

FIRE IN THE HEART

By Rabbi Dr. Moshe Dror

SERMON FOR SUNDAY AUGUST 3RD, 2008

Place Written: Yeroham, Israel

Theory: Fire cleans, and gives light. So we can see that in some very real form that the light of the word of God is a possible vehicle of redemption and restoration for our future as well.

Purpose: While we are certainly not Prophets, we are part of the school of the Prophets and apprentices in the Collegium of Prophets.

This week, in synagogues all over the world, Jews will be reading in public the last section of the book of Numbers of the Bible. As part of the public reading of the Torah sections there is also a public reading of passages of the Prophets that are associated with the Torah Portion. This week is the beginning of the three-week period before the fast day of the Ninth day of the month of Av that commemorates the destruction of the First Temple By Nebuchadnezer in 586 BCE. This is considered to be the first major political and religious catastrophe of Jewish consciousness and has been commemorated ever since – for 2500 years. The section of the Prophets that was chosen to be read is from the first chapters of Jeremiah who deals with the despair with the Prophetic message of hope, trust in the Lord, and the power of redemption and restoration. Jeremiah begins:

The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of King Josiah son of Amon of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of King Zedekiah son of Josiah of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month. Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.”

Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant” (Jeremiah 1:1-10).

For more than 25 plus years that I have known and worked with Richard Kirby, the one most consistent metaphor that we both share is the feeling that is so powerfully suggested by the Prophet Jeremiah is the theme of “fire-in-the heart for the word of God”:

O LORD, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I must cry out, I must shout, “Violence and destruction!” For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot (Jeremiah 20:7-9).

Fire cleans, and gives light. So we can see that in some very real form that the light of the word of God is a possible vehicle of redemption and restoration for our future as well. This same metaphor is as powerful now as it was for a few thousand years.

How can we do this?

One way is to realize that while we are certainly not Prophets, we are part of the school of the Prophets and apprentices in the Collegium of Prophets. We are indeed Colleagues of the Prophets – we are the ones who choose to work together in the Collegium to empower the “Prophetic Imagineering” for the future. Just as Disney has Imagineers who can develop and create his world, so too we are able to be “Imagineers” of the Prophets of the Spirit.

The World Network of Religious Futurists is considering establishing and developing a “Magnificat” Seminary/college/collegium to do just that.

The original idea began with our work as a partial response to the needs and desires of our colleague Bishop Gootla Dorababu in India.

The idea soon began to grow and take on wider and a more expansive vision.

As a message for redemption – using the metaphor of Jeremiah as the fire in the heart that is so precious to both Richard and me – I would like to share some of my thoughts – tentative for now – about the “Magnificat Collegium”. I am sure that this will change, develop and grow, as does any living system.

I would like to call this “Magnificat Collegium” rather than College or Seminary or Academy so that we should distance ourselves from the sclerosis of conventional theological education and thinking. The metaphor of Light of the Word of God is both the Biblical message and the vehicle of photonics (light) that is the medium of our technologies of such a potential collegium for Cyberia.

We can use the technologies of off-the-shelf gadgets of today. But just remember that there will be more creative and innovative ways to create such Imagineering learning systems on a global scale.

We began with the idea of Magnificat as the classic reference to the Magnificat of the Virgin Mary in the Christian tradition. As the ideas expanded we considered using another term but decided to retain the theme and title of Magnificat as it refers to “My soul MAGNIFIES the LORD” for our 21st century spiritual restoration. So we want to honor and empower the Sacred Feminine-Female-Yin aspects of all of the religious and spiritual traditions and new developments.

The basic idea is to develop learning strategies to develop the Pastors, Clergy, Guides, Chaplains, Coaches – for the future. We need to include both a healthy respect for tradition as well as innovative transformation.

One of the needs that we should be able to meet is how to relate to the organized Religious faith communities that have a long history in human culture. We also need to deal with one of the most creative and widespread developments in the UN-organized spiritual journeys that are mostly individual spiritual journeys.

One of the most popular and comprehensive Religious/Spiritual web sites is Beliefnet (www.beliefnet.com), which was started by Steven Waldman on December 28, 1999 – just for the new millennium. It is now owned by Fox Entertainment, a division of News Corporation. It contains huge amounts of information on all of the religious traditions in the world in all of their manifestations, plus meditations, prayer groups, study guides to the Bible from every point of view and study guides for each of the sacred texts of all religions. Once we develop this further we can make contact with the Beliefnet people and develop some really fascinating projects jointly – all online.

We will need to develop materials about Religion Online (which invite the web surfer to get all sorts of information about religion, doctrine, polity, organization, belief), Online Religion (which invite the visitor to participate in the praxis of the religious and spiritual dimension of life via the web – liturgy, prayer, ritual, meditation, homiletics and more), and the many facets of Religion on line in theology IN cyberspace, theology OF cyberspace, and theology FOR cyberspace (www.cybertheology.net). Each of these is entirely new to the world of the spirit, and each is based on some aspect and dimension of light as the new word-logos of God.

We will develop this as an experimental site to relate to the issues of Divine Service in Cyberia for Cyberspace. This will deal with the digital generation and the post digital consciousness as well – with music, sound, image, video, augmented reality, virtual reality, dance, and all of the Multiple Intelligences of Howard Gardner.

The fundamental focus will be how to develop learning environments for the “cultural creatives” to deal with the Logos-Mythos-Value memes for our future.

All of this is a new dimension of the same prophetic message of Jeremiah of the Fire-in-the-belly-for-the-word-of-the-Lord.

Amen

Sermon Word Total: 1,366

Meditation Seed Thought: The light of the word of God is a possible vehicle of redemption and restoration for our future.

Feedback/Comments: Please email your comments at:
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