

## A KS Spiritual Combat Readiness Evaluation

I have been laid up for nearly this entire last month recovering from Right Knee Replacement Surgery which took place on May 6, 2024. I have been seriously having dialogue with the HS about our congregation's readiness as we enter the battleground of this year and season. I served for six-plus years in the US Army Reserve's 292<sup>nd</sup> Transportation Company in Palatka, FL – 1 year as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt (O<sub>1</sub>) I was the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon leader; after promotion to 1<sup>st</sup> Lt (O<sub>2</sub>) as Company Executive Officer (XO) for two years and after promotion to Captain (O<sub>3</sub>), I became the 292<sup>nd</sup> Company Commander (CO) for the last three plus years until I retired. The single most important job I had to do, both as XO and CO, was preparing the unit for its annual Combat Readiness Evaluation (CRE). If we passed, I remained XO/CO, if we failed, I would be removed from command and asked to leave the USAR. For any US Army officer, a CRE (the USAR CRE was known as the Annual ARCOM) failure by the unit you lead meant your military career was over. This was absolutely important and required training design, execution, assessment, and as it turns out, during my tour of duty, the 292<sup>nd</sup> did extremely well. The readiness status for *KS* is similarly serious and important. What is the Combat Readiness Status for *Kehilat Kol Simcha* in the first of June 2024? Individuals and units have combat readiness evaluations. Soldiers in the USAR also are tested annually in what is called the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT). What is your personal KS CFT score?

In the latter part of the Sermon at the Mount (Matthew 5-7) Scripture details for us an evaluation standard for individuals to enter the Kingdom of Heaven: *"<sup>21</sup>Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, and drive out demons in Your name, and perform many miracles in Your name?' <sup>23</sup>Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Get away from Me, you workers of lawlessness (iniquity)!'" (Matt. 7:21-23)*" which quotes from the Psalms: *"Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; For Adonai has heard the voice of my weeping" (Psalm 6:8, NKJV)*. We must ask, *'When is preaching and prophesying iniquity? When is casting-out-demons iniquity? And when is doing miracles iniquity?'* The answer is in verse 21: *when we do these activities in our own will rather than according to the Father's will*. I have spoken many times on the subject on iniquity (e.g., March 20, 2021, August 25, 2018, March 16, 2013, etc.) The Psalmist states: *"Behold, I was born in iniquity and in sin when my mother conceived me" (Ps. 51:5)*. We were all born self-willful beings. *Isaiah 53:6* gives definition to iniquity: *"Each of us turned to his own way."* Adam and Eve turned their own way, and you and I certainly do. Everything is *selfishly about us* all the time. It is *how I see it, how I interpret it, how I believe it, and what is relevant to me right now*. Our actions, especially when we are young, are based on *I, I, I, and Me, Me, Me*. If we use the definition of *personal willfulness for iniquity*, Scripture bursts out with new clarity, meaning and application: *"Direct my footsteps in Your word, and let no iniquity get mastery over me" (Psalm 119:133)*. If our decisions are not based on Scripture, we will fall into destructive habits that come by relying on our own willfulness. Further, every good deed must be motivated by love of *Yah* and not by self-will.

The *Mystery of Iniquity* is that we will follow our own faulty reasoning when we have available *Infinite Yah's Wisdom*: *"For the mystery of lawlessness (iniquity) is already operating...because they did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved...they will believe what is false (the lie)" (2 Thess. 2:7-11)*. When we persist in doing our own will, *Yah* turns us over to a *reprobate mind*, and we believe the lie that we are equal with *Yah*. In reality, we have placed ourselves above *Yah* by deciding what our will is in each matter rather than determining His Will.

*Departing from iniquity* means to stop doing what we are inclined and willfully want to do and to begin to do the will of *Yah* (which will be good works) in acts of faith and righteousness. Only as we depart from the iniquity of works that are initiated by our own will, will we be able to recognize and achieve the good works that are initiated by the Will of *Yah*. Works that are directed by *Yah* fit into His bigger picture and His greater plan for the world.

How should we evaluate our combat readiness? May I suggest that the best way is that we **examine ourselves** and carefully consider *our ways* so that we *scrutinize our self-will*. It is possible that you are rejecting the *Messiah* in your heart because of self-will.

