

BattleGround by Paul Gasser, Elder, Etz Chayim-Tree of Life Messianic Congregation and Graduate Student JSI University

Thus says the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace. (Zech. 8:19 ESV)

The fast of the fourth month is the 17th of Tammuz. The Fast of the fifth month is the 9th of Av. These two days mark the beginning and end of a period called the 3 weeks. Both days also mark some very troubling days for Israel and its people, and in between them, more people have been killed during this period of the year throughout history than during any other period.

For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, we can relate to such things. For this is summer time. A time when things are hot, rain is lacking, and there seems to be no break from the heat. This is true in the spiritual sense as well. People stop going to synagogue, they stop studying the word of God, they stop praying and many other things. So spiritually, we as a whole, become spiritually dry. There are many reasons and justifications we give for such things. But the reality is we open ourselves for spiritual attacks.

Our spiritual “walls” get torn down in times like this, and the enemy is able to come in without much effort. This is because we have let our guard down, not realizing we are constantly “under siege”. We will also open ourselves up to people who seem to have ‘water’ for us to drink from and ‘water our plants’. Yet these people are the sheep in wolves clothing we are warned about. They come in with a new teaching (or so we think) and we take it hook, line and sinker. These teachings will take us away from following Torah or Messiah Yeshua, which opens us up to greater influences and attacks.

Such attacks tear down our Temples. **Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?** (1 Cor. 3:16 ESV) When the Temples were destroyed, the enemy came in and knocked down every rock, took every golden item and even melted the gold on the walls so they could take it with them. Nothing was left. What was kept in the Temple, and what does the Temple represent? The Torah. In such attacks, Torah gets taken from you, and you then begin to live like the nations and not the people whom are set apart unto God.

The battle ground is this: We need to realize we are constantly under siege and we need to keep our ‘walls’ up. This will allow us to protect our temples and the Torah within them. Then when the “Water of life” comes, we can drink deeply from this and gain in our knowledge and understanding of God and how He wants us to live.

From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah, ¹⁷ who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other. ¹⁸ And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. (Neh. 4:16-18 ESV)

Keep your sword on you, which is Torah. Continue to work on the walls. Seek help from people whom think as you do. Do not go outside for this help. Trust your leaders that they have your best interests at heart. They will keep you walking in Torah. Then we can work as a people and accomplish much during such times of hardships.

Shavua Tov!