *parashah*, Jacob was headed back home after spending too much time with his uncle Laban. He knew that his brother Esau lived just around the corner, so he sent messengers ahead of him to his brother. When the messengers returned, they mentioned that Esau was coming to meet him, and, by the way, he had four-hundred men with him. Since Jacob had stolen Esau's birthright and blessing, he thought Esau might be a little angry with him. Was Jacob trusting in HaShem? Let's continue with the story. Jacob was so worried that he divided everything that he owned into two camps. That way, if one camp was attacked by Esau, the other camp would be able to escape. Then he decided that just in case Esau was really mad at him, it would be a good idea to buy him off with a gift. So he sent a lot of livestock to Esau. In his prayer to HaShem, Jacob recalls that it was HaShem who told him to return to his kinsmen, and that HaShem had said, "I will deal well with you." Maybe Jacob did not believe that HaShem had control over the situation or control over Esau. As it turned out, Esau was already very successful in his material wealth and couldn't care less about all of the livestock that Jacob had sent to him. And, on top of that, he was not at all angry with Jacob. As a matter of fact, the Scriptures tell us that Esau ran to meet Jacob, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. If only Jacob had trusted HaShem to begin with, he could have avoided so much needless worry.

How about you? Do you worry needlessly, or do you trust in The Almighty?

I say, "In God we trust - don't worry, be happy."

Genesis 32:7-8

Genesis 32:6-8

Obadiah 1:8-11

Hebrews 11:17-19