We are all familiar with the evaluation of the Messianic Congregation of Laodicea: *“<sup>14</sup>To the angel of Messiah’s community in Laodicea write: “Thus says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Originator of God’s creation: <sup>15</sup>I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. Oh, that you were either cold or hot! <sup>16</sup>So because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spew you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup>For you say, ‘I am rich, I have made myself wealthy, and I need nothing. But you do not know that you are miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked. <sup>18</sup>I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich, and white clothes so that you may dress yourself and so the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed, and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. <sup>19</sup>Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. Therefore, be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup>Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. <sup>21</sup>To the one who overcomes I will grant the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I myself overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. <sup>22</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Ruach is saying to Messiah’s communities.”* This are the Laodicean congregations we live in today. So-called Christians (Believers) are so called (*cold*). What we have is a congregation of *mouth professors* instead of *heart processors*. Unless they wake up and overcome, *Yah* is going to spew them out. But He gave them a chance, wake up! Get real! Fix the motives and evaluate yourself and stop believing that *you need nothing*! He said *“you do not know that you are miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked.”* We need *“eye salve to anoint our eyes so that we may see.”* Are we lukewarm when it comes to the things of *Yah*? If so, *“To those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. Therefore, be zealous and repent.”* I do not know your heart and you can fool me (or John or Sam or Gene or Joe or Mike) but you cannot fool Him! We must become zealous and repent. If you expect *Yah’s* Power in your life you are going to have to LIVE the life, not just talk it. Walk the talk!

As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of Man (see my Oct. 29, 2022, message *What Will be the Sign of Your Coming?*). The truth is that we have reached the days of Noah once again. Like in the times of Noah, mankind has two priorities, wealth and pleasure, everything else is secondary. *Yeshua* indicates that during the time just before His return, although the warnings were sounded, most people will carry on with life as usual. Does the current Believing World care about *what Yah says*? I would say NO because *His Torah* and *His Tanach* are rejected by nearly all of Christianity while adhering to the doctrines of *Yeshua* but, yet abolishing obedience to the Old Testament – *Who cares what He said prior to the New Testament?* This statement may seem harsh, but regardless of the reason, Christianity promotes disobedience to *Adonai’s Torah* by insisting that it has no relevance to a Born-Again Believer’s life. So will it be in the days preceding the return of *Yeshua*. Noah’s message (which the same as John the Baptist’s message) *Repent & Return* will be preached, but most people will give little heed to it. According to *Yeshua’s* own words it should be clear that *Noah* provides an important basis for understanding the end times. The problem appears to be one of *self-gratification* (the context implied by the statement: *“eating, drinking and taking wives”*).

What is therefore the HS’ instructions for KS Combat Readiness? We read in Matthew: *“<sup>11</sup>As for me, I immerse you in water for repentance. But the One coming after me (Yeshua) is mightier than I am; I am not worthy to carry His sandals. He will immerse you in the Ruach ha-Kodesh and fire. <sup>12</sup>His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He shall clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn; but the chaff He shall burn up with inextinguishable fire (Matt. 3:11-12)”* Evidently an extremely important work of *Yeshua* is immersion in the *Ruach ha-Kodesh and fire*. On the evening of the first day of the week (Resurrection Day) we read: *“<sup>19</sup>It was evening on that day, the first of the week. When the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Judean leaders, Yeshua came and stood in their midst! And He said to them, “Shalom aleichem!” <sup>20</sup>After He said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Yeshua said to them again, “Shalom aleichem! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you. <sup>22</sup>And after He said this, He breathed on them. And He said to them, “Receive the Ruach ha-Kodesh! <sup>23</sup>If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven;*

*but if you hold back, they are held back.” (John 20:19-22)” To the Road of Emmaus disciples He said: “<sup>49</sup>And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49).” And in Acts He said: “<sup>4</sup>Now while staying with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father promised—which, He said, ‘you heard from Me. <sup>5</sup>For John immersed with water, but you will be immersed in the Ruach ha-Kodesh not many days from now’ (Acts 1:4-5).” In order for the work of *Yeshua* to go forth, the emissaries & disciples (all of them), had to wait for the Father’s Promise, Immersion in the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* and fire. This is the TRUE Immersion in the HS coming with fire to burn the chaff out of individuals. Peradventure, hard times, testing and tribulation are necessary to bring about this statement by John the Immerser: “<sup>12</sup>His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He shall clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn; but the chaff He shall burn up with *inextinguishable fire*.” What makes us think that that can be accomplished without the HS? It is NOT in the Kingdom of Darkness’ interest for this work of the HS to manifest. Do you have the chutzpah to ignore *Yeshua’s* own words and imagine that we can overcome the enemy (Rev. 12:11-12) in our own strength? As for me, my house and congregation we will do exactly what *Yeshua* said and pray and tarry until we indeed receive the Immersion of the HS with fire *until we are clothed with power from on high*. Anything less is surely a trap and there is no time for games or gambling. KS let us tarry until this HS Immersion becomes a reality in our midst. *Shabbat Shalom!**