



February 2000

Blessings in the Beloved!

"Body Building"

We appeared on the podium in sweatsuits the evening of December 26, 1999, prepared to minister to our brothers and sisters in the Lord attending T'Shuva `99. Many were no doubt wondering what we were up to! Then the music began and Neil picked up his 5 lb. weights and Jamie her 5 lb. Bible and began to exercise. We got everyone's attention.

Our final message for 1999 was a word from the heart of God that we believe **you** need to hear too. It's about "Body Building!" Perhaps that concept reminds you of 1Tim. 4: 7-8, which exhorts believers to "*exercise unto godliness, for bodily exercise profiteth little.*" Although that's true, the kind of body building we're speaking of is the spiritual kind...building up the body of Messiah. One word expresses this concept well: **encouragement**.

"Where seldom is heard a discouraging word..."

Remember the song, "Home on the Range"? In today's put-down society, encouraging words are heard all too infrequently. Even in religious bookstores, there's virtually no information on encouragement. We were able to locate one book on the topic written by Charles Swindoll many years ago. We went to the Bible to find out what God has to say about encouragement and were excited about what we found.

First of all, two Hebrew words are used for **strengthen** and **encourage**. One is *a-mats* (pronounced ah-MOTTS). The other is *cha-zak* (pronounced ha-ZAK with the guttural `ch' sound at the beginning of the word). *Chazak* is a primary root which also means to fortify, strengthen or aid.

According to Webster's Dictionary, to en-courage is to inspire with courage, spirit or confidence, to stimulate by assistance or approval, to embolden, hearten, reassure, promote or advance. **Courage** is the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain etc. without fear (in other words, with **faith**). The dictionary antonym or opposite of en-courage is dishearten or disapprove.

CHAZAK! Be encouraged. Yeshua has overcome the world!!

Personal Encouragement

A person's first and usually long-term encourager is their mother. One of the most painful parts of losing one's mother is losing one's encourager. God, in His Faithfulness, provides for those who have no mother/encourager. One of the ways He does this is through the Body of Messiah, the Mishpochah. We are **to nurture** and **encourage** one another.

We praise the Lord for the many encouraging words that we receive from both those who receive our teaching newsletter and those who watch **Jewish Jewels** on television. We save many of them to reread when the work of the ministry gets overwhelming. Jamie recently reread an E-mail from Fredrick M. about our Feb. '99 newsletter on the Song of Songs: "**ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL!!! BARUCH HA SHEM! What an encouragement, as I read it over my lunch break in my office cubicle...and had to bow my head in prayer and rededication to my First Love.**" A recent letter from Donna B. in Idaho touched our hearts as well: "*I was blessed beyond measure by your program on the Shofar. My heart leaped as you spoke about it. When the largest of the shofars was blown, my heart was pierced. I had never heard anything more beautiful in my life. I wept as I was overtaken by the power of God's love in the sound. Thank you for the love I felt, in abundance, through **Jewish Jewels.***"

Encouragement is a wonderful double blessing. Those who encourage receive encouragement. One of the greatest encouragements that our ministry ever received was a special gift given to us by another Messianic Jewish ministry so that we could begin to videotape segments in Israel. Up to that point, we had not even **considered** filming outside the U.S. because of the costs involved. We lacked courage and faith to take such a bold step. When the head of this well-known ministry gave us the financial gift, we were emboldened, reassured, strengthened, **encouraged** to reach higher and trust the Lord for greater things. His belief in us made a great difference in our lives and in the lives of all those who watch **Jewish Jewels** on television. Never underestimate the power of ENCOURAGEMENT!

Encouragement in the Tenach

Moses encouraged Israel. A beautiful example of this "spiritual body building" is found in Deut. 31:1-6. Verse 6 is especially powerful: "*Be strong and of good courage (cha-zak v'a-mats), do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.*" Moses also encouraged Joshua with the same phrase in verse 7 at God's direction (Deut. 3:28).

King Josiah, famous for the great Passover he celebrated (2Chron 35:18), was an encourager of the Levites: "*And he (Josiah) set the priests in their duties and **encouraged** them for the service of the house of the Lord.*" (2Chron. 35:1-2) There's also an interesting example of artisans encouraging one another in Isaiah 41:6-7: "*Everyone helped his neighbor, and said to his brother, Be of good courage!*" (CHA-ZAK!)

Barnabas, a New Covenant Body Builder

Barnabas is a very interesting figure in the New Covenant Scriptures. He was a follower of Yeshua and fellow-worker with Paul (Saul) whose real name was Yosef (Joseph). His fellow disciples gave him a new name, Bar-NAB-ba (Barnabas) which means son of consolation, encouragement or prophecy: "*And Josos (Yosef) who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cypress, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.*" (Acts 4:36-37)

An example of the encouragement given by Barnabas is seen in Acts 9:26-27 and 31: "*And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he (Saul) had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Yeshua. Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.*"

Barnabas, unlike the other apostles, was not afraid of Saul. He encouraged the others to accept him, and trust that Saul really had become a sincere follower of Yeshua. The result of Barnabas' encouragement was PEACE, EDIFICATION and MULTIPLICATION within the believing congregations.

When an encourager appears on the scene, good things happen! If our congregations had more encouragers and less 'kvetchers' (Yiddish for complainers), the Body would be stronger!

Barnabas believed in Mark too. He wanted Mark to accompany him and Paul on a journey, but Paul refused to take Mark. The dispute became so heated that Paul and Barnabas split up. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cypress and Paul chose Silas to go with him to Syria and Celicia. At some point, because of the influence of Barnabas, Paul changed his mind about Mark and later wrote: "*Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.*" (2Tim. 4:11)

An encourager makes an impact on many lives!!

Body Building Through Spiritual Gifts

"So we, being many, are one body in Messiah, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them:...he who exhorts (ENCOURAGES), in exhortation (ENCOURAGEMENT)..." (Rom. 12:5-6,8)

There is a **gift** of encouragement, just as there is a gift of mercy and a gift of giving. But **all** of us are called to encourage, just as all of us are called to give and to show mercy.

John 14:16 indicates an interesting connection between the gift-giver, the Holy Spirit, and encouragement. Yeshua speaking in John 14:16 says to His talmidim (disciples), "*And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper (Comforter) that He may abide with you forever.*" The word for Helper or Comforter used here is the Greek word "Parakletos." The word in Greek for EXHORT (encourage) is also Parakletos. Encouragement and the Holy Spirit (Ruach Ha Kodesh) are inseparable. With the Holy Spirit, **you are equipped to be an encourager!**

Encourage One Another in 2000

"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort (ENCOURAGE) one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3:13)

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification (ENCOURAGEMENT), that it may impart grace to the hearer." (Eph. 4:29)

"But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation...Therefore comfort each other and edify (ENCOURAGE) one another, just as you also are doing." (I Thess. 5:8,11)

Thank you for all the cards, all the letters, and all the encouraging words. Please forgive us if we take a while to answer you. Once in a while, a letter or card gets lost. We do the best we can, and really appreciate your loving communications!

Together we **are** making a difference eternally. Next month we will share on evangelism and the precious Jewish souls who have recently received their Messiah. Be encouraged. God is moving. Yeshua is coming back soon. Nothing given for the sake of the Good News is in vain. God sees your heart.